

THE BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
OF DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Miami, Florida

*This was  
Compiled by  
Faye Bogner*

Excerpts from Minutes

August 7, 1968

Next to speak were Otis Wallace and Charles Richardson, representing a group known as SOUL (Student Organization for Unity and Liberty), asking that South Dade Senior High School be required to discontinue using the nickname THE REBELS, along with its emblem, songs, etc., all of which they consider an affront to black students. They also complained of discriminatory treatment by teachers, librarians, coaches, and student organizations, and requested changes in curriculum to include courses in black history and culture.

40,807  
Complaints from  
Negro Students at  
South Dade High  
School

In conclusion they asked that the Board either act immediately to institute changes along the lines suggested, or grant the black students free bus transportation to Mays High School.

In answer to the above, a delegation of parents, students and alumni of South Dade High School, headed by Mr. Jack Levy of Homestead, appeared and presented a petition protesting any movement or act that would cause the name of THE REBELS or its traditional colors to be changed at South Dade High School, unless the student body as a whole votes otherwise.

Susan Thompson, secretary of Community Relations at South Dade High School, spoke briefly at this point, stating that in an effort to solve some of the problems of the Negro students, a committee consisting of equal numbers of Negro and white students was set up. Meetings have not yet been held due to the summer vacation, but will be scheduled early in the school year. She went on to say that Charles Richardson will be a member of the Student Faculty Board next year, and since this problem has come up and been brought before the Board, she will be glad to call a meeting before the beginning of school in order to talk over some of the points complained of.

During the discussion that followed, Mr. Gordon stated that it would be his suggestion that the School Board Aides be asked to meet with members of the white and black student body at South Dade High School, and bring back a report that will enable the Board to take whatever action is necessary to



make the situation better. In his opinion a conference between the students, themselves, would be better than an investigation by administrative officials.

He accordingly moved that a committee of School Board Aides meet with students, both black and white, from South Dade High School, and bring back a recommendation on what they feel would be a fair solution to the problem.

Mrs. Meyers seconded the motion, stating that this suggestion was also made by her own aide, Barbara Woodin, and she is heartily in favor of it.

Mr. Lehman stated that under present policy the Board cannot change the name THE REBELS, nor can the black students do it. Only the white majority at the school can do this, if they are so inclined. Since this is the case, he hopes they will think about it, and decide for themselves if this is not too high a price to ask the black students to pay at this time.

The Superintendent stated that he feels the Board is correct in saying that this is, to a very great extent, a student problem, and he thinks the suggestion made to the young people is a good one. He hopes they follow it.

He went on to say that he has been observing the white students in the audience, and feels they need to do a lot of thinking about this problem. Last year there were only about 88 black students at South Dade High School, . . . this year there will be around 200. Therefore, the white students will have to make an effort to understand the feelings of the black students in this matter. Under the circumstances he is glad they will all get together and talk this thing out.

He went on to say, however, that there are other problems that are administrative in nature. The Board has a policy that states clearly that there shall be no racial discrimination. There can be no excuse for a principal or teacher, either black or white, discriminating against a student because of his race. It is against the Board's own policy to do so. On the other hand, in protecting the rights of students, the teachers must also be protected from unfair complaints and charges.

However, in terms of attitudes and in terms of living together in the school, this is something the students, themselves, must solve. He is more and more impressed with the maturity that is demanded of students, particularly high school students today, and he means both white and black students alike. But because the white students have been the racial majority, it probably requires more from them. Right now they can be of great help in this school by providing the leadership that will prevent it becoming a community problem.

Further discussion followed, after which vote was taken on the above motion, and same was unanimously carried.

40,807-A  
School Board Aides  
to Meet with a  
Committee of Negro  
and White Students  
at South Dade High  
School



Than 500 Attend Protest Meeting

# Parents, Students Rally 'Round Rebel Flag'

*News Leader - Wed Aug 7<sup>th</sup> -  
Front page*

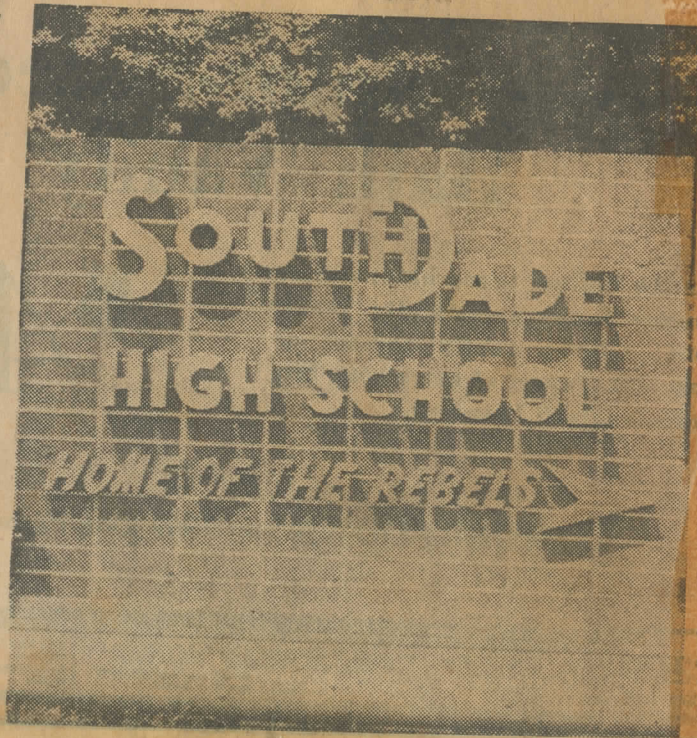
500 students, parents  
ni of South Dade High  
lied around the Rebel  
arris fieldhouse Tues-  
y protesting a demand  
school nickname and  
mbols of its Rebel tra-  
changed.

Marvin Griep was asked just  
who constitute membership of  
the newly-formed SOUL (Stu-  
dent Organization for Union  
and Liberty) and what persons  
are behind it.

Homestead Mayor William  
Dickinson, noting the school  
board bans student member-  
ship in secret groups, wanted  
to know why the board is lis-  
tening to complaints from a  
group about which nothing is  
known.

Griep replied that when the  
complaints were first brought  
to school officials, it thought  
they came simply from a group  
of concerned students. The or-  
ganization is now under inves-  
tigation, he added.

Dickinson said he believes  
the 100-member organization is  
composed of students from  
throughout the county, and ad-  
ded "If 100 students from all  
over Dade County can bring  
this kind of trouble to our high



school, we have a right to know  
who they are."

Griep declined to speculate  
on what action the school board  
will take today on the Negro  
group's complaints. But he  
said it was his personal rec-  
ommendation that the problem  
be solved "at the local level"  
with the students, faculty and  
parents involved.

School coach Norman Ander-  
son, speaking out on another  
charge of SOUL that Negro  
athletes are discriminated  
against at South Dade, pointed  
out that of three top track team  
awards presented last year,  
two went to Negroes.

He added that when football  
practice started in the spring,  
no Negroes turned out for the  
initial session. The coaching  
staff contacted a half dozen  
boys and bent its rule against  
reporting late for practice, to  
offer them a second chance,  
Anderson said.

None showed up for the sec-  
nd session either, the coach  
said, so after that they were  
barred from going out for the  
team.

"We want Negro athletes,  
quite frankly — but we are  
not going to break our funda-  
mental rules," Coach Anderson  
said.



# Wipe Out Rebels,

By GERRY CROSBY

South Dade Negro students determined to stop what they term "racist" policies that oppress black students have formed an organization and will present their grievances to the school board this month.

The "Student Organization for Unity and Liberty" (SOUL) comprised of approximately 100 students claims its main objective is to cleanse South Dade High of its racist policies which serve to oppress black students, deny them privileges and derogate their dignity.

The group has requested a hearing at the School Board's August 7 public meeting at which time they will list the following complaints:

1. The nickname of South Dade High School, the Rebels, is blatantly racist. The name of Rebel, the Rebel flag, uniforms, songs and ideas that serve to perpetuate the rebel tradition are oppressive to students.

2. Discriminatory treatment of black students by teachers and ad-

ministrators. SOUL claims white teachers and administrators have displayed unequal treatment toward black students, manifested by discriminatory grading, unfair disciplinary actions, unwarranted derogatory remarks, and unequal application of school rules and standards.

3. Discriminatory treatment regarding black students' participation in student organizations. Black students are underrepresented on the student council, there are no black cheerleaders or majorettes and the admission policies in general serve to deter black membership in school clubs, the group claims.

4. Discriminatory treatment of black athletes. SOUL says that unequal playing opportunities are given to black athletes, deserved recognition is denied them and their activity bus has been taken away. In addition a policy exists which is generally exploitive of black athletes.

5. The absence of black teachers,

## FORECAST

East and southeast winds 10 to 15 knots with seas two to four feet. Inland waters light chop, becoming choppy during afternoons.

# The South Dade News

57th YEAR NO. 101

247-2321 (Homestead)—235-8531 (Perrine)  
WANT ADS—248-2511

HOMESTEAD, FLA., MONDAY, A



# Aim of 'SOUL'

## Rebels Racist?

demand the following:

1. The school's nickname of "Rebel" be eliminated and be replaced with a name that is not oppressive to black students.
2. A charge in the racial attitudes of teachers, coaches, administrators, librarians and other employees. In the absence of such change there dismissal is demanded.
3. More Black representation on the student council. The addition of black girls to the cheerleaders and majorettes squad. A revamping of club politics so as not to deter black membership.
4. Equal treatment for black athletes which must include the reinstating of an activity bus.
5. The hiring of additional coaches and black administrators.
6. The inclusion of black history and culture in the school curriculum. Black students of South Dade High School said they are sincere in their demands which must be met immediately or action will be taken.

coaches and administrators. The absence in numbers of black teachers, coaches and administrators points to a hiring practice that is clearly racist and serves to deny the black students adult leaders who can understand their problems and with whom they can identify.

6. The absence of black history and culture from the curriculum.

7. Discrimination in the school library. There have been several instances in which black students have been denied use of the school library, SOUL claims. The reasons given were untenable and it is clear that racial prejudice prompted those demands.

To eliminate the above racist policies, the members of SOUL said they

# The Leader

Greater Homestead Edition



## Letters To The Editor

# 'Racist' Charge Denied

By Former Student

Editor, The News Leader:

I am neither an intergrationist or a segregationist. I am a constitutionist, meaning I am a strict interpreter of the constitution.

I would like to remark on SOUL's wanting to change the name of Rebels.

AS AN American and a southerner I am proud of my heritage. Those men and women who called themselves rebels a little over 100 years ago were good Americans, both whites and blacks, who fought for what they believed in.

I was a South Dade Rebel but neither my classmates nor I can be labeled racists. How could we? We didn't advocate violence or hatred.

In the South there were Negro slaves, but the war between

the states wasn't fought over slavery but for states' rights. In the north there were indentured servants, both black and white. But no one calls the American flag a symbol of racism.

BOTH WHITE and black Americans should be proud of their southern heritage.

SOUL stated it is not represented on the Student Council. I thought one had to be nominated and elected. Need I say more?

If black athletes can't meet the qualifications, why should they be put on teams if someone else could do better?

About the absence of black teachers. We all know there are not enough qualified black teachers. If these students are really concerned and not just rebelling why don't they go to

college, after graduating, and become teachers to eliminate this problem.

ABOUT BLACK culture and history. When I went to school I studied world and American history. We all know black, white and yellow men participated in developing history but no one needed to tell us. I never had anyone teach me Irish culture or Irish history either.

I am happy and proud of our American history.

But if SOUL wants black history, here is their first lesson: Many Negroes fought as rebels in the Civil War and were proud to do so. Look that up in the history books.

Eliminate the name "Rebels," — Never. As long as there is injustice in the world there will be rebels.

They want black cheerleaders and majorettes. If a black girl is good and can fulfill the qualifications, fine, make her a cheerleader or majorete. But don't ever put a white girl out and replace her with a black girl because a minority wants it that way.

IT'S AS IF being a white girl is a handicap.

What I am trying to say is this: Black students have no grounds for their demands. What they want must be earned and not given.

In the August 5 issue of The News Leader, SOUL stated: ". . . black students of South Dade High demands which must be made immediately or action will be taken."

Who are they, a handful, to make such outrageous demands?

There is an air of racism at South Dade and it is led by the organization called SOUL.

SP 5 BARRY D. MURPHY

## Students 'Shocked' At Racism Charge

Editor, The News Leader:

After reading the article in Monday's News Leader about racism at South Dade High School we were shocked. We have attended South Dade for two years and we know such conditions are not as stated in the article.

The students and the faculty are not prejudiced and are fair to all.

SOUL IS protesting something that happened over a century ago, something we had no part in. We have a rebel flag but may we remind our SOUL brothers that flying high over our school flag is the American flag which stands for peace and justice for all. Is that racism?

In reply to the charge that there is no Negro representation in cheerleading or majorettes, may we point out that there's been no participation. They have to try out first just like other girls. We just can't "give" it to them.

No one has special privileges at South Dade.

EVERYTHING that we have which has to do with spirit concerning football games and such is related to the theme of "Rebels." For example, cheers, theme songs, band uniforms, flags, class rings, yearbooks, newspaper, colors, themes for halftime shows, and many more.

If our name is changed all this has to be thrown out with it, including one of the most important of all, school spirit. We feel that this spirit has nothing to do with prejudice or racism.

We feel that this change would be confusing and completely unnecessary. We hope all who are concerned will agree with us and support us in our efforts to keep the name of South Dade Rebels.

3 SOUTH DADE STUDENTS

Fri - Aug 9th  
Leader

N/L  
Aug  
9



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No one has special privileges at South Dade.

Also Student Council representatives are elected according to grades and ability to cooperate with others in setting up standards, relating them to the student body and the like.

AS FAR AS the hiring of coaches and administrators is concerned, the School Board does this, and it does so on the basis of education, training, ability and the need for personnel.

Concerning the absence of black history and culture, the students at South Dade don't write the textbooks so they (SOUL) should protest against the Dade County Board of Public Instruction.

Finally, we would like to say that we see no need for a change in the name "Rebels." It is a name which shows a great deal of spirit and enthusiasm, but which does not mean that we are against Negroes as were the rebels of over a 100 years ago.

EVERYTHING that we have which has to do with spirit concerning football games and such is related to the theme of "Rebels." For example, cheers, theme songs, band uniforms, flags, class rings, yearbooks, newspaper, colors, themes for halftime shows, and many more.

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3 SOUTH DADE STUDENTS



# Name Dispute Brings Protest To South Dade

Page 2  
Herald  
Aug 7  
Wed

By BILL BLOSS  
Homestead Bureau Chief

"Keep the name Rebels," thundered 500 parents, students and alumni of South Dade High School Tuesday night.

Marvin Griep, south district supervisor of junior and senior high schools told the assemblage at the school football field his recommendation to his superiors is to consider the demand to change the school name as an "internal school problem to be handled at the local level."

The meeting was called to approve a petition and select delegates to appear before the school board this afternoon. The board will hear the demands of a group called SOUL (Student Organization for Unity and Liberty), protesting alleged discrimination at the high school and calling for removal of the name Rebel and "Dixie" as the school anthem, because they are irksome and oppressive to Negro students.

Homestead Mayor Bill Dickinson told the crowd to concern itself only with the threat of changing the name. Other complaints of discrimination or unfair treatment should be investigated and

## Around South Dade

Phone Nos.: Circulation 350-2333 News 247-9333

Bill Bloss, Bureau Chief

eliminated if they are true, he said.

The mayor called for school officials to "level with us and let us know who made the request and what adults or what organizations are behind it." The names of the objectors haven't been released.

Dickinson challenged the school board's acceptance of a secret organization when students are banned from joining secret groups. Griep said he can't answer for the board, but SOUL and its backers are being investigated.

According to the mayor, it is a county-wide organization with approximately 100

members. "If 100 people can cause this turmoil," he stated, "then something is wrong."

Head track coach Marvin Anderson disavowed any mistreatment of Negro athletes at the South Dade school. "The track team gives three honors . . . and last year two of them went to Negroes," he said. "They earned them and deserved them and I would do it again," he added.

Last spring, Anderson said, football coaches bent a rule to let six Negro boys come out late for spring football. None of them showed up the next day.

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## Student Cabinet Considers Demands

South Dade High School student cabinet members met Tuesday to discuss demands of Negro students to change the "Rebel" name identifying the school.

The cabinet said the meeting was called to send representatives today to a meeting with school officials. The students were surprised at the demands by the Negro students.

Commenting on a letter of complaint sent to the school, the cabinet members said demands to place Negroes on the cheer leader squad and in the majorette corps were unreasonable because no Negro girls had tried out for either.

The students said they

find the facts. All indicated they oppose doing away with the name, "Rebel." "The white students are in the middle" between the school officials and the Negro students making the demands for changes.

A list of demands from the Negro group, which calls itself "SOUL" (Student Organization for Unity and Liberty), also complained about being barred from school clubs, deprived of use of the school library, failure of the school to teach history and culture of the Negro, lack of recognition of Negro athletes, unequal treatment of Negro students by the white faculty and absence of Negro teachers and coaches.

The Negro students called

Miami Herald  
after the rally  
meeting Tues. Eve.  
Narris Field House  
Aug 7, 1968



Says School Official

# Rebel Name Likely To Stay At S. Dade

By VIRGINIA AMENDT  
South Dade High School's "Rebel" nickname won't be ordered summarily dumped by school officials, despite a de-

mand for a name change by a newly organized group of black students.

That was the word Monday from Marvin Griep, director of

secondary schools in the south district, after this and several other "demands" by the black student group were made public.

School officials didn't choose the Rebel name, Griep pointed out; it was chosen by vote of students and faculty when the school first opened. If it's changed, it should be changed the same way, he added.

"We recognize that this is a symbol which might be objectionable to a changing, growing student body," said Griep, "but to act out of a blue sky would not be correct procedure."

Making a name switch would involve "lots of ramifications," he added. Athletic teams bear the Rebel name, band uniform caps carry out the Confederate theme, and the school newspaper is called the Rebel Review.

The new Student Organization for Unity and Liberty (SOUL) presented its demand for a name change from Rebel in a list of seven complaints made public Monday. SOUL has asked a hearing before the school board's meeting Wednesday to air its complaints and ask changes in what it calls "racist policies" at the school.

Griep sat in on a meeting a week ago with a committee from the new group and South Dade Principal William R. Wilson. Wilson is on vacation and couldn't be reached by the News Leader Monday.

In response to News Leader questions on other complaints of the group, concerning alleged lack of Negroes on the staff and the absence of teaching of Negro history and culture, Griep supplied this information.

South Dade had one Negro teacher last year, another will be added to the faculty this year, and "We are working toward further integration of the

## 'Save Rebel' Meeting Scheduled For Tonight

Students, parents and alumni of South Dade High School will meet at 8 p.m. today at Harris Fieldhouse in Homestead to "save" the school's Rebel nickname.

The meeting was organized Monday after a group of Negro students at the school called for a change in the Rebel name, which they term "racist."

Tonight's rally is expected to produce a formal stand in opposition to the Negro group's demand, with a delegation named to appear at Wednesday's county school board meeting.

The Negro group, Student Organization for Unity and Liberty (SOUL), will present seven complaints over alleged "racist policies" at South Dade High to the school board at 3 p.m. Wednesday at 1410 N.W. Second Ave., Miami.

faculty." The athletic coaching staff has no Negroes and will have none this fall since there are no vacancies to be filled on the staff.

The county school office is studying the question of adding more black history and culture to the school curriculum. However, it wouldn't be taught as a separate subject but would be incorporated into subjects already taught. Griep noted that some of this is included in present courses.

South Dade until very recent years had no Negro students. In the past three years Negro enrollment has increased from a mere handful to about 100 last year.

Various complaints of alleged "discrimination" were voiced by Negro students to officials at South Dade during the past school year but the list of complaints and demands represents the first action by an organized group.



# South Dade Is 'Fed Up'

News Leader:

The "Great Debate" held Monday, March 10, at Harris Field was the first serious challenge to "Laugh-in" in three years as determined by the latest ratings. The entire matter would be laughable if the end result—the education of the children—would not be affected.

A community debate is generally associated with a presentation of divergent views whose objective is to impress upon the audience a solicitation for political votes.

Now that the debate is concluded who is supposed to vote on what?

What was the "debate" all about?

Mr. Don Pierce was in error for placing the Mayor of the City of Homestead in a position of acknowledging or repudiating the statements attributed to members of the city council. They are entitled to their democratic right to make statements as individuals. If Mr. Pierce desired to assist he should have requested specific corroboration of alleged wrongdoings.

The mayor was unwise to further fan the flames by a request for a Roman forum debate. Mr. Pierce had about as much of a fair chance to impress a crowd at Harris Field in Homestead concerning his views, as Nasser would in making a speech on South

Miami Beach on "How to win a six-day war."

The people of South Dade, the silent 90 per cent are fed up with meetings, rallies, political debates using the school system as the whipping boy, and bi-racial groups who represent irreconcilable extremes posing as community leaders.

The political leaders (?) of the City of Homestead are duty bound to specifically submit indiscretions on the part of school administrators to the School Board. Presenting general charges through the news media so as to compile a political scrap book is a gross injustice which adversely affects those with whom we are most concerned—the children.

I feel that the loquacious mayor was in error in stating that the CPO is a "legally charged organization" and their demands should be adhered to.

Based on my information they are not a legally chartered corporation, but in effect a non-legal entity, or more colloquially speaking—a nothing. Every member of the CPO exposes himself personally to legal liability for libelous statements made by the executive committee and sanctioned by the membership.

Clothing themselves with the name "Concerned Parents" places all opposition to their views as unconcerned parents.

This is reminiscent of those super-duper patriots who wrap themselves in the flag and any persons disagreeing with them are deemed to be unpatriotic.

As to the "Great Debate"—I

left early to watch "Laugh-in".

Not only did Goldie appear intellectually superior to the parties to the debate—she is also prettier.

JOSEPH S. MARCUS

## CTA Appeals Policy Ruling To High Court

By BOB SHAW  
Herald Staff Writer

The Classroom Teachers Association has asked the state Supreme Court to overturn a Circuit Court decision forbidding collective bargaining between the School Board and the CTA.

And CTA Attorney Tobias Simon, who filed the appeal, says that the School Board will be listed as a plaintiff in the proceedings, despite the fact that the board voted last week not to contest the lower court decision.

"The petty political action of the board is of no consequence whatever," Simon stated. "The board is now a party to the appeal, and will be called upon to file a brief."

AT ISSUE IS the board's controversial Personnel Policies Memorandum, which gives the CTA exclusive bargaining rights for all teachers employed by the county.

The policy was passed by the board in December, and immediately taken to court by the Dade County Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, smaller rivals of the CTA.

Circuit Judge Jack Falk threw out the memorandum last month, saying that the agreement had been reached through collective bargaining and therefore violated state law.



Tobias Simon  
... 'board is in'

LAST WEEK, four board members, including three who took office this January, voted not to appeal Falk's decision.

Simon said Thursday he "assumed" the board would now support the CTA appeal. But Assistant Board Attorney Robert Ware wasn't so sure.

"As it stands now," he added, "the board has instructed us not to appeal the decision."

Simon indicated he would base his appeal on Falk's interpretation of the state constitution.

"Judge Falk said the constitution rules out collective bargaining, but my interpretation is that it permits bargaining by all employees — public and private," Simon said.



Called 'Johnny-Come-Lately'

# Mayor Attacks CTA In Jr. High Debate

3/11/69  
N/L

By VIRGINIA AMENDT

Homestead Mayor Bill Dickinson accused the Dade Classroom Teachers Association of being power hungry, and a Johnny - come - lately with solutions to Homestead Junior High School discipline problems, at a meeting Monday night at Harris fieldhouse.

The occasion was a public debate between Mayor Dickinson and Don Pierce, director of personnel services for the Dade CTA. Dickinson had challenged Pierce to the debate after the CTA officer charged local people with "witch hunting" because of demands made for the removal of the junior high school principal, Charles Overholser.

During the debate, both sides agreed that firmer discipline needs to be enforced in school classrooms.

About 200 parents, teachers and interested citizens were present.

Pierce opened by saying he

had never accused Dickinson of being a "witch hunter." He had directed his criticism at the Concerned Parents Organization and some City Council members, who, he said, were urging Overholser be removed as principal "without a hearing, due process or any statement of specific charges."

He outlined CTA recommendations for improving school discipline, which include enforcing existing board policies regarding expulsions, obedience of pupils to teachers, and corporal punishment by principals if necessary, plus a forum through which students can express their grievances or gripes.

"The CTA is deeply concerned over the breakdown of discipline in the schools," said Pierce. "Teachers are sick and tired of kids telling them to go to hell, using four-letter words to the teacher in class and getting away with it. This can only lead to chaos in the schools."

Dickinson said he was "delighted" that the CTA at "this late date" has come up with recommendations for improved school discipline.

"Prior to March 4, no city official had been approached by the CTA," the mayor added. "It was only when it appeared the job of an administrator was at stake did we hear (from the CTA.) The only inference is that the CTA is concerned with this, not with pupil safety or discipline problems."

He praised teachers from Homestead Junior High who devised their own program for helping solve problems at their school, which has been offered to the county school board. Improvements have been made at the school recently, Dickinson added. But they came about because citizens and teachers within the community were concerned, not the CTA, he claimed.

Terming the CTA a "power union," Dickinson said the teacher organization became concerned only because of public pressure. When parents began making demands, the mayor said the CTA was afraid of "losing its grip" and "had to attack those making the demands."

Pierce said the junior high faculty worked up its program on his suggestion. He also said that he had spent an hour and a half at the south district office back in January, discussing the junior high problems, and had worked on it further at meetings in February.

"On March 4, I met with the Homestead Junior High Faculty, and said if they were going to sit by and let demands come for ouster of the principal without a hearing, they had better consider whether their own jobs might be next," Pierce said. "The CTA is not going to sit by and sleep while citizen groups demand the ouster of one of our members."



Debaters Agree

3/11/69

# 'School Discipline Needs Improving'

By **BILL BLOSS**  
Homestead Bureau Chief

Homestead Mayor William Dickinson and Donald Pierce, Dade Classroom Teachers Association director of personnel services, agreed that discipline in Dade Schools needs improving.

However, in a debate Monday, the two did not agree on actions of the Classroom Teachers Association nor on an alleged "witch hunt" directed at Homestead Junior High Schools Principal Charles Overholser.

The debate was held before 200 persons at Harris Field in Homestead.

**DICKINSON SAID** he represented Pierce's public statement that a Concerned Parents Organization demand for Overholser's ouster was supported by members of the Homestead Council and should be refuted by the mayor. Dickinson said the council did not make such a demand, although some members mentioned names of school administrators who might impose stricter discipline at the local school.

The mayor defended the CPO to the extent that it is a legally-charged organization speaking in behalf of its members, and as such should

Around  
**South  
Dade**  
Phone Nos.:  
News 247-9333  
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have a voice.

**PIERCE DENIED** that the CTA is a union (as alleged by Dickinson) and said teachers have as much right to be represented by a professional organization as do lawyers and doctors.

"The teacher movement in this country is just beginning," Pierce said. "Teachers are no longer wards of the government," he continued. "They have discovered that they do have a voice."

The mayor said the CTA got into the school issue late but it is now trying to "regain its stature and become a dominant force." Teachers and parent groups were having success in bringing about improvements in the schools,

so the CTA is now trying to take credit for recommendations made by the Homestead faculty, he charged.

"**THE CTA WAS** losing its grip and had to attack groups" which Dickinson said were succeeding in causing changes in administration and discipline.

Pierce's answer to a question on changing administrators at South Dade High School (and improving discipline) asked, "Isn't it correct that the former principal went on sick leave?" His answer was a round of giggles and guffaws.

Pierce said "I am standing behind my remarks," criticizing Homestead officials and the CPO. He objected to the CPO demanding Overholser's removal saying the group had no right to make such demands. However, he said, the CTA "is not afraid to call a spade a spade and if we feel changes are necessary we are going to say so."

The meeting closed in agreement, at least to the point that discipline needs to be improved at all Dade County schools. Both sides offered to work together for the betterment of our schools and our pupils.



## Dickinson Vs. Pierce Debate Set For Tonight

3/10/69

Controversy surrounding discipline problems at Homestead Junior High School will be aired at a public debate at 8 p.m. today at T. J. Harris fieldhouse in Homestead.

Homestead Mayor William Dickinson will debate Don Pierce, director of personnel services for the CTA, on Pierce's charges that actions of the City Council and the Concerned Parents Organization "smack of witch hunt."

The mayor, who issued the debate challenge to Pierce, has invited all parents, students and teachers at the school to attend.

In a press statement last week, Pierce criticized the CPO and "some members of the City Council" for urging removal of Principal Charles Overholser.

The City Council, responding to numerous complaints that unruly behavior by some students at the school constitute a threat to pupil safety, called recently for a school board investigation of conditions at Homestead Junior High.

The Concerned Parents voted two weeks ago to ask for Overholser's removal as principal, alleging he has failed to enforce discipline.

## Let's Learn, Not Burn

3/10/69

Editor, News Leader:

The news is that the Classroom Teachers Association's Don Pierce will debate Homestead's Bill Dickinson.

The exact topic has not yet been chosen. I suggest it be: "Whether Homestead's Teachers Or Its Politicians Are Of Greater Value To Our Community".

The educators I've been listening to appear objective, unselfish, and far more aware of the broader issues than the average politician. They must be doing their job well, judging from the eloquent letters in The News-Leader for March 5 from two ninth-graders.

In any event, the debate should prove enlightening. Will there be present the usual noisy clique determined to accept as the sole explanation for our problems international Communism? If so, will the debaters avoid pandering to this element, and assist the moderator in maintaining adequate control at all times?

Here's an opportunity for Homestead to demonstrate political maturity. Let's attend the debate to learn, not burn.

IRVING PESKOE



2/18/69

# Junior High Disorders To

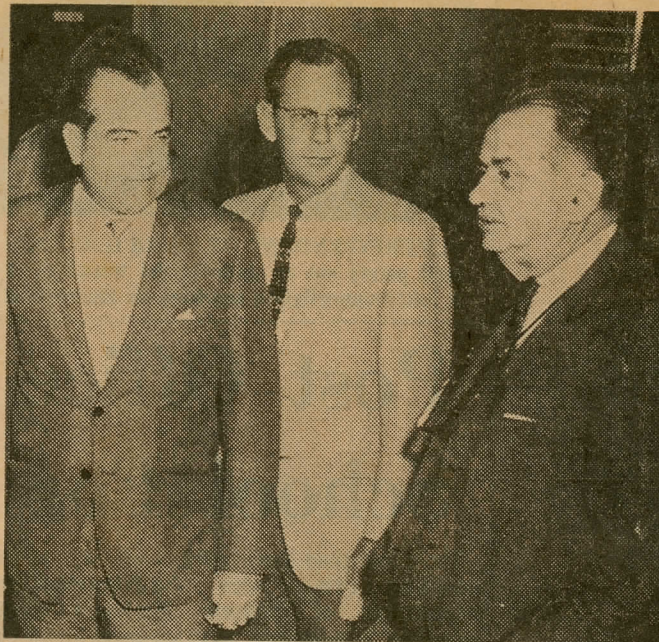
By VIRGINIA AMENDT

City Council members' complaints over discipline at Homestead Junior High School will be carried to the Dade School Board when it meets Wednesday, the Council was assured Monday night.

Chairman Holmes Braddock and two other School Board members traveled to Homestead for a first-hand report from City Council members on what they feel is wrong at the junior high school.

The Council claims unruly student behavior originating within the school has spilled over into surrounding streets after classes, causing a community problem.

There was general agreement that a problem does exist at the school, calling for a firm course of action. Braddock agreed suspensions — of which there have been more than 200 since last fall — aren't solving the problem.



COUNCILMEN Fred Rhodes and Charles Locke talk to Ben Sheppard (right), Dade County school board member, prior to meeting Tuesday night over problems at Homestead Junior High.

In answer to a Council question, Braddock said the board hasn't received any requests for outright expulsion of any persistent trouble-makers. Later in the meeting Miss Elizabeth Gilkey, south district supervisor, said four students have been recommended for 30-day suspension and possible expulsion.

It's the contention of the Council — supported by school records — that about 30 among the school's enrollment of 1,500 are causing most of the serious behavior problems.

Board member Dr. Ben Sheppard said he personally favors changing the state law which requires children to remain in school until they are 16.

The three board members expressed favorable interest in Mayor William Dickinson's proposal that a special class be set up for "problem" youngsters at the school, rather than simply sending them home on suspension.

Board member Mrs. Ethel Beckham wanted to know, though, just what the Council thought the class should consist of.

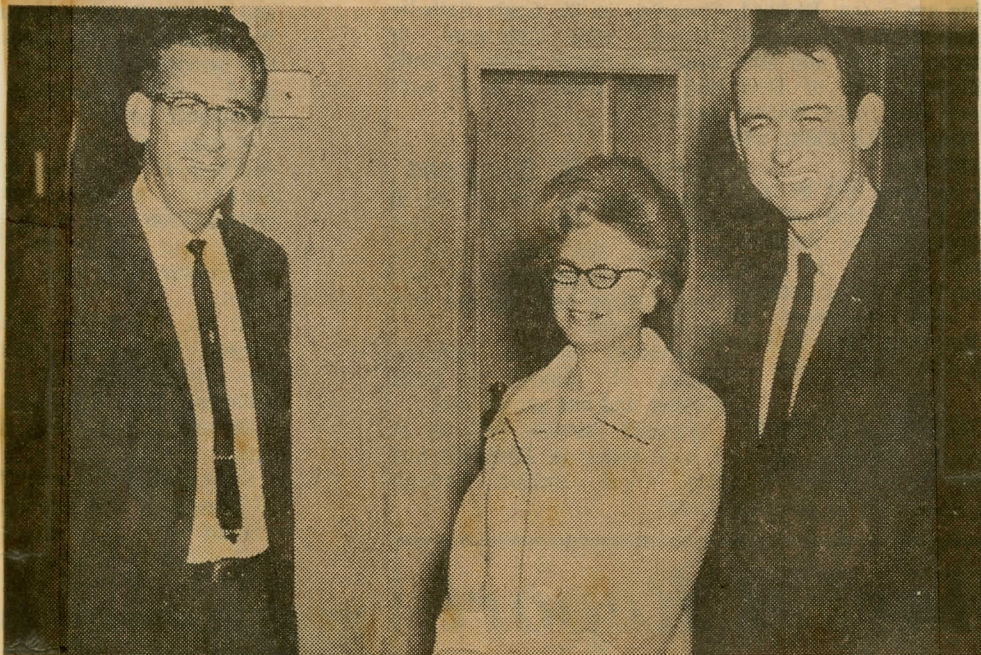
"Discipline and respect for others," said Councilman Fred Rhodes.

Mayor Dickinson said he felt the school administration, with its professional know-how, could come up with a suitable program.

Several Council members were critical of the school principal, Charles Overholser, for alleged failure to enforce discipline and indicated they felt he should be replaced.

Mrs. Judy McKinney, school librarian, offered a concrete program which a faculty committee has worked up. It calls for a special school for the "emotionally unfit," preferably close by the south district office where special counselors, consultants and remedial work teachers are headquartered. It urges secondly that Homestead Junior High become a pilot school for the "vocationally oriented" boys and girls who don't do well in the regular academic program.

## Receive Attention



MAYOR BILL DICKINSON (left) greets Mrs. Ethel Beckham and Holmes Braddock, school board members, council chambers

Tuesday night. They talked of solutions to problems at Homestead Junior High.

Photos by Vernon R. Hurley



# Today

By PAUL BROOKSHIRE 2/14/69

**CONFRONTATION** between Dade School Board members and the Homestead City Council last night over problems blamed on a "disciplinary breakdown" at Homestead Junior High, brought into focus two things:

1. There is a major problem at the school.
2. Something should be done about it as soon as possible.

**A HARD CORE** group of students, some of them repeatedly suspended (but never expelled), have been disruptive to education processes at the school.

Most, if not all, council members feel it results from a "lack of administration of discipline" at the school.

**ALTHOUGH** racial problems were minimized, the influx of 300 black students into the school this year apparently has resulted in some of the disorders.

Homestead Junior High now has a 31 per cent black enrollment and it is expected to climb even higher next year.

**COUNCIL** members, some of whom have children in the school, say there is an atmosphere of "fear" at the school.

They say the fear not only exists among the children but teachers as well.

There is some contention teachers are afraid of "reprisals" from school officials and others if they crack down on disorderly students.

**OUTSPOKEN** Councilman Fred Rhodes contended the school needs a strong disciplinarian and one whom the students respect. He says such is not the case with the present man on the job.

Another councilman, George Wright, called the school a "madhouse" and says he would never send his children to school there under current conditions.

**BOARD** and council members did agree on many things.

A small group of students is causing most of the trouble . . . and there is a need for some type of program for "incurable" pupils who disrupt the education of others.

The "best education possible" was the expressed goal of both sides.

**IT APPEARS** now with the school board, made more aware of acute problems at the school, will implement some steps to correct the situation.

At least that appeared to be the feeling as the confrontation came to an end.

## City Student Sent To Youth Hall

A 14-year-old boy was taken to Youth Hall Monday afternoon after he allegedly pulled a knife on another boy, 15, on the grounds of Homestead Junior High School.

Victim of the attempted assault was Ralph Forehand of 321 SW Fifth Ave., Florida City. He told Homestead police and school authorities that he put his hand on the other boy's shoulder and said "Hey," whereupon the boy turned around, pulled a knife on him and tried to cut him.

Both boys are white.

A school coach intervened and took both the youths to the school office.

## Bad Students Get Teachers

Three teachers are available for a special class at Homestead Junior High School to handle youngsters causing discipline problems in the regular classrooms, a parent-teacher meeting at the school was told Wednesday night.

The south district office has agreed to supply the three added teachers, but it's up to the school faculty and administration to work out a suitable program for the proposed class.

Also, there's the problem of finding a room at the school in which the class would meet.

Such a class has been urged by Homestead City Council as a solution to unruly behavior problems which have plagued the school all year. Only a tiny percentage of the student body—30 to 35—is causing most of the difficulty, and repeated suspensions of the offenders haven't solved the problem.

It's argued that instead of simply sending the youngsters home on suspension, they should receive special training and counseling in a separate classroom to help them adjust to the normal school routine.

The special class is envisioned as a temporary situation for suspended students, who would return to regular classrooms when able to adjust better.



# CPO Awaits Decision Of Education Board

2/27/69

Dade board's ruling student whose parents backed refusal to be shorn.

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## New Rebel Look?

SHAPE — AND COLOR — of things to come is this sample band uniform for South Dade High School being modeled by David Magee. Principal Howard Crabtree adjusts shoulder 'awnings' and breastplate — separate overlay that will convert the uniforms from marching to concert band type. Basic uniform is royal blue, with gray breastplate, royal blue sash, and gray

letters SD on back. Shako of white fur sports school colors via blue and gray tassels in front. White gloves, spats and shoulder awnings complete the smart new look. County School Board, which is underwriting cost of new uniforms for the 110-member band, will seek bids early next month.

Photo by Ed Oberlies

## Housing Subject Of Meeting

2/20/69

Better housing for migrants will be the topic for a meeting at 3 p.m. today at Redland Labor Camp.

The meeting is sponsored by Florida Christian Migrant Ministry and Migrant Legal Services, in an effort to mobilize greater concern over adequate housing for migratory workers and their families in this area.

Growers, clergymen, principals of several schools which have large numbers of migrant children enrolled, are among those invited.

George Eicher, chairman of Homestead Housing Authority, will present the revised plans for new federally-financed housing to be constructed at Redland and South Dade labor camps. The revisions will make it possible to accommodate more families than had previously been planned.

A tragic fire at an area labor camp in which three infants died when a cabin burned down has given impetus to the concern for improved migrant housing.

Costs for private building of new camps are prohibitively high, forcing growers to utilize existing housing, much of it old.



# CPO Awaits Decision Of Education Board

2/21/69

Early next month the Concerned Parents Organization will be notified whether the State Board of Education intends to hear CPO's Rebel symbols case or keep hands off.

Attorney Richard O. Mitchell, of the Tallahassee law firm of Mitchell and Mitchell, told CPO members at a meeting Thursday night that the decision will be forthcoming within a few weeks.

Mitchell is a partner in the firm of Mitchell and Mitchell, named as co-counsel with Homestead Attorney Ralph Jordan to represent CPO before the state board.

If CPO's request to present its case is turned down by the board, the attorneys will file suit in the Leon County Court.

The suit will charge that the State Board of Education, in refusing to consider CPO's case, is not giving the state a uniform set of rules and regulations, Mitchell explained.

CPO is contesting the Dade County Board of Education's rule banning the Confederate flag as a South Dade High School symbol and Dixie as the school fight song.

Mitchell and Jordan pointed out that elsewhere in Florida there is a Dixie High School and that several schools in other Florida counties use the song Dixie as their official school spirit-and-fight tunes.

The Dade board's ruling student whose parents backed applied only to South Dade High School, Jordan added. his refusal to be shorn.

CPO's executive board announced at the meeting that beginning in March, the organization will hold regular general meetings on the third Thursday of each month. Meetings, unless other notice is given, will be at 8 p.m. in the Homestead armory.

In his report to CPO, Attorney Mitchell indicated that the CPO request for a hearing is only the second time the state board of education has been asked to intervene in county board policy.

The other case, which arose about a week before the Rebel symbol question was first taken to the state level, concerned the expulsion from a Gainesville school of a long-haired boy

In the Gainesville case, the board decided not to intervene. That decision paved the way for the boy's parents to take the case to the District Court of Appeals — a legal action that is reportedly now underway.

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2/25/69

# Attorney Defends School Principal

Joe Marcus, a Homestead attorney, today accused the Concerned Parents Organization's Executive Committee of "indicting, trying and convicting" Homestead Junior High School principal Charles Overholser.

Marcus expressed his feelings in a letter to G. Holmes Braddock, chairman of the Dade County School Board.

The CPO was reported to have urged the ouster of Overholser at a meeting last week.

The junior high school has been embroiled in some controversy over the alleged breakdown of discipline at the

school.

Marcus' letter to Braddock read as follows:

"This letter is in response to a recent indictment, trial and conviction of Mr. Overholser, the principal of Homestead Junior High School by "The CPO". As you may recall it was the Dade County School Board that was instrumental in the organization of this body by suggesting that a bi-racial group be formed to resolve the recent South Dade High School dispute. Now that the School Board has recognized this "Group" they proceed at this point to solve all educational

(Continued on Page 3)

# Attorney Defends Principal

(Continued on Page 3)  
problems in South Dade.

I recently had occasion to visit with Mr. Overholser and his assistant principal, Mr. Robert D. Sulzberg. My visit was motivated by reports and rumors of abuses existing at Homestead Junior High. The sum and substance of my impression was that very serious problems do exist and the administrative staff as well as the faculty of Homestead Junior High are to be commended for their handling of an extremely complex situation. I was accompanied by the legal counsel of the "CPO" who expressed that he was equally impressed with the efforts of the Homestead Junior High faculty and staff.

The letter by Mr. Tom Dolar of the CPO does not in any opinion reflect the feeling of the majority of the true concerned parents of South Dade. Your

acquiescence to the demand of this non-legal entity will only clothe this group with the feeling of representative power that is non-existent. It is tragic that Mr. Overholser is maligned by a general statement of accusations without specifically attributing to him any definite indiscretions on his part justifying removal by the Dade County School Board. Whether judgment is proper or improper can only be evaluated after the exercise of that judgment. I have had 12 years of teaching and administrative experience with Florida State University and I would feel inadequate to handle the problems existing at Homestead Junior High. However, an inexperienced, incompetent, unqualified and uneducated minority takes upon itself the power to pass judgment as to the method in handling a highly complex social, economic, cultural and emotional problem. Have they

taken a course in Guidance 350, Sociology 411, or a self-study course in Bigotry 201?

I strongly urge the Dade County School Board to function as they were elected to do. Make decisions based on their judgment and evaluations and not that of a loud minority. If the School Board should adhere to the removal demand of the CPO the next step would be a demand by the CPO to select instructors, arrange the curriculum and determine the course content at Homestead

Junior High School.

Well I'll be darned!

This sounds like Berkeley, Columbia, San Francisco State, and Wisconsin University in reverse. The next thing you know the CPO might have a "Simulated Happening". They could receive considerable assistance from the University of Miami Philosophy Department. Now again we are confronted with another issue — Who wears the leotards? Oh well — Let's send it back to the executive committee of the CPO."



# Are Parents To Blame? 2/26/69

Editor, News Leader:

It is with concern I read in the News Leader that three school board members will meet with Homestead City Council to hear council complaints over discipline problems at Homestead Junior High School.

Mayor William Dickenson wants to discuss what the problems are and feel the school is being used as a breeding ground for problems while school officials feel it is a community problem.

Dickenson said he plans to propose that a special class be set up to rehabilitate the few students who appear to be causing most of the problems.

He says there are 1,500 pupils at the school and about 30 to 35 are problem kids. He also states that when problems erupt they generally involve one or more of these kids, and they are suspended for from 3 to 10 days, and when they come back the same thing happens all over.

The figures given indicate less than 2½ per cent are problem children which, in turn, indicates that the officials are on the ball and ready to nip the problem in the bud.

This problem is as old as the hills and is not just a problem of today.

This problem starts back in the home and I am not guessing, this starts with problem parents. Being a parent is a 24-hour-a-day and

a 7-day-a-week job. A job of don't and do's, a job of praise and love, a job of soap and water and understanding.

I can tell you with certainty, living up to the Jones is not the answer, but 10 per cent brains and 90 per cent sweat is the true answer.

Any damn fool can perform the biological function but it takes a real mom and dad to make a good citizen.

Again, I must say there are

good instructors, but it takes dedication and hard work to be a teacher, and to these words I would quote Goethe:

"A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows on rows of natural objects classified with name and form."

L. T. ANUNDSON  
Homestead, Fla.

SOUTH DADE (FLA.) NEWS LEADER 2/27/69

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## “ . . . . . We Have Best Jr. High In County . . . . . ”

Editor, The News Leader:

“Before I comment on some statements that have been printed in local papers recently I feel that I should explain that I came to work at Homestead Junior High School twelve years ago. I intended to remain for one year only before requesting a transfer to a school closer to my home. I have been driving 18 miles to work ever since because I came to love the students from this community. I have often told them that we have the best junior high school in Dade County and I have not yet seen anything to change my opinion.

“It is true that our school has problems; it has had problems ever since I have been here and long before that. It has also quadrupled in size; so have its problems. I am in the school at seven o'clock in the morning and usually leave at five or six and I know that the problems are nowhere near what some people in this community would have you believe that they are.

“It has been said that these are strictly school problems which have spilled over into the community. I would like to speak about some of these problems.

“It has been said that there is “fear” in our school — hate would be a better word. We do not teach racial hate. It comes to us from parents through their children. We are fortunate that those with blind hatred are few, but this is a community problem.

“Children have been condemned for walking in the streets and for walking on lawns where there are no sidewalks. This is a community problem. Children do not build sidewalks.

“It is often extremely difficult to get teachers to work in this area, and many leave after the first year. A great many of them have said it is because they are not made to feel welcome in the community. Cities all over the country regularly print and distribute attractive brochures to prospective teachers and the city officially makes new teachers welcome to the community. I have not in my twelve years here seen this community do either. This is a community problem.

“Some of our very best teachers have difficulty remaining in the school because they are Negro and cannot find suitable housing anywhere near the school. This is a community problem.

“Many teachers, parents and students say that when they read the

would enjoy taking him on a tour of the complete school any time he wishes to visit. If city officials speak officially without first-hand knowledge of the subject, this is a community problem.

“It has been said that teachers in the school are afraid to speak out because they fear retaliation by the administration. I challenge anyone to show evidence of any past act of retaliation or to show that there is any foundation for believing it could happen. In the meantime to bandy the word around without justification is a cheap propaganda device and nothing more. If city officials make accusations based on misinformation and do not try to determine the truth, this is a community problem.

“The school has repeatedly over the years sent out requests for help from people in the community. Three years ago a resource survey was run. One thousand forms went to the community; only three were returned. At the beginning of this year over 1500 newsletters were sent out containing two specific appeals for help; only one answer was received. When the people of a community show such apathy and yet jump at the chance to attack a school and its personnel, there is a community problem.

“To speak without information — to criticize without suggestions is the way of the coward. I would like to offer the following suggestions to the Mayor, the City Manager, the City Council and the citizens of this community.

1. First of all, visit your school. Get first hand information. I would be pleased to show you any part of the school or its program at any time.

2. Volunteer your services to help the children of your community. Don't wait for someone else to do it and don't wait to be asked. There is a job for almost everyone.

3. Start an active campaign (cooperate with the Dade County Board of Public Instruction) to persuade teachers to come to this community and then actively make them welcome.

4. Take steps to see to it that there is adequate housing available in the community for any teacher who needs it.

5. The next time you hear a report about the school, question the source, determine the facts. If you continue to hear unfounded stories from the same person, question the integrity and purpose of that person.



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"Some of our very best teachers have difficulty remaining in the school because they are Negro and cannot find suitable housing anywhere near the school. This is a community problem.

"Many teachers, parents and students say that when they read the papers and listen to people in the community they do not recognize their school. Gossip is rampant. Here are three versions of what happened after a recent bomb hoax at the school (1) "They found the bomb and arrested a student." (2) "The bomb went off in the auditorium and destroyed it." (3) "The bomb went off in the cafeteria and killed a cafeteria worker." All of this in the face of repeated appeals by school officials and PTA officials to determine the truth before speaking. This is a community problem.

"A member of the City Council is reported to have said that the school is a "mad house". I do not remember ever hearing

of the complete school any time he wishes to visit. If city officials speak officially without first-hand knowledge of the subject, this is a community problem.

"It has been said that teachers in the school are afraid to speak out because they fear retaliation by the administration. I challenge anyone to show evidence of any past act of retaliation or to show that there is any foundation for believing it could happen. In the meantime to bandy the word around without justification is a cheap propaganda device and nothing more. If city officials make accusations based on misinformation and do not try to determine the truth, this is a community problem.

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4. Take steps to see to it that there is adequate housing available in the community for any teacher who needs it.

5. The next time you hear a report about the school, question the source, determine the facts. If you continue to hear unfounded stories from the same person, question the integrity and purpose of that person.

6. Take immediate steps to have Homestead Junior High School become a Community school so that its facilities can be available to the children and adults in the afternoon and evening. Remember that it is your school and they are your children. Your teachers cannot do a good job if they are constantly under fire from some members of the community. Give them your support and help. If you find they cannot or will not do the job under those conditions then you have a right to be concerned.

We will wait patiently and hopefully for your response.



At Junior High

2/27/69

## Teachers Back School Principal

Fifty-five teachers and counselors at Homestead Junior High School — almost the entire faculty — lined up publicly today behind beleaguered Principal Charles L. Overholser, target of an ouster attempt by the Concerned Parents Organization and public criticism by the Homestead City Council.

In a signed statement supplied to news media, the teachers rallied to defend Overholser and his administration of the problem-racked junior high.

The statement said the 55 signers want to go on record as "opposed to any action or group which might remove him from our school."

The statement said it was issued "to clarify any misconceptions about the relationship that exists between

members of Homestead Junior High School faculty and its principal."

Members of the CPO and the Homestead council have been sharply critical of disciplinary policies at the school, and have openly charged that teachers there are afraid to speak out because they fear retaliation by the administration.

A letter from CPO, signed by its president, Tommy Dolar, was sent to county school authorities Monday, calling for Overholser's removal.

The principal has said he is at a loss for comment on the ouster request because the letter dealt in generalities and did not list specific allegations.

The faculty statement, with 55 signatures affixed, offers a five-point defense of Overholser's administration.

2/27/69

## School Board Gets Letters

Three strongly-worded letters concerning Homestead Junior High problems and a move to oust Principal Charles Overholser got no mention at the Dade County School Board meeting Wednesday.

Copies of the letters were made available to board members, however. One was from Concerned Parents Organization, one from Attorney Joe Marcus, and one from the school faculty.

G. Holmes Braddock, board chairman, said the ouster move "is not a thing that needs to be discussed at board level."

He said Dr. Edward Whigham, superintendent of schools, had already been handed the question at a board-administration conference, and that Whigham and his staff are investigating the situation.

2/27/69

## Student Boosts Junior High

Editor: The News Leader:

This is the first letter I have written to this paper and I feel that it is necessary. I am a 9th grader of Homestead Junior High School and I am PROUD of it. In view of the recent attacks against the principal of my school, Charles Overholser, I am writing this letter.

Mr. Overholser in my belief, is handling the problem at Homestead Junior High as well as can be expected. The people who are acting against him trying to remove him from his position should try to handle it if they could.

Most people that are against him have never met him. I have known Mr. Overholser for the three years that I have attended Homestead Junior and it has been a rewarding experience. He is like anyone else. He makes a few mistakes, but so does everyone else.

He has a sense of humor and is a fair man. He tries to be fair with everybody. He's even been criticized for that. They say it's bad that he sways his rules, but if he didn't, he couldn't be fair because some cases require special attention in order to be fair.

Another thing, everyone is criticizing Homestead Junior High for the racial problem. Has anyone thought it might not be the school's fault but the fault of the parents of the community? Think about that.

How many people reading this have ever been to our school to judge for themselves? How many go to see our exhibits or science fairs or even band concerts to see the GOOD things about our school? Just about the only publicity we get is about the bad things. Why?

Maybe people don't care about the good things. Come out and judge our school for yourself. Form your own you think.

opinion THEN let us know what  
A PROUD STUDENT



At Homestead School HERALD

2/28/69

# Principal Gets Teacher Backing

## Statement Answers Parents

By **BILL BLOSS**  
Homestead Bureau Chief

The Homestead Junior High School staff Thursday gave school Principal Charles Overholser a vote of confidence in a statement signed by 55 teachers.

The teachers said they were against any proposal to remove Overholser as the chief administrator. The statement was directed toward a letter mailed to school officials last Friday by Concerned Parents Organization President Tommy E. Dolar, calling for the principal's removal from the troubled school.

Only a handful of teachers failed to sign the statement designed to clear up "misconceptions about the relationship" between the faculty and Overholser.

The CPO letter caused many parents as well as the teachers to rally to the principal's support. Most of the supporters say they believe Overholser is doing a good job in the face of difficulties brought on by integration and rapid growth of the school.

School officials have declined to comment on the CPO letter, other than to acknowledge its receipt.

A meeting of junior high school parents has been called for tonight to discuss the ninth grade boundaries for next school season.

Mrs. Pat Harper, Homestead Junior High School PTA president said parents of Redland Junior High and Homestead Junior High are especially urged to attend.

The meeting will be at 8 p.m. in the Homestead Junior High Auditorium.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

3/4/69

# Stop, Look, LISTEN!

Editor, The News Leader:

I read Mr. Edward Cumbie's letter (Feb. 26, 1969) with much dismay and sadness. Though I have only been in this community a short time, I share with Mr. Cumbie the love for our children as well as the people in this county. And again, though I cannot identify clearly some of the crucial issues with our school and community, I can share with Mr. Cumbie the sickness that is rampant in our times. This is not a new and currently discovered disease in our nation but one which was very contagious and wide spread as long as 2000 years ago.

What I am thinking about and what Mr. Cumbie wrote is the problem of Communications—in particular, the skill of "hearing the other person" and the skill of "getting the facts". These skills are not developed by reading books or listening to someone lecture on this subject, but takes much practice and patience. Often times, it begins at the top level of the community yet in order for it to take roots, everyone needs to be aware of these skills and practice them daily.

All ready I have experienced the lack of the skill of "getting" the facts. Do we stop to bother to ask the source—getting it right from the horses mouth?

Do we bother to examine both sides and the source of our facts? Do we even bother to confront the person to get his or her side of the story and to understand this person?

I doubt it. For many of us this can be embarrassing or just too difficult to take the risk that we may be wrong. In the end, we kill each other and ultimately our community (and our children) only because of our apathy and lack of the facts on all sides of the issue. Sometimes the easiest solution is to get rid of the hurt without bothering to diagnose and cure the sickness.

As for hearing each other, I do not know what the answer may be except maybe "silence." We can become very noisy at times but do we really perceive what other people are saying or do we really even care? I would be all for a proclamation for a "Day of Silence" in which we may become acquainted with each other by name, appearance and

shaking of hands. I wonder then how we could listen to each other after we found out who we are.

I expect none of the above will resolve any of our immediate problems in S. Dade.

They are here and we will have to deal with them. And I'm sure before the answer is found, we will have to struggle long and hard together. But before the answer, any answer if you will, is found, we will have to learn to respect and support each other. This means our elected Mayor and City Officials, Our School Officials, Our Teachers, The Parents and most importantly, Our Students.

The bombs in Viet Nam are killing lives each day but we in South Dade can kill ever so much deeper if we cannot begin to support, praise and listen to each other.

Mr. Cumbie says he will wait patiently and hopefully for our response. I pray all of us of this great community will respond with hope, trust and patience to one another together.

The Rev. CHARLES D. CURRAN Jr.

## This Parent Concerned

Editor, News Leader:

I have heard it said that common sense is a rare commodity. After reading an item in the Feb. 25 News Leader, entitled, "Attorney Defends School Principal," I am convinced of it.

If the tirade is evidence of "higher education," 12 years of

teaching and administrative experience, perhaps the inexperience, incompetent, unqualified and uneducated minority could better use the 57 per cent of their tax dollars to buy lessons in courtesy and diplomacy for such uncouth individuals whose education is sadly lacking.

A sincere Concerned Parent for the past 12 years.

NAME WITHHELD

\* \* \*  
Editors Note: Readers are reminded to sign their name on all letters. Names will be withheld on request.



# Students Learn Despite Adult Furor

3/5/69

By Virginia Amendt

A poster in the auditorium lobby announces a drama festival to be presented Friday night.

Inside the auditorium, 300 boys and girls from several English classes sit, attentive and silent, watching a preview performance of one of the plays by drama students.

In a building across the street other students look over the nearly 300 exhibits making up the annual science and math fair. A number of the exhibits are highly sophisticated. Many represent weeks or months of painstaking research and hard work. It is the school's biggest such fair to date.

Elsewhere on the big campus, the chorus is rehearsing for an ambitious production of an historical narrative with music, which was written by an eighth grade class at the school. In history and geography classes, youngsters are working on exhibits for a social studies fair in April, first of its kind in any junior high school in the county.

These were some of the things going on one day last week at Homestead Junior High School — a school castigated in recent weeks as a "madhouse" where

there's so much student turmoil that the educational process has practically broken down.

Looking in on the science fair, an assistant principal remarked wryly to a visitor: "I wonder how the students managed to prepare and put this together in the midst of all the "turmoil" that's supposed to be going on over here!"

Homestead Junior High School has been much in the news in recent weeks. City officials have charged a breakdown of discipline within the school; the Concerned Parents Organization has called for removal of Principal Charles Overholser.

The administration is quick to admit that there have been problems, stemming from rapid growth and rapid integration. And that the problems are far from being solved.

But the school is hardly a madhouse of disorder, as charged by one city councilman recently, say school personnel. (A visit there tends to bear this out: the scene appears as generally peaceful and quiet as one would find at any other school.)

The school staff — and an increasing number of sympathetic parents — point to a number of positive things

Homestead Junior High has going for it, which have been overlooked in the recent spate of public criticism.

One is a rejuvenated Parent-Teacher Association, formed last year after lack of interest had led to its dissolution three years ago.

"We've had heavy attendance at all our meetings this year," said PTA President Mrs. Pat Harper. "The first meeting drew 397 people; there have been over 300 at each one since."

More parents are visiting the school, just to see what's going on, than ever before, said Mrs. Harper, and a much closer working relationship between parents and teachers has developed.

The PTA has taken over volunteer operation of the school clinic, freeing counselors to give more time to their heavy counseling loads.

"We do need more volunteers for this," said Mrs. Harper. "Anyone who'd like to serve can call Mrs. Arthur Warfield, 248-1843."

The PTA is currently mounting a campaign to enlist volunteers in many other areas where parent aid can be used. Anyone with a special interest or skill, or who simply enjoys

working with children, is invited to contact Assistant Principal Edward Cumbie at 247-4221.

An advisory committee on student discipline, made up of parents and teachers, has been organized this year. It provides a chance to swap ideas, come up with suggestions, look into complaints.

One suggestion, for example, was to spread out buses picking up students after classes. Previously all seven buses were lined up on the building's west side. More than two thirds of all students came out the west doors — the 40 per cent who ride the bus home and the 30 per cent who are Negro and who walk home from that direction.

With so many students pouring out together, there was greater chance for pushing and shoving incidents to erupt into fistcuffs — which happened on many occasions. The suggestion of the discipline committee has been adopted and three of the buses now wait on the school's east side.

The south district office has just assigned three more personnel to Homestead Junior High's staff for a special program to handle disruptive students who, as the educators put it, "don't adjust to the

regular classroom situation."

This is an apparent response to urging from the Homestead City Council for some such program for students on suspension, rather than just sending them home.

The program's content, worked up from ideas of administrators and concerned faculty members, hasn't got formal approval yet but is expected to and should be functioning soon, says Principal Overholser.

Assistant Principal Cumbie calls attention to other, broader programs in self-instruction and independent study which are providing improved education opportunities for youngsters at Homestead Junior High.

New this year is a self-instruction program in the

science department, for boys and girls who have fallen behind academically. Working with check sheets, each student studies vocabulary cards, sees film strips, does assigned reading in simply-written texts, makes posters and the like. When he's finished the 23 requirements on the check sheet, he proceeds to a higher level.

"The kids like it," says Cumbie. "There's some fooling around, but mostly we've seen good progress. At the beginning of the year the kids learned how to run the audio-visual equipment themselves. It's interesting; since then total damage to the equipment has been only two looped film strips being dropped and popping open."



## Commends Teachers' Action

3/4/69

# CTA Calls Jr. High Fuss A 'Witch Hunt'

The Dade Classroom Teachers Association (CTA) said Monday actions of the Homestead City Council and Concerned Parents Organization in regard to Homestead Junior High School "smack of a witch hunt."

"The action of the CPO and some members of the city council in attempting to remove Mr. (Charles) Overholser as principal at this time is typical of pressure groups who attempt to run the public school system from the outside," Don Pierce, director of personnel services of the CTA said.

Pierce issued a statement after a meeting of CTA members of Homestead Junior High Monday.

"The CTA commends the

members and the faculty of the school for the open support of their principal . . ." Pierce said.

In addition, Pierce told The News Leader:

"The actions of the City Council and CPO are not only irresponsible but smack of a witch hunt which one would expect to find in a dictatorship not in a democracy.

"We call upon Mayor William Dickinson to refute the statements of some members of the City Council. . . unless he wishes to go on record as favoring their action.

"As far as Mr. Dolar (president of the CPO) is concerned, he should present his concerns as a private citizen to the proper authorities and

with some facts rather than opinion.

"I reject the statement that the teachers are afraid to speak up. To the contrary I find the faculty to be solidly united in their quest to better conditions at the school. The CTA is especially concerned about groups and publicity seekers who use the news media at the expense of interfering with the education process without regard to possible outcomes."

Finally, Pierce said the CTA "wishes to make it clear that the CTA is working closely with a school committee to present to the proper school board officials some recommendations which we feel will provide some solutions rather than the drivel that has been espoused by some of the officials and citizens of the community."



# CTA Official, <sup>3/5/69</sup> Mayor To Debate

A challenge to debate Homestead Mayor William Dickinson next Monday night was accepted this morning by

Dade Classroom Teachers Association official Don Pierce.

Pierce told The News Leader he hadn't yet received Dickinson's wire, which the mayor said would be sent today, but promised "I'll be there."

Mayor Dickinson's challenge to a public debate with Pierce came after the CTA official charged actions by Homestead City Council and the Concerned Parents Organization regarding problems at Homestead Junior High School "smack of a witch hunt."

Pierce made the charge in a statement to the press Tuesday.

"It is somewhat amazing that today we have reached intellectual degeneration to the point that if we espouse concern for the safety of our children we are called witch hunters," retorted Mayor Dickinson this morning.

"While I can appreciate the motivation of Mr. Don Pierce for protection of his pay check," the mayor added, "I will not call upon (him) to refute the instruction of his superiors. But I will call upon Mr. Pierce to publicly discuss his statements with me at a public meeting to be held at Tom J. Harris Field in Homestead Monday, March 10, 1969, at 8 p.m."

He added that he would interpret Pierce's lack of attendance as a "public admission" that statements made by Pierce in Tuesday's News Leader were "false, politically motivated and without foundation."

Pierce's press statement Tuesday attacked "the action of the CPO and some members of the City Council" in urging removal of Charles Overholser as principal of Homestead Junior High as "typical of pressure groups who attempt to run the public school system from the outside."

The City Council recently asked the Dade School Board to investigate conditions at the school, after receiving numerous complaints of student fist fights, threats and other unruly pupil behavior. The Council alleged a breakdown of discipline within the school which they said was affecting pupil safety and threatening to become a community problem.



# Don't Blame Principal <sup>3/5/69</sup>

Editor: The News Leader:

I am a student at Homestead Junior High School. I am a ninth grader, and I feel that our principal, Mr. C. L. Overholser, has been doing and will continue to do as good a job as possible.

I feel I am speaking for most of the students at H. J. H. S. when I say that no matter what color a principal is, or what color a student is, the problems will not change at our school.

That is, they will not change until the children, parents of the children, and everyone involved changes their attitudes.

The prejudices of the kids are not brought on by themselves; they are brought on by the parents and also by the way the kids are brought up.

The problems are not caused

by Mr. Overholser. They are caused by not only the students of H. J. H. S., but also by the cheap talk that is going around.

I know that some kids talk because they don't have anything better to do.

If the community could get together and produce some things of enjoyment for the kids to do, maybe some of the problems at our school and other schools would come to a halt!

Some kids just start trouble for some kind of enjoyment. This doesn't make sense! All of this is brought back to Mr. Overholser and blamed on him.

Stop and think about it, and then write your answers to The News Leader. I would like to have some replies; not only

from the students of H. J. H. S., but from parents and students from other schools also.

A Concerned 9th Grader



## Mr. Cumbie Is Praised

Editor, News Leader:

Edward Cumbie, Assistant Principal of Homestead Junior High School is to be congratulated on his courageous and thoughtful letter which appeared in The News Leader.

He accomplishes many things beyond the call of school duties, one of which we at the Florida Pioneer Museum appreciate: the time and effort spent in taping reminiscences of Pioneers and "Old Timers" of Homestead, and presenting the recordings to the community (the museum) for posterity.

Mr. Cumbie and the folks at Homestead Junior High care.

LOUISE O. HAMILTON

## World Needs More People Like Charles Overholser

Editor, News Leader:

I would back up Mr. Charles Overholser any day. I am a 9th grade student at Homestead Junior. I have not lived down here long, but when I started going to HJHS I found that Mr. Overholser was a very great man. He has great integrity and is dealing with the racial situation in our school without prejudice.

If any other person were in his place, with some of the situations he has dealt with, they would have retired! He is very kind and a very, very likeable person.

The world would be a better place to live if more people were like Mr. Overholser.

I hope that the conscience of every member of the CPO and the Homestead council will hurt them enough so that they will let some common sense into their heads.

I, too, wish that the good things were printed about Homestead instead of the bad things.

Now, I would like to thank YOU Mr. Overholser for being the fine person you are.

A Grateful Student.

DEBRAH GARDNER



# Leader of CTA, Mayor to Clash

By **BILL BLOSS**  
Homestead Bureau Chief

Homestead Mayor Bill Dickinson said Friday he is seeking an impartial moderator for the debate between himself and Don Pierce, Classroom Teachers Association Director of Personnel Services.

Pierce said he will appear at the 8 p.m. meeting Mon-

day at Harris Field, in Homestead, but insisted that a moderator be appointed. He requested Dickinson to choose a person who will be impartial.

**THE MAYOR** said late Friday that he hasn't selected a moderator, but he will submit the name to Pierce for his approval, when the choice is made.

Dickinson challenged Pierce to debate a statement issued by the CTA officer, which said Homestead councilmen and the Concerned Parents Organization are engaged in a "witch hunt" at troubled Homestead Junior High School.

Pierce's statements "are totally without knowledge," Dickinson says. He accused Pierce of being politically motivated and said the debaters "should let the people know our motive — whether our interest is in the child or in an organization."

**HOMESTEAD** officials questioned the discipline at the school, in light of continuing disturbances and pupil unrest. The city council and a school board committee met last month to discuss problems at the school and to seek ways to end the discord. No specific recommendations were made.

Several days after the meeting, CPO President Tommy Dolar submitted a letter to school officials calling for the removal of Charles Overholser as principal of the school. Without making specific charges, Dolar said Overholser was not qualified to administer the local school.

Teachers and parents rallied to Overholser's support following publication of the CPO letter. Some members of the CPO said they weren't informed that a meeting had been set to discuss the ouster demand. Other parents voiced approval of Overholser's efforts and said the CPO did not speak for them.

Dickinson said he will bring certified excerpts from the record of the meeting with the school board committee, to the debate. These, he said, will show that Pierce was speaking without knowledge of the council's actions in calling their efforts a witch hunt.



