

Education

"THE REPORT CARD"

Black History Month

Yvonne Atkinson



On Thursday, February 13, 1985, the Board of School Trustees passed a resolution honoring the crew of America's space shuttle Challenger. The proclamation was read to the audience and now hangs in the Board Room of the Education Center. A copy has been provided each of our schools for proper display.

Its importance, sincerity, and message, I felt, should be viewed by our community so I have dedicated this week's column to this proclamation, and share it with you to remember that these seven Americans have shown us the way to push back the barriers of knowledge and science.

SEE FRONT PAGE

SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

Occupational Education: A Force For the Future

With the declining scholastic aptitude test scores, the Federal Government initiated a national study which was released under the title, "A Nation at Risk." Fifty different research reports were commissioned to complete this study, and each of these dealt with a segment of the educational process which could have had some impact on the apparent decline of academic achievement.

Following the issuance of the report, communities in every state had an occasion to review their educational programs and in many instances, there was a call for reform. Parents and community leaders met with school officials to determine if their educational program

was meeting student needs and expectancies. From most of these meetings came a reform movement which has propelled American education to readdress its priorities and concentrate on basic skill development. Three years ago, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (S.A.T.) scores began to increase and last year's increase was greater than any year since 1973. These tests are offered to college bound students, but have been deemed as an indicator of the total school's performance. The report, "A Nation at Risk," concentrated on college bound students. The individual research projects again concentrated on the college bound youth.

While the reform movement was being discussed by state legislators and local school district officials, there was a number of educators and prominent citizens who sounded an alarm. The report, which had propelled the reform movement, had for the most part, neglected vocational education in its totality. To add to this, only the college bound student was being considered as S.A.T. scores were reviewed. In Nevada, as reform was considered, the Governor commissioned two studies. These were entitled, "Making High School Count," and "Making High School Work." Nevada had looked at both aspects of education — the academic and the vocational. Recommendations were formulated by both task forces and presented to the State Board of Education. These studies and resolutions offered by the 1985 legislative session, coupled with information received from the various

school districts across the state, will provide the basis for changes made in secondary education in the State of Nevada for the next decade. One suggested change involves increasing the number of required classes needed for graduation.

Whatever recommendations ultimately end up in being offered as directives for the secondary schools of our state, vocational education must remain a significant segment of the educational opportunities offered our high school youth. Over 70 percent of the graduates of high school today will not complete a high school education, and over 80 percent of the jobs available do not require college degrees. Vocational education in the high schools can be exploratory, which means that students have an opportunity to investigate potential job and career options before entering the work force. Vocational programs can be general preparation programs where general job skills like maintaining and holding a job, getting along with employees, and following directions are classroom tasks. Vocational education can be job specific where actual job performance skills and requirements are taught and mastered.

Vocational education cannot be an option that we consider for possible inclusion in our curriculum. It must be an important segment available to all students. A trained work force for this nation means prosperity and growth. Meeting the challenge for an emerging job market can be a role the high school plays. Students can profit by their experiences. A prominent vocational

African Educators Criticize Proposed Voucher Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — African American educators meeting in Washington (Jan. 23-25) severely criticized the soundness of proposed voucher legislation noting that it is impossible in any state in the nation to "buy" education for \$600 per year.

The executive board of The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) expressed grave concern about the provisions of the Equity and Choice Act of 1985 (S. 1876 and H.R. 3821). According to NABSE President Dr. Charles R. Thomas, "We believe this is harmful legislation and must not be permitted to become law. Of critical concern is the provision allowing for the receipt of Chapter I monies through vouchers to private schools without those schools being obligated to provide Chapter I services.

Under the ill-conceived bill local education agencies (LEAs) must assume responsibility for monitoring discrimination in private schools receiving vouchers and also bear the undue burden of assuring that discrimination is not taking place.

NABSE is concerned that LEAs must assure that vouchers are being used properly by parents who receive them whether they are used for tuition, or compensatory educational services, or both. This additional administrative burden further inhibits LEAs from carrying out their legitimate Chapter I educational functions.

NABSE is further concerned that the cost for additional administrative services and transportation created by the voucher program may be deducted by the LEAs from their Chapter I grants thereby reducing the funds available for legitimate activities.

educator once noted that vocational education teaches math, English, and all of the other subjects through an applied process. As reform continues in Nevada, we will want to keep these facts in mind and always develop a program which offers vocational education as an opportunity and challenge.

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