

Mansfield Expects No Repeat Of 1956 School Mixing Incidents

Star-Telegram Mid-Cities Bureau

MANSFIELD — School and city officials Friday said they do not expect any trouble Aug. 30, the first day of school, when about 70 Negro students will enter the previously all-white junior and senior high schools here.

"We had between 60 and 70 Negro students pre-enroll for the secondary schools and registration for new students is continuing through Tuesday," School Supt. Willie Pigg said.

No one here seems to think that a duplication of the 1956 anti-Negro demonstrations, which gained nationwide publicity for this south Tarrant County town, will occur.

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protesting the admission of three Negro youths to the high school forced then Gov. Allan Shivers to send six Texas Rangers to keep order.

Shivers instructed that if mob violence threatened, the school superintendent should transfer the Negro students to another district, an act the Supreme Court later held invalid.

Faced with losing federal funds, the school board in January voted to integrate the school district totally.

"Nothing is going to happen, nothing at all," said Mayor Lon Hubbard. "I know the people here and I know that no one is going to try to interfere with the admission of these students."

Supt. Pigg said he did not know of any Negro children who lived in the zone served by the white Erma Nash Elementary School.

"BECAUSE OF a lack of classroom space, we have had to zone the elementary schools," he said.

The school official said there might be some white children who would attend the Negro Willie Brown School.

"If they live in that zone,

that is where they will have to go to school," Pigg said.

The question of school integration came up in 1955 when an attorney for the NAACP tried to get admission for three Negro students to Mansfield High School.

Like other Negro high school students from Mansfield, they had been attending Fort Worth's I. M. Terrell High School.

School officials refused and an appeal was made to the federal court, which upheld the federal order forcing schools to integrate.

MANSFIELD WAS the first school district in the state to get that order.

Attorneys for the school district appealed without success.

Crowds, estimated as high as 300, milled around the high school on the first day of school in September 1956, and for the next three days.

The Negro students didn't appear and did not try to enroll in school, but returned to Terrell and the matter was, for the time being, dropped.

Supt. Pigg said about 30 Negroes will enter the high school and "a few more than that" will enter junior high.