

A rank order of the 10 school districts, which indicated asbestos removal as one of their top three expenditures, shows four of the districts located in the South, three in the Midwest, two in the West, and only one in the Northeast. The average expenditure ranged from a high of \$755,581 per school for Oklahoma City and \$1,689 per student to a low of \$33,113 per school and \$52 per student for Milwaukee. The data from New York City tend to be misleading. Although it is spending the second highest amount on asbestos removal, due to the size of the district, the average cost per school and student is one of the lowest among the top ten spenders.

The total asbestos removal expenditure for the 74 school districts who responded to the survey totaled \$221,875,000. This amount represents an average of \$2,998,311 per district, \$25,244 per school, and \$35 per student. Nationwide the total number of schools is 84,173 schools with a total student population of 40,300,000. The numbers for the survey were 8,789 schools with a student population of 6,358,896, making the percentage of surveyed schools 10.44 percent of the national total and 15.78 percent of the total national student population respectively.

Based on these data, extrapolation and estimates for asbestos removal were determined. The total asbestos expenditure for the nation ranges from a high of \$2.1 billion (if we consider schools) to a low of \$1.4 billion (if we consider students). The first number may be more realistic because the unit of measurement is the school — the usual measure for determining annual budgets. Taking into consideration the total national revenue for K-12 public schools, which is \$185 billion, the total asbestos removal bill in relation to the total annual revenue for education can be derived: 1.14 percent to .76 percent. The second figure may be more realistic since the unit of measurement involves students — the usual measure used for determining school revenues. These percentages may be used as national yardsticks for a school to project how much to spend on asbestos removal. The question ultimately arises: Do we need to spend all this money on asbestos removal? At

what level of exposure is asbestos unsafe? If the asbestos is intact, not flaking and out of reach of students (and employees), should it be removed? The bottom line: The risk of dying in an airplane crash or in a high school football game is much greater, it appears, than dying from exposure to intact asbestos on the basement pipes and basement ceiling walls in a school building.

*Allan C. Ornstein
Robert C. Cienkus*

Allan C. Ornstein is professor of education at Loyola University of Chicago. He is author of many books and articles on educational issues, most recently Educational Administration: Concepts and Practices.

Robert C. Cienkus is associate professor of education at Loyola University of Chicago. He is educational consultant to several school districts in Illinois.

Black Business Firms up 38 Percent Over Five Years

According to a survey conducted by the Census Bureau of the Commerce Department the number of black business firms in the United States increased from 308,000 to 424,000 in 1987, a 38 percent rise. All U. S. firms rose 14 percent, from 12 million to 13.7 million during the same period. Receipts for black firms increased by 105 percent, from \$9.6 billion to \$19.8 billion. About 3 percent of the nation's firms were black-owned in 1987 generating 1 percent of U. S. business receipts for that year. Some 94 percent of black-owned firms were sole proprietorships. Partnerships and subchapter S corporations each comprised 3 percent. (A subchapter S corporation is an Internal Revenue Service designation for legally incorporated businesses with up to thirty-five shareholders who, because of tax advantages, elect to be taxed as individual shareholders rather than as corporations.)

Receipts per firm averaged \$47,000 for black-owned firms, compared with \$146,000 for all U. S. firms. Fifty-four percent of firms owned by blacks had receipts under \$10,000; fewer than 2,000 had sales of \$1 million or more.

The survey also shows that 17 percent of black-owned firms which had paid employees, accounted for 71 percent of gross receipts. The 189 firms with 100 or more employees accounted for \$2 billion in gross receipts or about 14 percent of the total receipts of all black-owned employer firms.

Service industries made up about half of all black-owned firms and 31 percent of gross receipts, while retail trade businesses accounted for 16 percent of firms and 30 percent of receipts.

The ten industry groups with the largest dollar volume of receipts in 1987 were automotive dealers and service stations (\$2.2 billion); eating and drinking places (\$1.3 billion); personal services (\$1.0 billion); and wholesale trade, nondurable goods (\$700 million).

The ten metropolitan areas with the largest number of black-owned firms accounted for 36 percent of the national black total and 36 percent of gross receipts by black businesses.

Correction: The following errors appeared in the article by Seymour Martin Lipset, "A Unique People in an Exceptional Country," in the November-December 1990 issue of *SOCIETY*. The name of Steven Cohen was improperly rendered as "Ocean" in several places. The fiscal contribution of Jews in 1986 to assorted causes is indicated to be 35 billion; the actual amount should, of course, read 3.5 billion dollars. Finally, it should have been made clear that this essay, as well as other papers in the symposium on "American Pluralism and Jewish Americans" were derived from the newly published Transaction book on *American Pluralism and the Jewish Community*. Professor Lipset is in no way responsible for the mistakes in the text of his article.