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Costanzo Increases Security At University City High

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Superintendent of Schools Matthew W. Costanzo has increased the security and disciplinary force at University City High School in an effort to halt the violence that has plagued the school.

After a visit to the new \$14 million school at 36th and Filbert sts. Wednesday, Costanzo made the following recommendations to improve discipline:

- Adding four persons to the schools' six-man disciplinary staff.
- Establishing a separate, off-site program for disruptive students.
- Locking classroom doors from the inside to exclude outsiders.

'Salvage a Dream'

"It is a minimal investment to salvage a multimillion-dollar operation and dream," Costanzo said.

During the first six weeks of classes the school had experienced four stabbings of pupils by other pupils, a pupil takeover of the school requiring police intervention and several assaults on teachers by pupils.

Teachers described the school as suffering from "a complete lack of discipline" and said "students are pulled out of classes by gang members."

Major Source

A major source of the violence is the large number of gang members among its some 2,400 students. Although most high schools are generally regarded as neutral turf free from gang fighting, University City has not yet achieved such status since opening last December.

Costanzo called the schools' situation "inherently difficult, but not impossible, maybe it is just a shade more difficult than any other new inner-city high school because of the extreme gang problem."

The superintendent said he would add two nonteaching assistants for a total of eight so the school would have one for each floor. He said that the school system must modify the formula (based on student enrollment) which regulates the number of NTAs assigned to a school to take into account special conditions at a school.

School Discipline

Costanzo added that he would also assign a male and female teacher to work full time with school discipline.

“I was appalled that there wasn’t any alternative program for the chronic disruptive students, but there will be in a week or so,” he said. Last spring he made available about \$50,000 to each secondary school to start these programs for disruptive and other problem pupils.

“I suggested that it be a two-stop process,” he continued. “If disruptive pupils can’t fit into an off-site program, then they should go to Catto (a special disciplinary school at 42d and Ludlow sts.)”

He also stressed that having teachers lock their classroom doors from the inside was not against Fire Department regulations.

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By CHARLES F. THOMSON
Of The Bulletin Staff

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