

CC: DENA BELTZER
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Bruce 1/3/93
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The Superintendent of Berkeley Public Schools has asked each school site to determine its stand on: 1) school size 2) grade configuration, and 3) integration. There is a lot at stake. Several schools want to change the present scheme. They wish to change from K-3 to K-5 configuration. Unless an acceptable method of integration can be found, however, such changes will not be possible.

The Le Conte "Measure A" Site Committee has prepared its position. The committee hopes that its position is shared by the Le Conte community. **This is a way of finding out whether our fellow parents agree with us or not.** Please let us hear from you if you do not agree so that we can better represent Le Conte.

Talk to Barbara Penny-James, or to another member of the committee (see below.)
Call parent Bruce Wicinas or Dena Beltzer. Do it now!

BACKGROUND

Le Conte enjoys its high degree of integration by drawing students from one geographically connected area of Berkeley. Unlike most other K-3 schools in Berkeley, we do not have a large portion of our students being bussed in from a separated, far-removed portion of the city. Therefore our community is spared from the problems that the radical bussing arrangement causes for other K-3 schools. This makes it easy for Le Conte to identify with its community.

As a K-3 school, the Le Conte school building allows room for three classes per grade level. The total student population is about 350. If Le Conte were to change to a K-5 school there could be only two classes per grade level.

The present arrangement of grades - Kindergarten through third at Le Conte, 4th through 6th at Malcolm X - was implemented in 1968. It was devised as a strategy for integration. The arrangement also has an educational rationale: it allows small schools for small students, a larger school with more resources for older students. By grouping many 4-6 classrooms at one site it is possible to offer many more programs for these grades than would be possible at individual K-6 sites where there would be no more than two classrooms per grade.

POSITION

The Le Conte Site Committee believes that for most Le Conte children this scheme is working. We respect Malcolm X and look forward to sending our children there. The problems which are reported, such as the shock of transition, can be improved by efforts to tune the current arrangement.

A district-wide change of grade configuration would create chaos. It is justified only if it would correct large faults in the existing system. Because we do not find such great fault we recommend against such major change. We believe that the concern of the District should be the success of children district-wide. The district's resources should be devoted to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Submitted by:
Le Conte "Measure A" Site Committee