

1975-1979

School racial plan taking final shape

Aptos 'safe' under version nearing OK

By MARY McGRATH

When school busing to achieve racial balance comes to the Pajaro Valley, children in the upper-income Aptos area will remain in their neighborhood schools while minority children in town are moved, according to the latest proposal being hashed over by the desegregation advisory committee.

This plan, part of which was approved Wednesday, angered several members. Steve Dautoff called it "unconscionable" because it involved Aptos so little. Member Joe Moreno said it was "grossly inequitable."

But Barbara Reiland said moving mainly minorities was unavoidable if they wanted to close the run-down Linscott and Radcliff schools and change the grade level at Pajaro. These schools are over 90 percent Hispanic.

"You can't close these schools without moving minorities," she said.

The group had voted several weeks ago to include Aptos in any plan it submitted to the school board, whose members have the final say on desegregation.

But said Reiland, "There is no way to move equal numbers of kids without long-distance busing. And the community is so opposed to this."

Dautoff was the only member to suggest that mingling the races for better understanding was more important than the troubles caused to families by busing.

"A multi-cultural experience is very important," he said. He accused the group of "pussy-footing" around. "I think we should move some people," he demanded.

Some Anglo children could be moved out of the area, however, in the future. It was decided Wednesday, children of the planned Seascape development and Lee-Harkins Slough area will eventually be bused to Renaissance.

The proposal moves 1,802 children at an initial cost of about \$84,000. But, ironically, after all the moving and shuffling, the number of segregated schools in the district is only reduced by one, from eight to seven.

The committee defines a segregated school as one with over 62 percent minority students. Renaissance, which will remain a K-6 school, will be heavily segregated with 94 percent minority students. But the others will be no more than 75 percent minority, after Linscott and Radcliff are closed and grade levels at Pajaro are changed. It is unclear whether this will satisfy state and federal law.

The committee did agree on plans for the North Monterey County area and for the year-around schools area (see separate story).

The plans for these two areas will be submitted as is to the school trustees, barring any unforeseen changes by the committee. Public hearings will be held, but the trustees will write the final plan.

Parents, students and teachers should not expect drastic changes in September, on the contrary, the desegregation plan will take several years to implement. For the 1979-80 school year, the district may do no more than begin to educate the public on the subject.

The committee did not discuss how to guard against resegregation. This happened in the Berkeley school system where, 15 years after desegregation began, changes in the income levels and housing patterns of minorities lead to the schools becoming segregated all over again.

Member Glenn Specht did suggest the community "encourage low cost housing in the proper places" as one way of guarding against this.

At next week's meeting, the group will vote again on plans for the central Watsonville area and Aptos.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. at E.A. Hall School, room 9.