Boston schools desegregated, opening day generally peaceful

Some incidents, widest boycott in South Boston

By Robert J. Anglin
Globe Staff

Desegregation, symbolized by the school bus, came yesterday to the Boston public school system, the oldest in the nation, after nine years of controversy.

Despite widespread anticipation and some school boycotts, there was a minimum of confusion and disruption throughout the city and violence in only one section of the city.

The protest occurred in South Boston, where nine black students and a monitor were injured when buses were stoned after classes ended.

Mayor Kevin H. White responded to the incident by ordering tightened security measures, including police dispersal of groups of more than three persons in the immediate vicinity of all public schools and assignment of police escorts to all school buses entering and leaving South Boston.

Black parents with children assigned to South Boston schools were being urged last night by Thomas L. Atkinson, president of the Boston NAACP, to keep their children home from school today.

At the same time Atkinson said he would ask the federal court in Boston to assign Federal marshals to school buses.

However, the relatively smooth implementation of the court-ordered racial balance plan—which called for busing more than 18,000 of the city's 94,000 public school students—prompted White and School Supt. William Leary to declare the first day of classes a success.

White said at a news conference that since the Federal court order was issued June 21 by Judge W. Arthur Garrity Jr., "the prospect for implementation was uniformly optimistic, with pronouncements of confusion, even widespread violence:"

"These prophesies never came to pass in this city," White said.

Leary said that there was no disorder inside any of the city's 260 schools, that instead there was "safety, security and classes going on."

"In that sense, it was a successful school day," he said.

School Dept. officials estimated that attendance yesterday was 87 percent.

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Opening of desegregated schools mostly peaceful

School questions?

Boston residents who want answers to school-related questions can telephone the Boston City Hall communications room at 237-885, from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Information lines are also being operated by the City-wide Education Coalition, 943-2283, and Freedom House, 440-2704. Questions concerning applications for jobs as bus monitors and school aides should be referred to Ralph Mann, Boston School Dept., 742-7400.

Six young men, including one juvenile, were arrested during the day in South Boston. Police identified them as:

- Stephen J. Pyne, 17, of East Second Street.
- South Boston, charged with disorderly conduct, assault and destruction of public property.
- - Henry Federbrock, 18, of Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester, assault with a rock.
- - Robert H. Johnson, 23, of Henderson Place, South Boston, being disorderly.
- - Michael Kineavy, 19, of Second Street, South Boston, being disorderly.
- - A 14-year-old South Boston juvenile also was charged with assault.

Authorities said the day was generally peaceful at the other schools in the city. Eighty-two of the 200 schools were affected by busing.

Supt. Leary said some confusion was caused by "programmatic problems" at Roslindale, Jamaica Plain and Dorchester high schools.

Much of the difficulty, he said, was caused by computer programs which should be cleared up by today.

A number of students showed up at Hyde Park High but were turned away because they did not have the proper admittance cards. They were later admitted.

The School Dept.'s estimated attendance percentage was based on reports from most, but not all, schools in the city. The total projected enrollments at the schools that did provide the department with daily attendance figures was 70,778. At those schools that reported, 47,307 students actually attended -- 66.8 percent of the projected total.

There is a projected citywide total of 94,000 students.

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Associate Supt. John A. Conley said that figure was "very encouraging" and predicted it would remain fairly constant for the next few years, opened.

The normal rate of absenteeism for the opening days of school is from 25 to 30 percent, according to the state.

A citywide boycott of classes called by 25,000 in Roslindale, West Roxbury and Hyde Park at the elementary level, and in Roslindale high school. Absenteeism in Roslindale was also high at Roslindale High School.

The State Comm. of Educa-tion, at the request of several parents who decided to send their children to school despite their fears.

The President of the state to discuss the issue of busing for the 1969-70 school year.

A new order of the Boston School Committee, desegregate the city's schools.

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