

Education

SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

Tuesday, September 30 was a landmark day for the High School/Community College Connection Program. Conducted by satellite, a two and one-half hour teleconference was transmitted to over 250 work locations throughout the 50 states. The purpose for this workshop was to strengthen the working partnerships between high schools and community colleges and to suggest that educators develop a new associate degree program for vocational students. This will be in harmony with the time-honored college prep curriculum already in place in our high schools. The Clark County Community college and Clark County School District have taken a leadership role in this endeavor. A signed articulation agreement has already been completed between the School District and the Community College.

At the beginning of the program, President Ronald Reagan challenged the educational community to take special note of the need for trained workers for an emerging national economy. William E. Brock, Secretary of the Department of Labor, offered the keynote speech and suggested that all of those who will be in the work force in the year 2,000 are in school today. Mr. Brock went on to report that the need for trained workers is on the increase and by the 21st Century, most employment positions will require some training beyond the high school level. The question was posed, "How can we provide continuous, additional training from grades 11-14?" Dale Parnell, President of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, has authored a book entitled "Neglected Majority." His research has shown that many of our students who exit high school have been enrolled in a general education program and have not been trained either for college work or for the job market, yet these are the young people who will make up the work force in the future.

It is from this group of students that we find the greatest number of school dropouts. It is from this same group that we

find the highest unemployment rates. The teleconference clearly clearly demonstrated that America can no longer accept the fact that there are twenty-three million Americans functioning below the fourth grade reading level, nor can America continue to tolerate eleven million young men and women between the ages of 16 - 24 who have failed to complete a high school education.

This loss in human potential is staggering. Certainly the loss of human dignity is even more frightening. What is now being proposed through efforts of Dr. Paul E. Meacham, President of Clark County Community College and Dr. Robert Wentz, Superintendent of Clark County School District, is a clear and concise agreement regarding training opportunities for high school students that extends through college years. A partnership has been forged and students enrolled in the Clark County School District this year will have an opportunity to hear about continuation programs. Career education activities can start at grade eleven; training programs can

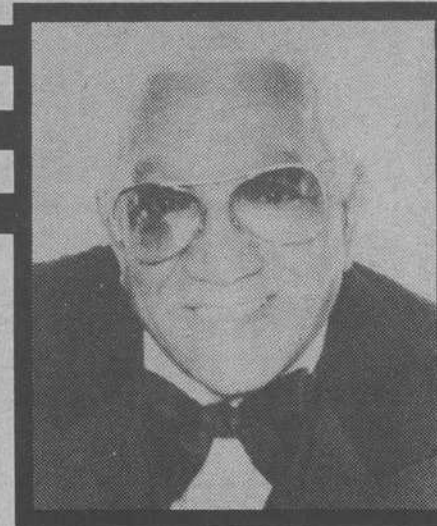
begin at this time; and, through this articulate program endeavor, the student will be able to work through an associate degree program at the Community College.

The teleconference, with its noted panel members, set the stage for America to begin work in a new direction. School districts and community colleges across the nation will be engaging in cooperative endeavors which can do nothing but assist the students we serve. Clark County has the benefit of being a forerunner and a pacesetter. The vision which is before educators now can be realized by the youth of this county.

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