

Education

SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

Sixteenth Annual Career Day

February 13, 1986 was a very special day. The Sixteenth Annual Career Day, a partnership program jointly sponsored by the Clark County School District, the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and literally dozens of local business and professional organizations convened at the Sahara Space Center for the opening exercise. As in past years, the Southland Corporation spearheaded the organization, development, and coordination.

It is the longest continuous running partnership for occupational education in Clark County, and has an important history. Over these past sixteen years, over 10,000 students enrolled in the junior and senior classes of local high schools have had the opportunity to participate in a day-long career awareness and exploration program. Students are hosted at an early morning breakfast where corporate and professional sponsors will meet with the student participants and have a time for introductions. Included in the breakfast activity is a guest speaker. This is an individual who has made a significant contribution to Clark County or Nevada, and who can enlighten the students on the world of work. This year's guest speaker was former Governor Mike O'Callaghan. Governor O'Callaghan noted in his remarks that the students today "are involved in a career and each job or position you hold during your work life is just a weigh stop." Governor O'Callaghan then continued by informing the students that "No one knows how great they can be, not even you," and with these challenging words, a description about tomorrow's job opportunities and a challenge to these young people to be the best that they could be was given.

Following the orientation session, the students left to spend the remainder of the day with a sponsor. They had an opportunity to view first-hand the real work world, to ask questions about job expectancies, employment

opportunities and educational requirements, to view working conditions, and to obtain a wealth of information about career possibilities.

This type of program would be successful if the story were to end at this point; however, the sponsors have contributed to the career day program over the years and any funds not used to pay for the breakfast meeting are then made available to the scholarship fund at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This fund has now reached \$84,000, and is used to assist local high school seniors who seek academic excellence in education at our own UNLV. The efforts of Bob Hitchcock, Director of Southland Corporation, is to be commended. His effort to continue this partnership program shows positive results every year. A note of thanks goes to each of the sponsors who contributed not only funds to support the breakfast and the scholarship program, but valuable company time to train the youth of the Clark County School District. A special accolade for forming a union which assists students in transition between secondary school and college is owed to all those who made this a

Kit Carson to host Career Day

Kit Carson Sixth Grade Center, 1735 North D Street, will host a Career Day on February 28 from 1 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. Nearly 40 business professionals, many of them parents of students enrolled at the school, have volunteered to lend their expertise as presenters.

The activity is designed to provide early exposure to students regarding career options.

Among the scheduled participants are: TV public affairs personalities Paul Dawkins and Deborah Campbell, Lady Rebels basketball coach Sheila Strike-Bolla, F.B.I. special agent Russell Nielsen, and engineer Nancy Darling.

positive learning experience.

This program again provides ample proof that when the Clark County industrial/business community and the educational agencies combine their efforts, a strong and viable learning experience can take place. Mike O'Callaghan gave the challenge and charge to the students to never sell themselves short. A community and the Sixteenth Annual Career Day is making sure that many young men and women have an opportunity to have the experience and knowledge about careers. They need never sell themselves short because of lack of information. The Seventeenth Annual Career Day is in the planning stages right now, and we look forward to another successful event with a partnership continuing and students assisted in making wise life decisions.

Music Festival to be held at Cannon

The Clark County School District Junior High School Solo and Ensemble Festival will be held March 1 at Cannon Junior High School from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Approximately 900 boys and girls from schools throughout Clark County will perform.

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School To Work Transition

Yvonne Atkinson



The Seventh Conference of the University/Urban Schools Task Force has just published a series of papers commenting on the school to work transition. Opening remarks for this publication were offered by Secretary of Education William J. Bennett. Secretary Bennett states that business leaders and companies are not interested in "narrow vocationalism." "It is important to applaud an emphasis on the broadest education preparation." He further notes that the report, which is prepared as a result of the school to work transition, advises schools to "stress literacy, mathematical skills, and problem solving, and that employers should recognize the relevance to the work place to character traits of self-discipline, self reliance, acceptance of responsibility, and respect for others."

These opening comments by our Secretary of Education frames a thesis of what appears to be a series of reports offered by a number of leaders from our business and educational communities. While we begin with the thesis that education at the public school level should be from a broad perspective, one of the research reports provided a clear picture of what must be

done in order for schools to assist students with transitioning to their world of work. Gordon Berlin, Program Officer for the Ford Foundation, reported that the nation's school to work transition problem has three components. First, there is the student with a solid high school education and work experience background. These students will have little difficulty moving from school to a working life situation. The second group of students from low and moderate income families, Berlin notes, are likely to graduate with barely adequate basic skills and will have difficulty making a solid connection with the world of work. The last group is composed of youth with inadequate basic skills and almost no work experience.

When you consider that the group which has limited basic skills and no work experience may never hold a job, a very real chasm exists between school and work. I was shocked to see that in August of 1985, 893,000 young men and women between the ages of 16 and 20 had never worked. They had never had part-time training, or knew little about obtaining and holding a job, and what was even more disheartening was that many of these who had never held a job were black students. The research report continues by emphasizing that an increasing proportion of the total youth population of America is minority and economically disadvantaged youth who have traditionally found difficulty in making the transition between school and a job. Compound this with the fact that the youth labor market is undergoing drastic change with fewer jobs open to our youth and you see a widening gap.

Today, more than 90 percent of all new jobs held by teenagers are in two areas, retail sales and service. Jobs in the private sector in manufacturing, construction, transportation, mining, and public service which have career ladders are being reduced for youth workers.

So what then as an outcome? Gordon Berlin makes a clear statement. He suggests that "Young men and women who are doing poorly in school are more likely to drop out and they are more likely to become teenage parents, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status." The key to transition between school and work is an education. The Indo-Chinese group have demonstrated this conclusively for as "boat people," they came to this country and melted into the American society and even with limited English ability, have made remarkable progress in school and in the world of work.

In some inter-city schools, the dropout rate for black students is as high as 50 percent. The unemployment rate is even higher. We must take an active stand now to encourage our students to remain in school to achieve to their full potential. As parents and community leaders, we must all take an active interest in school activities. If barriers exist, they must be addressed. If students are confronted with situations where learning is difficult, special programs must be designed. Clark County has an enviable record of intervening and assisting students who need help, but our job has only begun, not ended. We can not rest on any success because tomorrow's generation of young are already enrolled in school. This year's graduates will be our success or failure in tomorrow's transition to the world of work. Our success and failure for education of the remaining students will be determined by how well we provide those skills essential to living and transitioning to a changing world.

I have said many times that together we can make a difference. I believe that. The dropout rate for black students, unemployment for young men and women,

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