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# FRANK SMITH'S NEWS LETTER

YOUR CONGRESSMAN REPORTS  
FROM WASHINGTON

*(Not printed at Government expense)*



February 6, 1956

Despite considerable hullabaloo about other towns and cities, the District of Columbia school system is the only one in the country with a racial population ratio comparable to that of Mississippi where a school integration program has been put into effect. An examination of the effects of the integration program in Washington, after one year and a half, points out some of the dangers to public education that have resulted. These factors are basic to the opposition to integration throughout the South, especially in Mississippi.

Recent tests conducted by the school officials show that the educational level of the Washington pupils is now well below the national level. In an effort to remedy the situation, school officials have now set up a system which often virtually amounts to segregated classrooms, even though school enrollment itself cannot be segregated under District of Columbia policy. Special classes have been established for below-average students throughout the school system, and the great majority of the pupils enrolled in these are Negroes. All of the education level tests which have been given show that the Negro level has been far below that of the whites. The number of students classified as "slow learners" is so large that a special curriculum has been proposed for them, in addition to the special classes.

To meet the problem in senior high schools, a new solution is being prepared. It is proposed that these schools will not be required to keep a sub-normal student through completion of the 12-year academic course. These students will be assigned, upon entering high school, to a "terminal program." Their course will emphasize manual training and specific occupational work. One report is that at the end of the equivalent of the 10th grade, these students will receive a "terminal diploma" instead of the graduation certificate. It is expected that the vast majority of the terminal students will be Negroes.

These major changes in the Washington school program are necessary to prevent further deterioration of the educational level of the average and superior students. These problems in Washington make it clear how completely insoluble an integration program would be in Mississippi, where there would be far greater differential in levels of white and Negro pupils. They are the immediate proof of the wisdom of our decision to maintain a segregated school system.