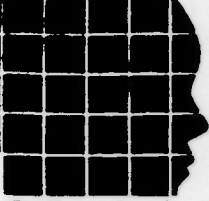


Desegregation Principles

KANSAS CITY, MO  
SCHOOL DISTRICT



"Building our future"

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BOARD ADOPTS PRINCIPLES SIGNALING NEW DIRECTION** **New Principles Adopted by Board Majority**

Kansas City, Missouri, August 8, 1996 - -The Board of Directors of the Kansas City, Missouri School District last night voted on five principles that signal a new direction and philosophy for the school district.

At that meeting Board President Edward Newsome introduced and received approval, by a vote of 7 to 2, for a motion that directs the school district administration and its legal counsel to embrace five guiding principles as it formulates a transition plan for the district.

"The adoption of these principles represents a major culture shift for this district," stated Newsome.

Continuing Newsome commented: "We believe these principles are responsive to the direction this community wants and needs, and are necessary for us to remove the remaining vestiges of segregation. This Board is sending a clear message that this district is serious about addressing the academic needs of the adjudicated victims of past *dejure* segregation."

Superintendent Henry Williams, who was attending his first official meeting of the Board of Directors, said: "I am quite pleased to get these directives from the Board. I am also pleased that this body shares my belief that educational excellence must be at the foundation of any successful desegregation plan. With these directives, we can develop a plan to give every child in this district the opportunity to achieve his/her maximum potential."

The transition plan is being developed to provide a framework for how KCMSD will operate as it transitions from a State desegregation-funded school district, to one that is no longer operated and funded by court orders. The transition plan will be submitted to the Court in the late Fall.

Stated Newsome: "The principles adopted by the Board place an emphasis on academic achievement rather than integration."

Attached is the motion and principles as approved by the Board of Directors.

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## **MOTION:**

**Move that the Board of Directors hereby directs the administration, in collaboration with legal counsel, to draft a *Transition Plan* embodying the following desegregation principles, *that*:**

- 1. Racial isolation (imbalance), in and of itself, is no barrier to academic achievement.**
- 2. (The remaining) racial isolation in the KCMSD will be eliminated to the extent practicable by improving the *overall quality* of all schools in the KCMSD.**
- 3. The primary purpose (function) of future desegregation efforts in the KCMSD is to improve the academic achievement levels of minority children, the adjudicated victims of discriminatory conduct by the State of Missouri and the KCMSD.**
- 4. Programs and initiatives specifically designed to address and eliminate the academic deficiencies of African-American, and other minority students must be developed and successfully implemented in order to eliminate the educational vestiges of discrimination and *dejure* segregation in the KCMSD.**
- 5. A variety of options, including magnets and non-magnets with a thematic focus (i.e., African-centered), traditional, and neighborhood schools, should be available to all students residing in the KCMSD.**

## **NEWSOME SPEAKS OUT ON KCMSD**

**It is very easy to become distracted by a lot of things that are going on in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. What we must NOT lose focus on is what is in the best interest of our students. Our students must be afforded the best opportunity possible---no exceptions, no excuses--- to achieve to their fullest potential. And, our students in this district are extremely talented, smart, and full of potential.**

**Educating our children should not be an after-thought---it must be our primary focus. Sure, other things are important, but they must all point to the impact they will have upon providing the best quality education possible. If the issue is one of closing schools, then the discourse must be centered around the impact on achieving quality education and the removal of barriers of the past segregation. If the issue is curriculum development and restructuring, the focus must be on providing sound, sane, and solid approaches to reading comprehension, strong analytical and critical thinking skills. If the issue is one of providing strong educational leadership, it must include persons who are unquestionably qualified and who have the demonstrated ability and sensitivity to work in an urban environment. And, if the issue centers around policymakers, the focus must be on persons who have the courage and vision to set aside personal and political agendas, free themselves from**



special interests who do not have the interest of students at heart, and do what is right for students, taxpayers, and patrons of the district.

In spite of attempts at humiliation, intimidation, and ostracization, I will not be distracted from putting forth my best effort, from using my the best judgment, from and continue to be willing to make the necessary sacrifices to give our children the best opportunity possible to succeed.

As I have always done, I will continue to stand up and speak out for (1) sound quality education, (2) fiscal accountability---cutting waste and useless spending, (3) abolishing nepotism and cronyism, (4) saving students from high drop-out, expulsion, and suspension, (5) qualified leadership, (6) meaningful parental and community involvement, (7) allowing students the choice to attend schools as close to their own homes as possible.

These are the kinds of things that people all over this district and city have spoken to me about. These are the kinds of things for which I was elected, and with God's help, will continue to do.

Edward J. Newsome  
At-Large School Board Member  
Kansas City, Missouri