

# Education

## SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS NEARS COMPLETION OF PHASE I

In early October 1987 this column announced the beginning of a unique planning process to be used by our public schools for the coming decade. The planning activity involved three major components. The CCSD established a Strategic Planning Committee and under the direction of Dr. Bill Cook, this group of educators and lay citizens met and established fifteen areas that they considered needed in-depth study. To complete the required studies, Action Teams were identified, again composed of educators and interested lay citizens. These Teams have been meeting on a weekly basis for more than 4 months and now are prepared to present their reports to the Planning Committee. If these action plans are approved, then the entire package of recommendations will be presented to the Board of School Trustees for consideration.

If this sounds like a highly specialized planning process, it is. Yet, under the capable leadership of Bill Cook and the Action Team leaders, initial reports suggest that tremendous progress has been made toward developing an operational guide that this district can use through the year 1998.

Listed among the Action Team reports will be a recommendation for Capital Improvement. One need spend little time in looking about this community to realize that such a plan must be put into place immediately if the district is to meet the educational housing needs of our students for the coming years. Student population growth has passed the 100,000 enrollment figure for the 1987-88 school year. Six new

elementary schools were completed this year, **AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO THE TAXPAYERS**, and are in service at this time. Four more elementary schools will be constructed and opened next year, yet there is a pressing need to continue with the building and modernization program.

Many of us came to this city 20 or more years ago. The growth that has taken place has been assimilated without much notice. However, if you take a few hours and travel throughout the entire city from the south in the Boulder City area to the North Las Vegas community, you will suddenly appreciate the unprecedented growth that has occurred in these 20 years. By traveling across the valley, east to west, you may find that we are no longer a desert city with many areas of land unoccupied. Homes have been constructed, apartments built and occupied, and business areas developed where vacant land once existed.

The construction you have viewed now supports a population of more than 600,000. In the next ten years, this progress will not diminish and our population could approach 1,000,000 residents. To be prepared for these new arrivals, schools must be constructed on a scale that is unprecedented in our district's history. We will need more than 50 elementary schools, and over 23 secondary schools, just to meet the student educational needs. Buildings must be modernized and repaired as we progress during this time.

One Action Team under the leadership of Dr. Dan Newburn has tackled this tough and demanding issue. Their

## UNR INITIATES MINORITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

RENO, NV (UNR)—As part of a new scholarship program, the University of Nevada-Reno will offer at least the same percentage of scholarships from its 1988-89 general scholarship fund to minority students as the percentage of minority students enrolled at UNR. Minority students comprised 7 percent of the overall student population at UNR during the fall 1987 semester. A total of \$70,000 to \$100,000 in scholarships is expected to be offered to minority students for the 1988-89 school year.

The deadline for 1988-89 UNR Minority Scholarship applications is the same as the deadline for all UNR general scholarships: March 1.

Minority students who will enter UNR as freshmen in the fall 1988 semester will be eligible for a minority scholarship, worth between \$400 and \$2,500 for the academic year, if they hold a high school grade point average of 3.0 or above. All Nevada high school counselors should have UNR General Scholarship application forms available for interested students. Application forms are also available directly from UNR. A high school transcript is all that needs to

report will be presented to the Planning Committee on February 22, 1988, and their recommendations could reach the Board of School Trustees as early as February 25. This Team along with all the other Action Groups have sought answers to very difficult questions. It was once noted that we either plan for the future or become the victim of the time. The school district has selected to plan and approach the future from a positive position. The success of our district demands such an approach.

accompany a minority student's UNR scholarship application form.

Minority students who are returning to UNR for the fall 1988 semester will be eligible for a minority scholarship if they hold at least a 2.5 grade point average at UNR. They must also submit an application, available at the UNR Scholarship Office, and a UNR transcript by March 1.

The newly initiated UNR Minority Scholarship Program is part of UNR's overall effort to increase minority enrollment at UNR. In the fall of 1987, minority enrollment at UNR showed an 18 percent increase, largely because of the efforts of the university's minority student affairs office. That office has conducted numerous direct mail campaigns to minority high school seniors who have taken the ACT, SAT or similar college entrance tests, has enhanced efforts to make scholarship and financial aid information available to new and returning minority students and has provided career counseling and academic advisement to minority students enrolled at UNR.

For more information about UNR's minority scholarships, call the UNR Scholarship Office at 784-4666.

## Business Workshop To Be Presented on March 4

A one-day workshop focusing on the information needed to start a business will be held on Friday, March 4th at the Holiday Inn-Center Strip, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Small Business Administration, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), and the College of Business and Economics, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

## SCHOOL BUILDING PROPOSAL NEARS COMPLETION

A Clark County School District Strategic Planning action team is finalizing recommendations for a 10-year school building program to present to the school board for its review and approval February 25 at 7 p.m. The proposal must first be reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee before going to the school board. At every step until final board approval the proposal is subject to be changed.

The ten-year building program, in its current draft form, calls for the construction of 54 elementary schools, 13 junior high schools, 10 senior high schools, 90 portable classrooms, school site acquisitions, building additions and remodeling totaling \$674,413,068.

If finally adopted by the school board and approved by voters, every sector of Clark County will be benefited.

In the first year of the program, 1988-89, a total of eleven schools are expected to be started, including five elementary schools in Las Vegas, one elementary school in Green Valley, one elementary school in Moapa, one junior high school in Las

Vegas, two senior high schools in Las Vegas, one senior high school in Green Valley, one senior high school in Laughlin, and one senior high school in Virgin Valley.

A concerted effort will be made to start construction of the elementary schools so they may be completed for the next school year and to initiate construction of the senior high schools to relieve overcrowding at the secondary level as quickly as possible. The inclusive cost for constructing a senior high school is \$23,000,000. It takes approximately two years to construct a high school and each one occupies a 40 acre site. Junior high schools average \$7,000,000 on a 20 acre site, and take approximately 18 months to build.

Elementary schools cost \$4,000,000 each, situated on 10-acre sites, and can be built within a one year period of time.

Although the district owns several countywide sites through previous land exchanges, BLM purchases and donations by land developers, some additional sites would still have to be purchased. The objective is to purchase sites as early as possible before development moves in and causes land prices to escalate.

The overall building plan is being developed by a cross-section of representatives from the school district and the community and represents the best collective citizen input. The team is considering as criteria for their decisions, the need for new schools, protecting the public's investment in existing schools, and anticipate of future changes to educational programs.

Additional factors being taken under consideration include: K-12 school input regarding at-risk students, year round school needs, increased graduation requirements, and technological advances.

District personnel are researching the most cost-effective financing plan to support the program by combining pay-as-you-go and bond funding without increasing the present tax rate.

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