

Student protest interrupts school day

By CHRISTOPHER MILLER

Tribune Staff Writer

A student assembly at Eldorado High School this morning turned into a sit-down demonstration over the social factions that have divided the school for years.

Heated feelings about the social divisions, which students term as "jocks, freaks and Chicanos," were brought to a head by an "Undercover Student" series of stories in *The Albuquerque Tribune* this week. The series is about student life at Eldorado.

About 2,000 students turned out in the school's courtyard at the 9:10 a.m. assembly, which was sponsored by the school administration. The assembly was called to discuss efforts to unite the social factions at the school and to cheer on the school's basketball team in the state championships, said Eldorado Principal Robert Daugherty.

The assembly remained peaceful until the bell rang notifying students to return to class. At that time, about 1,500 students sat down in the courtyard area and refused to return to class. Students cried out that they would not

"Eldorado has long been noted for its 'Freak Wall' and 'Jock Wall.' The students see that as a division of the school."

— Robert Daugherty
Eldorado High School principal

return until more discussion was given to the divided social factions and what should be done about them.

The students were persuaded to return to their 10:30 classes.

Daugherty said the demonstration was partly instigated by student Aaron Bell, a member of the student senate who asked students over the microphone whether they believed they were getting an adequate education at Eldorado.

Bell said he was concerned about what the social factions were doing to influence the quality of education. He said he wants administrators and teachers to work with the students to improve the quality.

"He got them all stirred up," the principal said.

About 50 representatives of the school's

student government met after the demonstration in the school cafeteria to discuss ways of quelling the dissatisfaction over the social divisions.

"Eldorado has long been noted for its 'Freak Wall' and 'Jock Wall,'" Daugherty said. "The students see that as a division of the school."

He added that the series of newspaper stories helped to reidentify the problems.

Daugherty said the segregation has actually lessened the tension between the various student groups. "It's better if they just stay out of each other's way," he said.

Chris Schafer, president of the student government, said the tension between students has lessened during the past few years. "There isn't as big of a problem now, but we're trying to kill it completely," he said.

Daugherty said fist fights have occurred on and near campus, "with a freak sometimes jumping on a jock, and vice versa."

The school probably will hold a series of open forums for students during the next few weeks to discuss the situation further, Daugherty said.