



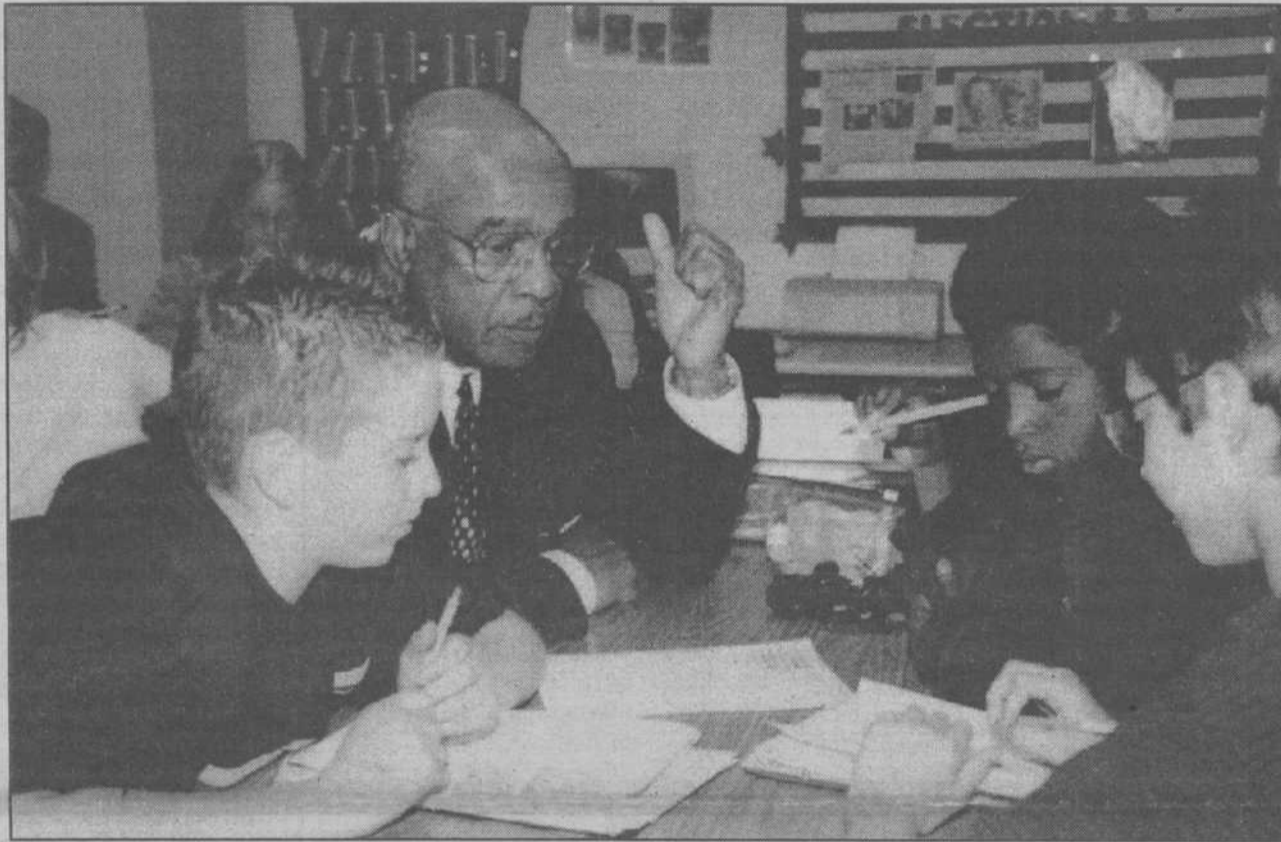
Educational choice increases for Nevadans

By Al Triche
Sentinel-Voice

School choice, generally speaking, is a reform initiative to expand educational options, especially for students in poor districts. Many consider it the natural outgrowth of desegregation, open enrollment and other equal educational opportunity efforts during the 1960s and '70s. Many, if not most large city districts use one or more "choice" programs.

The options could exist in private schools, including parochial and other religious-affiliated schools. They might also be found in public systems, for example, through intra- and interdistrict transfers or at so-called "magnet" schools. They might appear in private schools—could come in the form of controversial voucher programs, or one's choice might be among the increasingly popular "charter" schools. Choice might even be expressed through home schooling.

The current debate over school choice dates back to at least the Reagan administration and questions the pur-



Education Secretary Roderick Paige works with Hyde Park Middle School students, Jeffrey Frennd (left), Joe Scott (center) and Scott McKnight Wednesday. Paige visited two magnet schools and spoke about the challenges facing local educators.

pose and role of public schools. American education has systemic problems, therefore it needs changes in systems and policies, say choice

proponents.

But, say opponents, since the nation expects public schools to teach the values it embraces, introduction of

flawed choice plans could lead to the undoing of American public education as we know it. Instead, they say, reduce class sizes, update

textbooks, give teachers the resources they need and, especially here in Nevada, pay them more.

Generally speaking, Afri-

can-Americans strongly support school choice and approve of court decisions that have upheld parental rights. Late last year, when the Center for Urban Black Studies and the Center for Contemporary Studies hosted a conference on the reform movement, a group of over 300 black leaders agreed that public education has failed the black community.

Government-funded vouchers and tax credits for private education are, by far, the most controversial of the choice-based reform initiatives.

Such programs are supposed to motivate public schools to perform better by creating the threat of losing students to private schools, which, in theory, would succeed where the public schools have failed. Supporters say parents need alternatives to low-performing schools and competition will create them. Nevada, to date, does not have a voucher program.

Many opponents of vouchers say the programs are simply too expensive.

(See Education, Page 3)

Police say boy, 3, killed by 6-year-old

By Alan Morrell
Special to Sentinel-Voice
Rochester, N.Y. — Friends and family crowded a Rochester church yesterday to mourn a slain 3-year-old.

Not present was the boy's 6-year-old brother—who authorities say may be the youngest killer in area history. "It's very hard for the mother. She's holding it in. We're trying to get her to cry," said Sister Grace Miller, a family acquaintance who attended the funeral.

The attack occurred May 20 during a baseball game at a relative's home, said Police Chief Robert Duffy. The 3-year-old threw a stone at the older child, who then hit the boy with a brick and repeatedly struck him with a wooden, full-size baseball bat, Duffy said.

"In my 25 years as a police officer, I don't remember anything close to this." — Rochester Police Chief Robert Duffy

The next morning, the 3-year-old was unresponsive and not breathing, authorities said. Rural/Metro Medical Services took him to Rochester General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

"This is a terrible, terrible tragedy, not only for the 3-year-old, but for the entire family, including the older sibling," Duffy said. "In my 25 years as a police officer, I don't remember anything close to this."

Under state law, a 6-year-old cannot be held criminally responsible for a death. Children must be at least 7 to be charged as juveniles; anyone 16 or older can be charged as

an adult.

Family Court ordered that the 6-year-old be placed in a foster home, in the care of the Monroe County Department of Social Services, said agency Director Richard F. Schauseil. He said he could not comment on what would happen to the child; that decision will be made by Family Court, which typically closes its proceedings.

"She wants her 6-year-old back," Miller said of the children's mother. "It was a tragic thing that happened."

The brothers and other children were playing baseball May 20 in the back yard of a relative's home on Dale Street when the 3-year-old

threw a rock or stone at his older brother.

"The 6-year-old then reacted," Duffy said. "First, he used a brick to hit the boy in the lower body. The sibling then struck the 3-year-old in the abdomen and back with a wooden baseball bat, using over-the-head strikes to the back and abdomen."

Apparently, no other children intervened. Duffy was unsure how many other children were there or their exact ages. He said the 3-year-old was the youngest and the others were about 6 to 10. Police interviewed, some of the boys, said department spokesman Sgt. Carlos Garcia.

Police have not determined whether anyone was directly supervising the children when the attack happened.



Diane E. Watson (left) stands with City Councilwoman Lynette Boggs McDonald, one of her many supporters.

Local officials supportive of Watson's congressional run

By Melinda A. Vereen
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Diane E. Watson, who recently completed an appointment as U.S. ambassador to Micronesia, Embassy in Colonia, has also served in the California State Senate for

20 years representing the 26th Senatorial District, which includes a large portion of Los Angeles.

Watson, who is running for congresswoman from the 32nd District of California, (See Watson, Page 15)