

A8 CENTRAL ILLINOIS Decatur, Illinois • Monday, November 15, 1999

*'You can tell people are here to conquer the issue ... It's really inspiring.'*

—Annie Weiler, 21, Chicago student

# EXPULSIONS: Politicians get involved

## McGee's proposal

According to information from the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition Web site, Decatur school board members are considering this proposal from Glenn W. McGee, superintendent of the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rainbow/PUSH leader, to get the expelled Decatur students back into school. The proposal came together last Wednesday.

1. District 61 will hold the expulsions in abeyance. Students will be allowed to enroll in the alternative programs described below immediately. Full terms of the expulsions are put in effect for non-violent individual school students who commit an offense in the alternative placement that would result in a suspension.

2. The governor's plan for placement of students will take effect on Monday, Nov. 15.

3. Each of the students will be eligible for return to District 61 schools on the first day of the 1999-2000 school year provided that each student has maintained a high standard of conduct, attendance, completion of homework and a C average. The Alternative Placement Program and provided that the Review Panel (as detailed in point four below) recommends the re-enrollment of each individual student in District 61.

4. Two weeks prior to the beginning of the second semester, the State Superintendent of Education will convene a Review Panel to review the records of each individual student. The team will consist of the Deputy Governor, Lt. Gov. Dr. Hazel L. Lourie, the superintendent of District 61 or his designee, and two members to be named by the State Superintendent of Education.

The Review Panel will make a case-by-case recommendation to the Board of Education for re-enrollment for the second semester.

5. All high schools will reopen on Nov. 10. Neither Rev. Jackson nor any member of his team nor the six students or their parents shall appear at the school or on school grounds in an attempt to re-enroll the students or to disturb the opening of school.

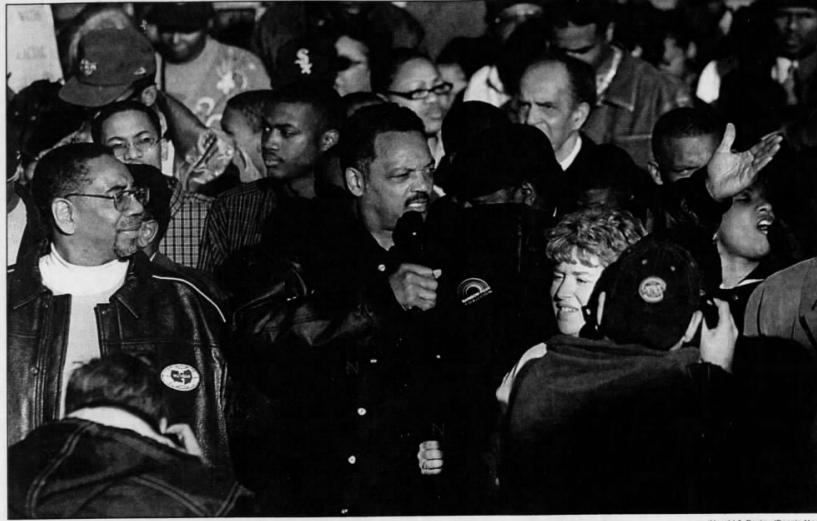
6. The State Superintendent of Education will seek support of the Illinois House of Representatives, the Illinois Elementary and Secondary Education Committee to convene statewide hearings on the number of minority students who are annually suspended or expelled.

7. The District 61 Board of Education shall review and clarify its "zero-tolerance policy" and establish a blue ribbon panel composed of education experts, clergy and other community leaders to review disciplinary decisions and make recommendations for improvement.

8. The District 61 Board of Education shall establish a program of peer counseling to address school violence and conflict resolution for improvement.

9. The State Superintendent will reconsider the revocation of the criminal charges.

10. Parties will seek an immediate resolution to the federal lawsuit.



JOIN US: The Rev. Jesse Jackson, center, motions for onlookers to join the movement Sunday afternoon as they pass along East Grand Avenue. U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Chicago, is at left.

## Continued from A1

will call for an investigation of the zero-tolerance policy when the state legislature reconvenes this week.

"We want to know what these things have led to this [arbitrarily] ruling. We have a responsibility to make sure that what happened in Decatur doesn't happen anywhere else."

Police estimated that about 2,000 people participated in the march from MacArthur Street over to Grand Avenue and westward to MacArthur, where a rally was held.

Rainbow/PUSH members, including Rev. Tomlinson, president of the Decatur chapter, carried a banner in the front row. It read, "Save the Decatur School and Leave No Child Behind." Jackson walked in the second row. He was backed arm-in-arm with Rush, who was standing ahead of the expelled students.

Both Decatur police and Rainbow/PUSH estimated that Sunday's crowd doubled that of a march on Nov. 7, which was 1,200 by police count and 2,000 by organizers. More than half of the participants were from outside Macon County. Protesters from the Chicago area were parked at the high school for the rally.

A few hundred more, an estimated 250 people participated in a "Stop the Violence" march organized by Decatur City Council member Betsy Whitson, who made an unsuccessful run for a city council seat last November.

This group, which wore blue ribbons in support of the school board, walked - and ran - from the high school to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to 16th Street and back.

Numerous people honked their horns in support of the marchers, who included Matthew Whitson, who made an unsuccessful run for a city council seat last November.

Whitson said he admired Stockard, who is African-American, for taking a courageous stand in supporting the school.

"I believe the school board has compromised and compromised," Whitson said. "Rev. Jackson is truly a man of God, then he should put away the rhetoric and sit down and come to an agreement."

Simultaneously at Nelson Park, the traditional home of the Ku Klux Klan, but in Bloomington, attracted about 200 people to a rally at Pavilion No. 1.

The protestor's son's involvement in the issue and actively recruited members of the crowd - some of whom were Decatur residents. Wearing black

and white robes with red trim, 10 Klan members took turns giving speeches punctuated with calls of "White Power!" echoed by vocal crowd members.

Imposter Wizard Jeffrey Berry rallied against Jackson's presence in Decatur. He derided local police for allowing the Rainbow/PUSH marchers to speak to the Decatur school board for listening to the coalition.

The Klan and the Rainbow/PUSH marchers never came in contact; however, some participants at the Jackson-led rally were hecklers on the backs of that Jackson calling for "Death to the KKK."

The protestor's son's involvement was evident Sunday afternoon. Decatur police Cmdr. Rich Ryan said 15 local, state and fed-

eral law enforcement officers were present some of the security detail.

From about 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Macon County sheriff's deputies handled all priority police business. Other priority calls had to wait until 5 p.m.

During the Rainbow/PUSH march, hundreds of spectators were between songs, a group of Chicago marchers chanted, "This is not a parade" at spectators along the route and urged them to stop.

Patrice Billingsley, who teaches fine arts at Martha Ruggles Elementary School, estimated that more than 40 bystanders to walk arm in arm with the group.

"They basically came right up and said, 'We're here for a cause,' she said. "I think this is a worthwhile cause, and I think they should all get involved."

For three Millikin University students, the teachers only had to

ask once. They had been watching the march from a sidewalk to "witness history."

"You can tell people are here to conquer the issue," said Annie Weiler, 21, from the Chicago area. "I tell them they're brave, determined and intelligent. I have goose bumps right now."

A small group of Progressive Labor Party members walked among the marchers during the march, shouting red flares they called for an end to racism.

At the KKK rally, about 30 police officers from the Decatur police, the Illinois State Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms stood between the Klan and the marchers in the crowd. The Klansmen and crowd also were separated by two lines of yellow police tape and about

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