Pennsylvania moves ahead to employ black educators

HARRISBURG, Pa. — For the past year, Barton A. Fields, a chief of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Recruitment and Placement Division, has been providing consultative and advisory services to school districts seeking to recruit black educators.

This recruitment effort is aimed at the hiring of experienced and inexperienced educators for teaching, counseling and administrative positions.

Mr. Fields initially began his effort about two years ago for a local school district, Harrisburg, which was badly in need of additional staff.

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At the time of the Harrisburg School District's request for Fields' services, only about 10 per cent of the staff was black.

As a result of the efforts of the Harrisburg School District in cooperation with Fields, the number of black educators on the staff was doubled.

Since that time, Fields has provided assistance to various other school districts and a community college.

These recruitment efforts were initiated by Pennsylvania's secretary of education, Dr. David H. Kurtzman.

Initially, black colleges and universities in the states of Georgia and North Carolina were involved.

Since July, 1969, the effort has been extended to Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and Florida.

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Fields pointed out that the recruitment effort by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, although new, is another area in which the agency provides services to local school districts.

He also indicated that every effort is made to involve the total community in efforts to recruit black staff.

Community groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Urban Coalition, Urban League and Concerned Citizens are asked to provide assistance in securing quality housing for the new personnel as well as extending community hospitality.

Various community groups often provide social functions at which the new teachers are introduced to the community.

Many of the educators, initially selected themselves, become involved in recruiting additional staff and in helping new personnel become adjusted to the community.

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The services provided by the department include counseling and guidance in the mechanics of a positive program of personnel recruitment as well as an introduction and orientation to black colleges and universities in America.

Mr. Fields has also planned and conducted recruitment efforts in conjunction with local school districts to provide them with the additional staff that they so urgently need.

"Many school districts," said Mr. Fields, "indicate they want additional black staff to provide positive success models for black students in their school districts and to give the total staff greater insight into the problems and accomplishments of black people in America."

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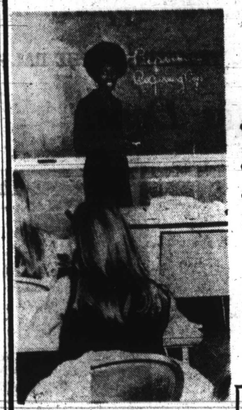

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The 'Design for High Academic Achievement'

By HUGH J. SCOTT

On July 13, 1970, the board of education of the District of Columbia adopted the report by Dr. Kenneth B. Clark entitled "A Possible Reality: A Design for the Attainment of High Academic Achievement for the Students of the Public Elementary and Junior High Schools of Washington, D.C."

That action revealed the board's deep concern over the widespread academic retardation in the school system and its commitment to direct all available resources toward solving this critical problem.

The board of education demonstrated that it felt that the time had come to apply every possible means to ensure that all children in the District of Columbia attained the basic skills in reading and mathematics.

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As the new superintendent of schools in the District of Columbia, I feel that this action by the board of education is commendable and it is the crucial first step to bringing changes which can solve this urgent educational problem.

It has now become my responsibility to rally the educational forces in the community in a massive, coordinated approach to demonstrate that quality education can become an actuality.

The task is a formidable one, but it is heartening to begin with a board of education which has demonstrated such a strong commitment.

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Realization of the goals set forth in The Design for Academic Achievement will require full mobilization of all of the personnel and financial resources of the school system.

The needs are severe and the school system cannot justifiably do less than commit its total resources.

It must also explore every possible means to acquire new resources, both human and financial.

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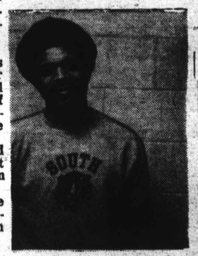
Success in implementing The Design for Academic Achievement will rest in large measure on the degree to which school personnel understand the necessity to achieve this goal; understand their respective tasks and responsibilities in the realization of this goal; and are permitted to exercise the professional skills which will foster creativity and commitment.

In a large urban school system, this is unquestionably the most challenging aspect of implementing such a plan on a system-wide basis.



WILLIE C. OWENS and his wife were both recruited by the Minneapolis Public Schools System by Dr. Joyce Jackson.

• • •

The school system must be organized in a manner that is consistent with sound management procedures and considerable planning and coordination must take place.

To assist teachers in redirecting their efforts in the classroom, training and support must be provided.

Approaches in learning must also be restructured to compensate for negative factors in the socio-economic environment of many students.

Without these necessary prerequisites, significant progress toward reaching the established goals will be impaired.

It is my hope, as superintendent of schools, that the necessary steps can be taken to ensure that what happens in schools throughout this city will reverse the trend of academic retardation and provide all children with an education of the highest quality.

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