Principal segregates meeting

ELK GROVE, Calif. (AP) — The principal at T.R. Smedberg Middle School held meetings last week for parents to discuss their children's scores on standardized tests. There were four meetings in all, with separate gatherings for whites, Asians, blacks and Hispanics.

The principal, who is black, said the segregated meetings were to "get real honest answers" from black and Hispanic parents, whose children are among the lowest scorers, and to allow them to speak freely, without embarrassment.

But the separate-but-equal meetings at the public school troubled some parents in Elk Grove, a mostly white, middle-class suburb of Sacramento and brought the threat of a lawsuit from a conservative organization.

"I am not embarrassed to speak out, and they could have done it in one big meeting," said Randy Reyna, a Hispanic woman whose daughter is in seventh grade.

Across the country, several educational and civil rights groups — including the NAACP, the ACLU and the National Education Asso said they had never heard of such me before. In heavily black Oakland, however, dle school held racially separate meetin years ago for parents to d after-school programs.

> *"I am not embarrassed to speak out, and they could have done it in one big meeting."*
>
> — Randy Reyna
> parent

Some Hispanic paren Smedberg said they had feelings at first. But afte meeting, one spoke passiona Spanish and English about raise her seventh-grader's s

"Now everyone knows els their children are at Maria Mendoza through d Ariana, who translated. know how to help my chil

Principal Philip Moore has the support of his school superin and the school board, spoke to about 20 p at his 1,600-student school before decid the separate meetings.

Nancy Kilborn, who is white and has a d ter at Smedberg, said the meetings work for her family. "I was kind of surprise shocked when I first heard about the meet she said. "I felt very comfortable."

Spill baffles authorities

DETROIT (AP) — A mysterious spill has sent more than 10,000 gallons of oil into the Rouge River near Detroit in the last five days, baffling officials who have been unsuccessful in pinpointing its source.

The spill has gotten bigger each day since it was discovered last week. The oil is believed to be industrial-grade waste oil.

"From Wednesday until now, there's been more than 10,000 gallons spilled, and we expect that number to increase," said Adam Wine, chief petty officer with the U.S. Coast Guard.

The river, which flows eastward into the Detroit River, was closed for a second straight day on Sunday as cleanup work continued, creating potential problems for industries that rely on the waterway to transport goods.

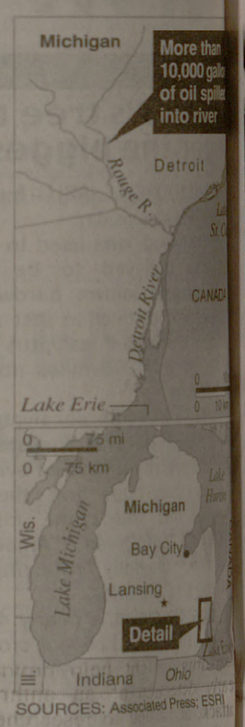
"There will be a need to move ships up and down to Ford and Rouge Steel to provide raw materials — iron ore, coal and limestone," said Rep. John Dingell.

The Coast Guard hoped the river would be reopened Monday.

The cleanup could last three to six weeks and cost more than $2 million, officials estimated.

The spill's environmental impact is unknown, although about 70 birds have been found with oil on their feathers, according to Dan Sheill, special agent with the U.S Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The spill is the largest on a Great Lakes waterway in more than a decade. Wine said the last major spill that affected Great Lakes waters was a 1991 gasoline spill in the Bay City area. The source of that spill was an explosion on the tanker Jupiter.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI

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