

July 25, 1985

Mr. Charles Benson, Superintendent
Corpus Christi Independent School District
901 Leopard
Corpus Christi, Tx 78401

Superintendent Benson:

This afternoon I called your administration offices and talked to Mr. J. M. Pierce. I expressed to him my concern over the run down appearance of Cunningham Jr. High School, both it's physical structure and it's landscape. He replied that a contractor had been working on painting the doors and the interior of the school, and that as a matter of fact, the contractor had had to paint the doors twice because vandals had carved their names on the newly painted. He stated that it was impossible to continually put fresh paint on these doors. I told Mr. Pierce that I had indeed noticed the painted doors and that, in my opinion, a very poor job had been done. I could not comment on the interior as I couldn't see inside any of the rooms. I asked that Cunningham be placed on the list of schools targeted for renovation and that more attention be given its ground maintenance. He agreed that the grounds were sub-par. I thanked him for his time and advised him that I would monitor not only Cunningham but Prescott and Chula Vista Elementary schools as well because of their poor shape. We cordially thanked each other and we ended the conversation, however, I was left with a less than satisfactory feeling. I felt that nothing was going to be done - that is why I am writing to you.

My concern goes beyond these school structures. I focus on what these school buildings stand for. They stand for opportunity, obtaining social and moral values, achieving the academic while participating in school activities, learning order and respect through the leadership and guidance of their teachers, peers, and most importantly, those who are charged with tending their growth into educated men and women by providing for them the atmosphere in which you accomplish these things.

Academic studies are very important but the atmosphere in which one is to learn is just as important. Initiative derives from pride. Pride is the manifestation of self-worth. It is difficult to develop "PRIDE" in a building that resembles a neglected juvenile detention center rather than a place of learning. That was the spirit behind our desegregation suit against CCISD and other school districts throughout the country. We felt that the children's needs and, therefore, our needs as parents were not being adequately tended. There was an unfair spread of the tax dollar and what it could buy, favoring the newer schools in the richer parts of the community. I want you to know Mr. Benson, that we want a better share of our dollars. We want to see that reflected in a concrete renovation plan for our minority schools. We want a new and progressive attitude from your administrators. We want to know that yesterday's problems do indeed belong in the past and that we have embarked in a new direction of trust and mutual respect.

Please consider my request. Review all the predominately Mexican-American and black schools, compare them structurally and academically with the newer South side schools, study their histories and perhaps than you will understand why I had to write.

Sincerely,

Noe Arevalo
2001 Islla Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78416
(512) 853-8361

cc:

Hector P. Garcia, Founder of American G. I. Forum ✓
Carlos Truan, State Senator
Hugo Berlanga, State Representative
Tony Bonilla, Lulac, Chairman, National Hispanic Leadership Conference