

# BILINGUAL CLASSES AGREED UPON HERE

## School Board Tells Court It Will Set Up Program for the Spanish-Speaking

By LEONARD BUDER

The Board of Education agreed in Federal Court yesterday to establish a major new program to improve the education of all Spanish-speaking pupils here whose difficulties with English impede their learning.

The new program will be directed to all pupils in all schools in the city who are unable to learn basic subjects—such as mathematics and science — when they are taught in English and who could learn if they were taught in Spanish.

At the same time, these pupils will get intensive instruction to master English and improve their Spanish. Efforts will soon be started to recruit additional bilingual personnel and to retrain some teachers and others for service in the program.

### Aspira's Role

Details of the new program, which will start this fall and be fully implemented next year, were contained in a consent decree signed by District Court Judge Marvin E. Frankel.

The agreement was worked out by high-ranking city school officials and representatives of two related Puerto Rican self-help groups, Aspira of New York Inc., and Aspira of America Inc. The groups had brought a class-action suit charging that the city school system failed to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking children, causing high truancy and dropout rates among these youngsters.

School Chancellor Irving Anker discussed the agreement at a news conference at Board of Education headquarters and said: "This is not a victory for either side. This is a victory for the children."

He said that 25,000 to 65,000 of the city's 1.1-million pupils would be directly in-

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valued in the program. He added that one of the first steps would be to determine by tests, which of the 200,000 Spanish-speaking pupils in the system should be in the program.

Aspira officials, who held a separate news conference at about the same time, hailed the agreement as a "landmark" that would have far-reaching benefits for Puerto Rican pupils. Victor Marrero, chairman of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc., which represented the plaintiffs, estimated that 40,000 to 100,000 youngsters would be directly affected by the court-decreed program.

## Agreement Detailed

According to the court papers, the agreement mandates the following:

¶The Board of Education will devise "an improved method for identifying and classifying children who are Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed according to their ability to speak, read, write and comprehend English and Spanish." This is supposed to be done by Oct. 1 and if it is not, the board must explain why.

¶A list of pilot schools that will offer the new bilingual program must be drawn up by the Chancellor by Oct. 30. The program should start in these schools by February, 1975.

¶The full program must be put into effect in September, 1975, in all schools where children need the special program. The consent decree emphasized that pupils in the program should "spend maximum time with other children so as to avoid isolation and segregation from their peers."

## Other Requirements

The agreement also specified that the Board of Education and the Chancellor were "under a duty to use their maximum feasible efforts to obtain and expend the funds required to implement the program" in accordance with the timetable. The court retained jurisdiction to hear and rule on disputes that might arise over whether the defendants adequately carried this obligation.

Chancellor Anker, responding to a question at the news conference, said he did not know the program's "price tag." He noted that the school system had received a supplemental allocation from the city of \$11-million for bilingual education, and that even without the new program the system would have had to provide for the education of these youngsters.

Elements of the new program have been available in some schools and district in varying degrees and ways for several years, Mr. Anker said. The new effort, he added, would be far more extensive and far-reaching.

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