

## READING

## Chinese American Parents Demand Safety for Children

“We have presented our demands in a reasonable and cooperative way, but the response...received has not been sufficient or appropriate. If measures are not taken within the next few days to comply with our concerns for quality education and [for our children’s] safety, we will be forced to take more severe action.

“We have not decided on the kind of action [we] will take...we will struggle to get our demands met.”

– Lui Mi Yu, mother and spokesperson for Boston Chinese Parents’ Assn.

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In a last hour effort, members of the recently-formed Boston Chinese Parents’ Association (BCPA) met in an attempt to force the school department to comply with demands made earlier by the BCPA for the safe and quality education of approximately 1,000 Chinese students being bused under Phase 2 Desegregation Plan which begins when school opens September 8.

At a new conference on September 3, Lui Mi Yu and Judy Leong, spokespersons for the parent’s association, reiterated the objectives of the BCPA. They complained of what they considered racially-discriminatory tactics and the insensitivity of the School Committee which would prevent a safe and quality education for Chinese students being bused.

Among the issues raised by the BCPA are:

- 1) All communication—such as notices of meetings with and from the school department are only in English—thereby effectively excluding the majority of Chinese parents from receiving information about the busing program;
- 2) While the majority of students being bused to the Eliot School are Chinese, the parents of Chinese students have been denied representation on the “Biracial council,” and

3) All but one of the five schools to which Chinese students will be bused has Chinese staff members.

On July 30, the association presented a list of nine demands for the safety and quality education of the Chinese students. These demands stressed the need for two Chinese teachers, and two Chinese transitional aides at all schools, and for two Chinese bus escorts at every school to which Chinese students are assigned. The BCPA also sought two bilingual school community information officers; a guarantee of safe bus boarding and disembarking procedures, secure arrival and departure procedures; responsible assembly and crowd control; and a police force which has a maximum number of 50 percent of the force composed of police assigned from the local precinct.

A subsequent meeting with the School Committee failed to arrive at any answers or solutions to the parent's demands, and on September 2, the association restated their demands to the School Committee.

"We have presented our demands in a reasonable and cooperative way," states Ms. Yu, "but, the response...received has not been sufficient or appropriate...if measures are not taken within the next few days, to comply with our concerns for quality education and safety, we will be forced to take more severe actions."

Although, the BCPA has "not decided on the kind of action (it) will take," states Ms. Yu, "we will struggle to get our demands met."

More than 150 parents were at the standing room only combined meeting and press conference held to air the grievances and to publicize the concern of the Chinese parents and the lack of response from various official parties and agencies involved in the busing effort.

On opening day of school, September 8, approximately 334 Chinese students will be bused to the Charlestown schools: Edwards Middle School, Warren Prescott Elementary School, Kent Elementary School, Price and Bunker Elementary Schools. An additional 75 students will be bused to Roxbury, and 184 to the North End.

## **BULLETIN**

On Monday, when school opened in Boston, Chinese students boycotted classes to protest "overall disregard for the rights of all Chinese parents and students." It was part of a three-day boycott called by the Boston Chinese Parents Association (BCPA).

The boycott drew immediate attention to the BCPA's concerns. On Tuesday, the second day of school busing and the BCPA boycott, school officials met with the representatives of the Parents' Assn. and agreed to meet the basic demands of the parents for bilingual, Chinese bus monitors, transitional aids and teachers.

On the first day of school, according to observers, Chinese students completely boycotted Quincy Elementary School and Prescott. Only a couple of Chinese students reported at Charlestown High School. (29 scheduled to be bused there).

Some 1,000 Chinese students from the South End and from Chinatown were to be bused to schools in the North End and to Charlestown.

The BCPA protested the lack of Chinese teachers, Chinese transitional aids and the lack of Chinese parents represented on the biracial councils.

The association said no means of communicating effectively with parents have been established, and that no "concrete action" was taken to secure safety for Chinese students being bused.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marian Hwang, *Sampan*, Vol II No 11, September 1975.