

Council Plans for School Goals, Objectives Meet Opposition

By Milton Coleman
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Proposed legislation to compel the D.C. School Board to submit statements of educational goals and objectives as well as regular reports on student achievement to the City Council ran into opposition yesterday from school officials and some parent groups.

School Board members refused to take part in a hearing before the Council's committee on education, recreation and youth affairs. Instead, the board sent a written statement contending that the Council would be overstepping its jurisdiction if it began to "determine educational policy and structure for the schools," as the legislation proposes.

School Board President Therman E. Evans said in a letter to the committee that the board already is drafting its own set of accountability and achievement standards.

Representatives of parents and citizens groups who appeared during a morning session before the committee generally agreed with the need for clearly stated educational objectives for the 126,000 pupils in the city's school system.

The parents organization representatives also expressed fears of educational policy being set and monitored by the City Council.

"The only thing we regret," said Margaret Jones of the D.C. Citizens for Better Public Education, as she endorsed the intent of the plan, "is that it (the legislation) would dilute the responsibility given to the Board of Education. The City Council would be playing too much of a role superimposing itself on the Board of Education."

Two similar bills are before the committee, one authored by Committee Chairman Julius W. Hobson (State-

hood-at large) and the other by William R. Spaulding (D-five).

Both plans call for the board to establish a set of measurable educational objectives in such areas as reading, writing and mathematics, and report regularly to the Council and the public on how city pupils are progressing towards obtaining those objectives.

Hobson's proposal also would require the board to submit to the Council a plan for such "educational accountability" that the Council could reject.

According to the sponsors of the legislation, the bills stem from concern about consistently low performance by city pupils on standardized scholastic achievement tests.

Several Council members said that they had gone to school in racially segregated or economically deprived schools with fewer materials than schools in the D.C. school system, but where interest in student achievement was greater in their opinion.

"The thing that worries us so much is that we don't have standards anymore. We don't have the same kind of standards today that we had when we had nothing," said Council Member John A. Wilson (D-two).

Charles R. Broxton, legislative representative for the Washington Teachers Union, attributed some of the educational shortcomings to a lack of equipment stemming from budget restrictions in the schools.

"If the (educational) function requires textbooks and the textbooks are not available, if the function requires paper and the paper is not available, if the function requires pencils and the pencils are not available, then the teacher cannot carry out his function," Broxton said.