



## Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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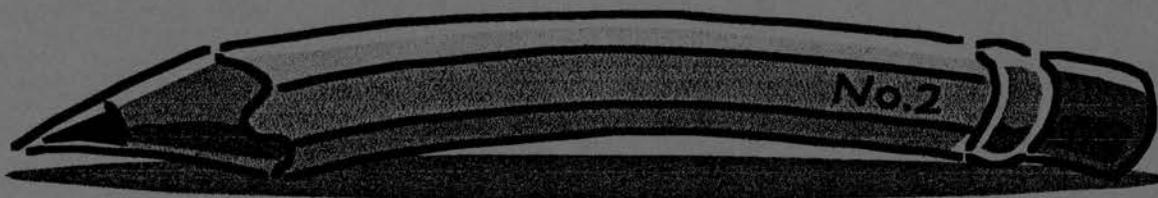
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**Here is information about Community Circle Conversations scheduled throughout Minneapolis. You are invited to choose a site that is convenient to where you live.**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Dates and Time</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
<b>Barton School</b> 43rd & Colfax Av. S.	5 Wednesdays October 21 & 28, November 4, 11, & 18 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Cindy Smedberg Barton Comm. Ed. 4327 Colfax Av. S. Mpls. MN 55409 <b>627-2378</b>
<b>Bryant Square Park</b> 31st & Bryant Av. S.	5 Thursdays October 22 & 29, November 5, 12, & 19 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Joann Nelson Jefferson C. Educ. 1200 W. 26th St. Mpls. MN 55405 <b>627-3202</b>
<b>East Lake Library</b> 28th & E. Lake St.	5 Thursdays October 22 & 29, November 5, 12, & 19 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Scott Bol Seward Comm.Ed. 2309 28th Av. S. Mpls. MN 55406 <b>627-7229</b>
<b>Pratt Center</b> 66 Malcolm Av SE	5 Thursdays October 22 & 29, November 5, 12, & 19 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Brenda Eccleston Pratt Center 66 Malcolm Av. SE Mpls. MN 55414 <b>627-2279</b>
<b>North Star School</b> 24th & Girard Av. N.	5 SATURDAYS NOVEMBER 7, 14 & 21 DECEMBER 5 & 15 10:00 - 12:00 NOON	Sandy McDonald North Star C. Educ. 2410 Girard Av. N. Mpls. MN 55411 <b>627-2971</b>

# Help Make A Difference In Minneapolis

You are invited to lend your voice to historic talks that are being held throughout the Twin Cities. The topic is education, housing and segregation and how these factors impact all of us. Participants agree to attend 5 two-hour conversations in a Community Circle. Community Circle Conversations promote learning and understanding from many points of view and respect for differing opinions. Participants will be part of a metro wide dialogue culminating in the opportunity to share insights with other groups. This project will be used to inform local and state public policy. Minneapolis School Board members and other elected officials have been invited to attend. Community Conversation Circles will start in mid-October at various times and sites throughout Minneapolis. See the back of this flyer details.



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## Registration Form - Community Conversation Circles

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Check Site (See back of flyer for details.)  Barton School  Bryant Square Park

East Lake Library  Northstar School  Pratt Community Center

To register for a Community Conversation Circle, fill out this form and mail it to the contact person listed for the site indicated (see the back of this sheet). **For more information call the site contact person at the site you are interested in attending or Scott Bol at 627-7229 for general information.**

Name	Org	Fax #	Voice #
Rita Hellegren	FACES	627-2730	627-7192 330-1505
Amy Rodquist	EHEP		827-9273
THOMAS ROSS	MU1	823-0720	
Janine FREN	FACES	627-7152/2242	
Barbara Blackstone	Off Disap Res.	297- <del>2200</del> 297-4635 →	
Brenda Eubank	FACES	627-2281	627-2279
DICK LITTLE	EHEP	330-1364 (AUGSBURG FAX)	330-1505
Scott Bol	FACES	627- <del>2242</del> 22420	62772:

NRP FX  
673 - 5138

AMY - KEEP  
THOSE  
2 SHIFTS  
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should be  
the person to  
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Barton School  
re = questions  
about this project

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BARTON  
**Circle Project**

	Name	Phone / E-Mail / Address
x	Jan Frankman	x Jim Deye
	(612) 935-5158 franko4@te.umn.edu	
	Co-Facilitators	

x Keiko Vlasey

Recorder (1st) 10/21

5th 11/18 ✓  
 4th 11/11 ✓  
 3rd 11/4 ✓  
 2nd 10/28 ✓

Circle Participants

- x Jo Haberman 619 E. 32nd St #5 Mpls 55407 W: 341-1616 H: 822-8870
- x Juliana James 4920 Upton Ave So Mpls 55410 W-627-2540 H-928-4967
- x Jan Korman 328 Kellogg Blvd W St Paul 55102 W 290-6227 H 776-1496
- x Heather Vek 822-3701 / theveks@mn.uswest.net 4632 Colfax Ave S
- x Audrey Kingstrom 3529 W. 54th St.
- x Pam Jewson 4116 Vincent Ave So Mpls 55410 929-8395
- x Julie Naylor 4207 Vincent Ave S 55410 922-5347
- x Jeremy Nichols 2436 Sheridan Ave S 55405 374-4880
- x Evelyn Turner 2436 Sheridan Av. S 55405 374-4880
- x Connie Scott Audubon Elementary School 4030 Chouen Ave SE 55410 627-2356
- x Amy Rodquist 705 S. 9th St Apt #302B 55404 343-7046
- x Thomas Ross 407 E 38th Mpls mn 55409 827-9873
- x Amy Muehlen 129 W. 50th SE. Mpls, MN 55419 823-5984
- x 10/28 Pamela Jay 4740 Harriet Ave So 55409 823-8372
- x 10/28 Cinnice Johnson Audubon 4030 Chouen ave 627-2356
- x 10/28 Mary Harvik Audubon 4720 Beard Av. So 922-0363
- (1st mtg-11/4) Neil Clark 597 Grass Lake Ter. 869-5614

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# Additional Participants/Recorders Minneapolis Community Circle Conversations

## Bryant Square Park Participants / Attendance Agreement

Bill Hammon 929-4147

Facilitator

5200 Wilson Road Ste. 107  
Edina, MN 55424  
NAME PHONE

Jefferson Center-926-3292  
Amy Gassetter / Keiko Veasey &  
Recorder

Doug Nethercutt

Commitment to attend all sessions:

10/22 10/29 11/5 11/12 11/19  
(yes) (no) (specific date exceptions)

Early 60's Ross Taylor 377-3440  
2677 E Lake Hwy Isles PKwy  
Mpls, MN 55408

European  
American  
Male

Mid 30's Tony Looking FIK 822-7896  
3408 Portland Ave So 55407

Native  
American  
Male

**Community Conversation Circle - Newly Recruited Participants-10/21/98**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Other Information</b>
Irma Kafalgjazal 5215 Main St. East P.O. 433 Maple Plain, MN 55359 479-2511	East Lake	Cannot come to Oct. 29 session.
Peter Koelz 5833 11th Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55417 861-1867	Barton	Cannot come the first night (10/21/98)
Connie Scott Audubon School 4030 Chowen Ave S. Minneapolis, MN 55410	Barton	
Scott Skordahl 5917 14th Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55417 869-8464	Barton	

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**Names Not on List Previously Faxed**

Talley Sjoberg 251 Appleby Hall 128 Pleasant St SE Minneapolis, MN 55455 626-7292	Pratt	Needs Directions
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**JEFFERSON CENTER**  
FOR NEW DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES  
FOUNDED 1974

612-926-3292 • Fax 612-926-3199  
3100 West Lake Street • Suite 405 • Minneapolis, MN 55416

e-mail: [jcenter@usinternet.com](mailto:jcenter@usinternet.com) • <http://www.usinternet.com/users/jcenter>

February 1, 1999

Mr. Dick Little  
Education and Housing Equity Project  
2211 Riverside Avenue  
CB 185  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 5454

Dear Dick:

Enclosed are our reports summarizing the discussions at Barton Open School and Bryant Square Park. We determined that the final sessions at both places provided a solid overview of the group's conclusions and key thoughts. Consequently, in this envelope the first piece for each site is a report on the final evening session, which serves as a summary report for the site.

If you have any questions about these reports, please give me a call.

Good luck in the next round!

Sincerely yours,

Doug Nethercut  
Executive Director

Community Circles

Final Session: Making a Difference What is the Community's Responsibility?

Clara Barton Open School

Wednesday November 18, 1998

Recorder: Amy Gagstetter

***The following is the summary from the Community Circles group that met for several weeks, at the Clara Barton Open School, to examine the challenges surrounding the issues of education, housing, and segregation in the Twin Cities Metro area. The following notes are a summation of the groups' discussions that took place over the weeks.***

The moderator asked this question before the participants started in on the study guide.

***What is the Problem that you are coming up with solutions for?***

- The need to talk about what basic the Human Rights are.
- The problems of race, class, economics, distribution of wealth, and that these factors are creating communities that are falling apart.
- The ranking of diversity, relying on the "supremacist world view" and that diversity is often punished.
- Inclusion in the same America that White America is enjoying- make that way of life available for all.
- The need for our country to look domestically first, before looking Internationally
- How do we achieve inclusion?
- \* - The issue is inclusion, trying to understand and appreciate differences, but also to see what we have in common.
- Segregation in Education, Housing
- Economic Disparity in education is the key problem.
- Lack of shared power.
- Concentrated poverty.
- The ability to learn tolerance and to deal with issues.
- Have to stop thinking in an Us v. Them way.
- \* - The basic problem is in Human Nature – the fear of something different.
- The Political Machine that exists today.
- Education – the need for students to be interested in it and stay interested.
- Problem is in Money – who gets it and who doesn't – distribution is unequal.
- Unequal access to education

***Question 1: What were some of the main areas of agreement in your discussions over the last few weeks?***

- not all were in agreement to all of the following points, but every participant was allowed to express their viewpoints and the following is from the discussion that the question generated.

Notes  
From  
Clara Barton  
SESSIONS  
1, 2, 4, + 5

\* No one from the Jefferson  
Center was at #3

- Early childhood education is important
- Race and class are linked, but are also very separate issues and need to be dealt with not only together but individually as well.
- There is a problem with people accepting diversity
- Institutional racism is happening and must be dealt with
- Education was a strong value expressed by the group as a whole and seen as a way out of poverty
- Need to deal with the issue of Deconcentration of Poverty.
- There is a disparity of affordable housing
- The issue of tearing down affordable housing to put up more expensive housing is causing a displacement of the poor and needs to be addressed
- There is a value of the ideas being talked about but what can and what are individuals willing to do personally?
- It is nice to sit and talk about all of these issues, but who is going to take action and when?
- White guilt is not doing anyone any good
- There seems to be a romantic vision of what this country once was, things may not be close to perfect now but they are better than they once were.
- Things are getting better today, if not for the simple fact that discussions like this are taking place.
- Things are hopeful and there are many opportunities to make improvements on the current situations.

***Question 2: Think back to sessions two, three, and four. What seemed to be the key ingredients of the solutions you chose? What were the roles of the schools? Of the communities? Were there any themes in the solutions chosen by other members of the study circle?***

- The group and the moderator felt that this was a difficult question to answer, the following is what was generated from this question.
  - Money to schools
  - There are many equity issues that need to be looked at
  - Integration is important
  - Money is a key ingredient in the solution but the problems will not be fixed by money alone

***Question 3: What is the responsibility of the community – the public, government, schools, teachers, businesses, families, neighborhoods, etc – for addressing these problems?***

- the group did not have enough time to go into to each of these questions in depth, they went away from the study guide for part of the discussion, the following is what was generated from the discussion concerning this question
  - Integration alone does not get at some of the underlying issues and does not solve all the problems.

- Dialogue is a crucial element for solving many of these issues
- We are in an adjustment period right now trying to figure out what to do
- Citizens have to take responsibility
- These issues and problems are not a burden on one individual or group to solve alone
- Things must happen as a collective of all sorts of people and groups
- Need to start addressing the problems of today and learn how to move forward (some disagreement on this point)
- There are no opportunities in the past, need to look at the present and into the future

***Question 4: In what ways should we utilize institutions in our communities to make progress on the issue of racial segregation?***

- The group did not have enough time to go into to each of these questions in depth, they went away from the study guide for part of the discussion, the following is what was generated from the discussion concerning this question.

- \* - Free and subsidized childcare is an important solution for some of the needs that exist in these problems
- Money needs to be allocated to these groups through policy
- \* - The need to get a majority of the lawmakers and others to agree that taking care of children should be a major priority, it serves as a way to address some of the problems that exist today.
- Communication is key
- How do we empower groups whose voice is not being heard loud and clear?
- How can power be shared?
- There needs to be a discussion on power and how that plays out in these problems
- **All Sides Have To Take Responsibility and work for positive change.**

TOP 4

***The group decided on their top action priorities to issue for the report.***

- **Early Childhood Education and taking care of children is very important, and must be a top priority of all.**
- **There is a strong need to invite the stakeholders in the community to participate in discussions.**
- **There is a strong need to continue to have conversations on all of these topics. Dialogue must continue if things are to change and improve.**
- **Legislative efforts are very important in addressing the needs that exist as well as to come up with viable solutions.**

Community Circles  
First Session: Getting Started  
Clara Barton Open School  
October 21, 1998  
Facilitator: Jan Frankman  
Recorder: Keiko Veasey

Most of the meeting was introductions and sharing backgrounds. Even though the group lacked racial diversity, the group was very diverse in backgrounds and thinking.

After initial introductions, the group established ground rules. Then, Thomas talked about taping the circle. The circle discussed taping, and decided to come to a conclusion at the beginning of the next meeting. It was decided to allow "new recruits" into the second meeting, but not after that. It was noted that providing childcare and transportation might help increase economic and racial diversity at future circles.

The group read through the expectations on page three of the discussion guide.

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The group consisted of several parents, a few teachers, a few community activists, a college student, a principal, and others.

The following are aspects of various experiences and feelings of the circle participants:

- When I first experienced busing as an adolescent, I realized that there were non-cookie cutter people out there and I loved it. It broadened my life and I loved it...
- I went to school with blacks before segregation, but there was a degree of economic parity between the races (due to the fact that the majority of school-kids were children of military personnel).
- "If you don't have the perspective that there is a different perspective, you're going to be lost."
- "School is a very important part of the community."
- There was diversity in my school, but not racial diversity.
- I grew up in a diverse neighborhood and went to a diverse school, but it seemed like the honors classes had all the white kids and the shop classes were filled with minorities. There appeared to be systematic classism and racism.

- When I went to a suburban Minneapolis school, it seemed like it was the black kids who were always the ones in trouble. Therefore, when I did bad things, I thought it was because I was black.
- "Public school was a good education in what poverty does to people."
- There was racial diversity in the school I attended, but not economic diversity.
- I went to night school. All the students in my night school class were black.
- Blacks have told me, "I don't want to be an Oreo ('black on the outside & white on the inside')." We don't want to be like white people. That may be what's behind some of the segregation in school classes and lack of diversity in upper level classes.
- "If we let ourselves talk about diversity solely in terms of race, we're not doing something right."
- After growing up in a small town and going to a small college, I began embracing diversity because I was hungry for it.
- I want to make parents— across economic barriers — realize the importance of education. I want people to want to learn, regardless of their race or economic situation.
- I had extremely low self-esteem growing up because I was poor. "You just don't have what you see other kids have. And it's hard to feel comfortable with that. Regardless of race. And no matter what you achieve, you never quite feel comfortable with it."
- "It all goes back to economics"
- I felt like I was in a different caste system (because of economic difference, not race) when I was in school.
- I was scared when I first put my kids into public school, but we made a commitment to public schools and to be involved as a parent.
- All through my life, I feel as though I've been discriminated against based on gender and class. (Even though I'm white).

Community Circles  
Second Session: What are the Reasons for Segregation in the Twin Cities?  
Clara Barton Open School  
October 28, 1998  
Facilitator: Jan Frankman  
Recorder: Lynette Utez

**QUESTION:** What do you feel are the strengths of the region? What do you feel are the most important challenges?

### **Strengths**

1. Everyone is willing to work for good education for kids
2. People want to make our city livable.
3. Cultural diversity i.e. the many artist opportunities
4. Relatively affluent area
5. Strong economy
6. Opportunities in the cultural arts
7. Economic wealth
8. Education
9. Powerful community organizations in neighborhoods
10. Over – educated state
11. Willingness of people to help

### **Challenges**

1. Bureaucracy with classes
2. People denying issues that make us feel uncomfortable
3. Not enough cultural diversity
4. We hide the poverty
5. We don't know how to explore or accept other cultures
6. So little systems analysis on poverty i.e. the poor are lazy
7. The disparities in the allotment of money per school
8. Blinders people have to the city and the poor
9. Getting all cultures what they need
10. The sprawl: the middle class leaving the city
11. Lack of affordable housing at a crisis level, lack of livable wage
12. Change the will of individuals who work against the education of non-whites
13. Empower people who struggle to get out of current poverty
14. Tap into people who want to help but just don't know how to help
15. Do we really value education/kids? Schools held hostage until May to know the funding from the legislature
16. We need to deal with race/poverty

**Following are comments made by participants in regards to the likely causes of segregation:**

1. Urban sprawl, the desire to have more, drives people away. To stay in the city you get less of the "American Dream" because of having less land.
2. Fear of the unknown. Fear of people who are different. Community connection is so important.
3. Deeply ingrained racism in neighborhoods
- \* 4. There is a tendency to blame the schools. But the "white flight" is really about race.
5. Raising taxes in the city does not help us to want to stay in the city and attend public schools.
6. People move out when the kids reach middle school age- Fear.
7. The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" makes you think differently about where you live with you children.
8. People need to have the opportunity to own their homes to create a tighter community.
9. People need to earn a living wage in order to afford their own homes.
10. Institutional racism, I need a fair chance to earn a living and have a home.
11. Community members must accept and take care of its members. Nobody (legislature, regional planning groups) will do this for us.
12. We don't have a consistent education system. Each school can look and be very different in quality.
13. We need to ask the legislature what can we do to get the money (for our schools). Get past the political games that get played. The legislature funding the more affluent schools rather than the most needy for fear of losing the middle to upper class from the city.
14. NAACP lawsuit wants boundaries redrawn – it is not necessarily against community schools.
15. The troubles of the middle schools is multi-faceted. There are institutional roadblocks in many forms. It is not just an attendance problem.
16. The reporting of school test scores should not be separated out by race. This makes the kids feel different. However, we acknowledge this is a way to find out the problems to better solve them.
17. The link of economic level to race is affecting how you attain education.
18. America owes the African-American economic reparations for the past. (Contrary to this point) it was noted that African – American individuals do not want handouts as this would not change the social implications that still linger.
19. Disempowerment is the issue. Things are stacked in our society.
20. Years of racial roadblocks linger today.
21. The best place to start to help is in education
22. The roadblocks that being single are also insurmountable. Almost impossible to own a home because of taxes.

23. Early childhood education is important as kids come from homes where parents don't value education.
24. We must look at the historical implications of slavery as they pertain to today's world and the economic implications.
25. We must focus on how to instill in a community the motivation to learn.
26. Prenatal help is needed; Working parents need to feel secure that their kids are in quality daycare.
- \* 27. Reparations need to come in the form of excellent education. Schools need to stop doing too much and concentrate on K-7 and after school care. The reason kids do well is the combination of parents and schools.
28. We must look also at *what* is being taught.

## Community Circles

Fourth Session: What Should we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?

Clara Barton Open School

November 11, 1998

Facilitator: Jan Frankman

Recorder: Keiko Veasy

### **What is the reality?**

Minneapolis Schools were desegregated many years ago.

Due to population changes, there is now an increase in busing to ensure integration and allow student.

Should we continue to bus? Went back to community schools.

There are still some magnet school, some choice, but less than before.

Now they are thinking about changing to K-5 and K-8 schools.

Community schools – some schools have too many kids, some have too few kids.

Even with Community Schools in Minneapolis, less than 50% of kids in kindergarten come from the community!

So much “political stuff” affects schools.

### **Discussion of Options**

#### Option #1: Create districts that combine community and magnet schools.

- Doesn't address segregation. Emphasizes education, regardless of race.
- Busing doesn't make sense.
- Unless gerrymander “community” – you're going to end up with 100% black in some schools and 100% white in other schools, due to population distribution.
- “I don't believe in magnet schools.”
- This sounds like the current policy – stem “middle class flight” to a degree. Doesn't address segregation.
- We'll end up with buildings with no kids and kids without enough space!
- It will all depend on where they put the magnet schools and will therefore affect busing.
- “*Integration* is different than *desegregation*.” Desegregation has not produced integration.
- “Is it better to bus and have diversity OR to have community schools that may not have diversity and have parental involvement??”
- Rather than address the above question, we should address the housing situation and population distribution with the city.
- One individual feels that the Minneapolis School District doesn't really want parental involvement.
- This option doesn't address at-risk students.

#### Option #2: A metro-wide school district should be created.

- There is a possibility of a HUGE district.
- “The bigger things are, the harder they are to manage. But it would provide wider choices.”
- Who decides who goes where?
- Do schools who ‘receive’ a lot of students have to ship their students out?
- Would have to provide transportation to any school – but it still places limits on choice because who would put their kids on a bus for an hour or more?
- This wouldn’t really work because would force long bus rides.
- Would be very expensive just to pay for the transportation. It’s better to spend/allocate resources to education rather than busing.
- Would be better to have several districts rather than one HUGE district.
- It’s a creative view – breaks down lines – takes pressure off Minneapolis School District. Rather than having School District make decision, the parents make decision. It opens up the options.
- “It’s just shifting chairs on the deck on the Titanic.” Rather we need to focus on achievement, not busing; focus on at-risk students instead. Should focus not on who goes where, but on who *learns* what!
- If you correct for poverty, most schools are about even, in terms of achievement...but what about those who do not arrive adequately prepared?

Option #3: Support efforts to build more charter schools.

- This requires a lot of parent and educator involvement.
- Can be self-perpetuating, not necessarily multi-cultural education.
- Aren’t charter schools just for “kids with difficulties?”
- A charter school gets to break some of the rules – so, it’s like a private public school. It would be a self-selecting private school, subsidized by taxpayers.

Option #4: Create a variety of school choice options for students and a system of incentives for educators.

- “I would agree with this if private schools had to take and keep all of its students too.”
- This would require lots of “learning” by the parents. Parents shouldn’t have to learn how to work the system in order for their kids to succeed.
- Competition and choice are good, but **do not** bring in a for-profit organization to manage the schools. “The schools should not be turned into money-making institutions rather than educational institutions.”
- Object to the “factory-style” of education. All kids deserve an **equal** education, not necessarily the **same** education though. A factory or “one right formula” attitude negates the individuality of students, administrators, and educators.
- Need choice not only between schools, but within schools too. (E.g. being able to select which teacher your child has.)
- “A private school system, even with vouchers, isn’t open to all.

Option #5: Create regional or statewide strategies for education equity and adequacy.

- “That’s the only way to make the community school idea work!”
- This would address the issues contained within the NAACP lawsuit.
- But, do you tell districts that they can’t provide local funding on top of state/federal funding? What about districts that have a population that are willing to spend more on their students?
- An approach – vary the voucher amount based on where the student lives. This would create an incentive to “take” challenging students (since more money is allocated to the student who lives in an at-risk neighborhood, schools would actually recruit varying students for the increased money.)

Option #6: Create specific schools, as opposed to integration, to increase the educational opportunities for students of color.

- This wouldn’t allow for cultures to learn about other cultures, or about each other.
- This *increases* separation and perpetuates fear of blacks (fear of those different from you).
- This *increases* isolation.
- But, it also increases one’s self-respect and appreciation of one’s own culture and history.
- Preserves and celebrates different cultures.
- Now, we all try to be the same – “American” – but being different is hard and I don’t know if, as a society, we can get over the fear of being different. This options points out and emphasizes the differences.”
- This should be an available option for those who truly want or need it, but not the only option.

Option #7: Focus on making schools multi-culturally inclusive.

- This would allow kids to understand and appreciate the ‘melting pot’ history and value the differences in America.
- “Multi-culturalism” must be taught carefully. Don’t teach “multi-culturalism that divides.”
- Schools need to teach kids to respect differences and the contributions of other cultures, and focus on individuals as Americans (melting pot history, diversity, civil rights, etc...)
- Multi-culturalism is an important part of education.
- Educators need to discuss and prepare students for learning about other cultures or else students will react with fear and it will create divisiveness.
- Educators need to avoid implied guilt. Teach multi-culturalism positively. Don’t teach “what my ancestors did to your ancestors.”

Option #8: Reversing the patterns of de facto residential segregation will truly desegregate schools.

- "In the end, this is the answer. But it will take a long time to get there. We need to focus on other ways in the meantime."
- If you have 30 low-income kids with extra 'problems' and issues, the teacher can't teach the same as 30 middle-class kids. The first group of kids won't learn as much.

General Comments:

- \* • None of the options address children before kindergarten. That's the most significant problem. Kids are starting kindergarten at different levels. We need to put resources into making sure that all kids are at the same level when they start school.
- The legislature never really responds well to educational dilemmas; Need to increase the total budget for schools. (Fund everything so that districts don't have to decide what programs get funded and what doesn't get funded!)
- \* • Choice is great, but then you need to have parents willing to learn about all the choices.
- \* • The school system is set-up not to address at-risk or transition students, which make up a lot of the Minneapolis school system.
- "The schools are doing the best they can with what they have."
- "There's too much theoretical talk. We need to bring it into the classroom."
- \* • We need to focus on housing.
- It's a natural tendency to want to come together in your own cultural group with whom you feel comfortable and accepted. There's nothing wrong with that as long as you are open and accepting of other people outside your cultural group as well.

# Things To Do

~~Wash~~

- ① Fax out addresses  
Barton / Bryant Sq  
C.C.  
→ of participant  
to the Jefferson  
center.

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dick Little  
Amy Rodquist  
Barbara Blackstone

**DATE:** November 19, 1998

**FROM:** Jan Frankman

### **RE Community Circles; Observations and Suggestions**

I thought it might be helpful to commit to writing my evaluation of the round of Community Circle dialogue which I completed as facilitator at Barton School last evening. I also have some suggestions for changes in the materials and, perhaps, in the formatting of the circles for the next round in the Winter.

It is most unfortunate that Amy was unable to be with us last night. I felt the experience was the best we had. I had contacted two very strong participants who had missed the week before, and they both attended. They played a very important role in providing substance and in confronting, very fully and effectively, statements and opinions expressed particularly by two participants who have been quite difficult both in demeanor and with respect to the content of their statements. Although I had decided to be more directive than I had been in the first four sessions, the participation of the Circle members was very strong and of high quality. I found myself following the discussion in large measure and ensuring that those who wanted to be heard, were heard and that there was safety in the confrontation which occurred. I used some strategies that I thought were helpful. First, before we began with the prepared materials, I posed a question which I asked everyone address and that was: "What is the problem/issue for which we are asked to evaluate solutions?" It was amazing and revealing, I believe, to all of us, the difference in viewpoints of what it was we had been addressing over the weeks. It turned out to be a very good way to begin. Second, I did not even try to cover all of the material - instead, I combined my own choosing with the opportunity for participants to also choose what they knew about or wanted particularly to discuss. I had each of the participants read the lists of action that may be taken toward the end of the material for the session. Finally, I announced at the beginning of the session that we would spend the last 15 minutes evaluating and debriefing our experience together. The comments, once again, were very revealing. They were honest and forthright and I believe, on the whole, reflect a positive experience. There is a high level of interest in following this work into the next round of circles. Please be sure to mail announcements of future circles to each of these participants. They want to be able to encourage others to attend. They also wanted to know how locations are chosen. There was a comment that Jefferson School would be a good place to have one group.

I have several suggestions which you may want to consider in future planning and as the materials are critiqued:

1. A companion facilitator's guide might be created which includes notes and hints for each session. It might include sections on the process (the uniqueness of dialogue), dealing with difficult people, ground rules (creating, reminding and expanding)

and additional strategies/questions that might be used during each of the prescribed sessions.

2. Either the first session could be expanded or an additional session added which focuses on self-examination and knowledge particularly with regard to the issue of race and racism.

3. It is important that participants receive the materials before the first session. Although all will not read and be prepared, some will and they will be helpful in getting a circle off to a strong start.

4. Our circle was too large - 19 of us with a recorder and two facilitators. It was a bit unwieldy to ensure equal opportunity to speak. I think 12 is a good maximum number.

5. It is important to ensure hospitality wherever the circle is scheduled to meet - we had scheduling conflicts which required us to move at the last minute and treats were provided one time - otherwise, I brought treats and one participant brought something one time. The facilitator should simply know what to expect.

6. If possible, either through affirmative action or by adjusting groups between locations, diversity and balance within each circle is desirable. There was a call for more youth by one of the members of our circle.

I am pleased to have been a part of this work. I believe it is a very important first step. It provides an opportunity for participants to know and understand differences and, more important, to recognize that we are all much more alike than we are different. Hopefully we will be lead to meaningful solutions to the very important issues which have been raised.

 JKF

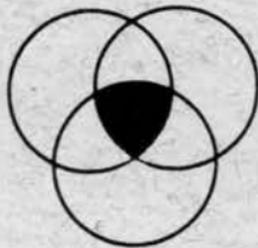
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Jan Frankman & Associates

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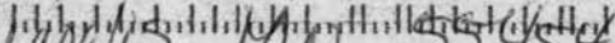
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