

Education

"THE REPORT CARD"

**Working Together
— We Can Make
A Difference!**

Yvonne Atkinson



I am often consulted by parents with specific questions pertaining to incidents and problems their children have had at a particular school or with a particular teacher. In most cases, I don't know enough about the parents' problem to be of any real assistance. Knowing as I do that it can often indeed be frustrating to attempt to resolve a school-related matter simply because of all the bureaucracy involved, I will offer the following pointers.

First of all you have to get a grasp of the size and scope of the Clark County School District. It is the nation's 19th largest public school district, larger even than the St. Louis school district or the San Francisco school system. Because of a state

law enacted in 1956, each county plus the state capital, Carson City, became a school district. Due to the fact that close to 60 percent of the state's population is centered in Clark County, we wound up with nearly 60 percent of all school age students. Naturally, that percentage would also be reflected in the student population of our 118 schools located throughout the county.

If our projections are correct, and we should know by the first week in October, we will have close to 91,000 students enrolled districtwide. One cannot ignore the fact that size has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. Many times it is not possible to know all of

the people on a personal basis that you need to deal with when you have a problem. Here's my advice. Start with the teacher, counselor, assistant principal or principal. Be sincere and work diligently toward solving your problem at this level.

Even before you have a problem that needs to be addressed, it is advisable to visit your child's school and meet with their teacher. By establishing positive communications you enhance your opportunity to be dealt with fairly and equitably should a problem ever arise in the future.

If all attempts at solving a problem at the school level fail, your next option is to consult with the principal's boss called a Zone Director. From there you may seek resolution of your problem through the associate superintendent and next the deputy superintendent — and, finally the superintendent.

Where do I, as your district school board representative, fit into the picture? As a school board member, I am here to set policy and make financial decisions that will permit the school district to operate efficiently. I AM NOT AN ADMINISTRATOR. The superintendent of schools is

the person who is hired by the school board to actually "run" the school system. He is obligated to run the school system according to policies and regulations which are approved by me and other members of the school board. So, in essence, we as board members establish the framework for the superintendent to actually administrate the district.

I know there will continue to be anxiety and frustration by many of you who, as parents, feel your problem is not being handled fairly. If you fit into that category, or, if you just want to put your "two cents worth in" to make some positive changes in how the system operates, I invite you to join a parent advisory group that I am now forming. The uniqueness of education as it relates to Westside students presents as well some unique features and challenges. I will need the input and assistance from you all to truly be effective in dealing with this very important matter. Feel free to write to me c/o Clark County School District, 2832 East Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, NV 89121. I want your input and I need your help. Together we can make a difference for the future of our children!

SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

Vocational Programs for the 80's

Located at 444 West Brooks Avenue in North Las Vegas is a truly unique school, the Area Technical Trade Center. As you drive up to the entrance, you are immediately impressed with the modern facility. A closer inspection shows that this school is small compared to other high schools in the District. A greater difference appears when you visit the classrooms, for you find that in this building, there are no specific classes designed to teach the basic subjects. The traditional concept of a secondary school has been changed and the programs you find in this building are technical skill courses which offer job training in six different occupations.

You will find students actively involved in learning the Construction Trades. The Industrial Electronics students work in a lab that has 1000 electronic components located throughout. The Diesel Mechanics program, located in a separate building, provides students with an opportunity to develop job skills in repairing and maintaining diesel engines. One of the most popular programs at the school is Health Occupations, designed to provide students with job skills for medical technician work. The Leisure and Hospitality program, or sometimes referred to as hotel trades, has a classroom resembling the front desk area of a large hotel, and provides training for hotel related occupations. Your quick tour of the Center is completed when you visit its gourmet restaurant, Chez Nous, where students interested in culinary arts are engaged in food preparation. The Center is beginning its fourth year of operation. At a time when many vocational programs were being curtailed or eliminated, the Clark County School District built, equipped, and staffed this school totally dedicated to the training of secondary youth for immediate employment positions. The Center, even now, is the only secondary school of its type

in Nevada, and is rapidly gaining the reputation through its graduates as a school of training excellence for employment opportunity.

While this concept of an area trade center is new to Clark County, it is not new to many other sections of the country. This idea of having students attend a specialized high school for a part of the school day and then return to their home high school for their academic course work has a successful history in the Midwest and East. Where it would be impossible for each of our comprehensive high schools to develop these unique programs, it is practical for one site to conduct such training opportunities. Two sessions have been scheduled. The first offers students an opportunity to attend the Center in the morning and assume their other educational course requirements at their home high school in the afternoon. The second session just reverses the process.

Admission Policy

The admission policy for the Center is based upon the following criteria. First, a student must demonstrate an interest in one of the programs. They must have a good attendance record in their freshman and sophomore years, and must have completed ten high school credits before making application. The Health Occupations and Electronics courses also require that the students have a math background which includes the completion of Algebra I and Geometry. A "C" average is desired for those students who want to enter the Center.

In the fall of each school year, all sophomore students are mailed a flyer briefly announcing the programs at the Area Technical Trade center. Shortly after the flyer is mailed, presentations are made at each home high school to interested students. Applications and brochures are made available to the students through their counselor's office. An interview is made by the

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