

## OUR VIEW

### Making the Grade

Last week, the Clark County School District released statistics on the number of schools that met adequate yearly progress (AYP), an academic measurement on how schools are meeting standards set forth by both the Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997 and 2001's federal No Child Left Behind legislation. (A record number of Clark County campuses failed to meet AYP—more than 200).

As important as it is for school district leaders, school administrators and teachers to find ways to produce better students, it's equally important for parents to be educated on what AYP means for their children. On Monday, nearly 27,000 letters were sent to parents of children in Title I schools failing to meet AYP. The letters explain that they can use the "choice" option to move their children to a better-performing school. The school district also must share transportation costs for students needing rides to other schools.

In previous years, the transfer option hasn't been widely used, in large part because many parents enjoy having a neighborhood school—the ability to walk their children to and from campus, to make parent-teacher meetings and special events, to help create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Failing to make AYP doesn't have to be the end of the world for a school. Implausible as it might seem to bring all youth—mainstream, developmentally delayed, behaviorally afflicted, non-English-speaking, as well as all the other subsets of students—up to snuff academically, it's an attainable goal. Everyone must simply do their part. Stop making excuses and start making progress. Our children deserve it.

### Standing Room Only

Whitney Houston sang it best: "I believe the children are the future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride..."

For the past nine years, the city of Las Vegas and the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District have hosted a Performing Arts and Visual Camp for Kids. The essence of the camp, according to promotional materials, is to provide a "pivotal opportunity for Las Vegas area youth to acquire character-building life skills training through the integration of an arts education program," and also to "incorporate values consistent with building strong and diverse, yet cohesive, communities. The life skills taught and executed at PVAC are lessons that can be practiced lifelong."

As the beginning of the school year beckons, camp activities are coming to an end for the talented youth who participated in the program at the West Las Vegas Library. The finale is slated for 2 p.m. at the West Las Vegas Library Theater on Saturday.

What a great gesture it would be for these wonderfully talented youth to perform in front of a packed house. What a way to not only build their self-esteem, but to create, if only for an event, that elusive community and generational connectivity that's so key in building strong communities. Toward that end, it would also be great to see all the African-American politicians who represent portions of West Las Vegas and North Las Vegas, all the activists who dedicate time, money and energy to improving the area, all the people that support activities in the area, in attendance.

Sure, such a gesture might seem purely ceremonial, especially for the politicians. But when it comes to children, sometimes you win with style over substance.



## How will John Roberts effect Blacks?

By Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice

On July 19, 2005, President Bush made a move that could potentially change the tone and tenor of the Supreme Court forever. All of the American people are hoping that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's replacement will guarantee and respect the rights and freedoms of all Americans and will judge cases fairly — with an open mind and without a political agenda. On one hand, we might be hoping, and on the other hand, crapping, with the nomination of John G. Roberts Jr.

Based on a preliminary review of some of his available records Bush's appointment of John Roberts can prove to be very detrimental to African-Americans. I have some very grave concerns about John Roberts' position on civil rights, voting rights, justice and equality, affirmative action and other issues of particular importance to the Black community.

We have been hearing from our national African-American organizations that their main concerns stem from having very little information on his judicial philosophy with respect to the above referenced issues. I don't know how much more information they need to determine that Roberts is nothing more than a right-wing conservative who will most certainly turn back the hands of time for African-Americans.



### ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

At first glance, Roberts may not appear to be an ultra-right judicial activist, but his approach to issues of protecting the rights and freedoms of individual Americans are to some unclear and troublesome at best. He may be a hard-nosed extremist with a soft conservative façade. Reports are being made that he has been listed as a member of the Federalist Society, a conservative organization that time and time again has opposed affirmative action in employment and hiring and has questioned the need to extend the Voting Rights Act in 2007.

From the cases of Dred Scott to Plessy to Brown to Bolling, individual justices on the Supreme Court have played a critical role in obtaining or denying racial justice and equal opportunity in America. It appears that Roberts will certainly be a judge who denies racial justice and equal opportunity based on several of his previous rulings and has consistently supported and promoted a legislative agenda that placed the rights of minority and women groups in jeopardy. He has been upfront and consistent in providing the conservative movement with the legal resources to oppose

civil rights.

Roberts regularly participates in press briefings sponsored by the Washington Legal Foundation, a right-wing legal organization that litigates on behalf of corporate interests and wealthy property owners challenging environmental and other regulations.

In October 2004, *Hedgepeth v. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority*, one of Judge Roberts' decisions, received national attention and outraged child advocates and civil rights organizations when he ruled that the civil rights of a 12-year-old African-American girl were not violated while riding the Washington Metro subway she was handcuffed, arrested,

taken away and fingerprinted by the police for eating a single french fry (allegedly in violation of a no-eating rule for transit riders).

The girl claimed that her equal protection rights had been violated because, under the then-D.C. law, an adult in the same situation would have only been given a citation, while the police were required to arrest her since she was a juvenile. Roberts ruled that juveniles are not a suspect class and do not enjoy fundamental rights to freedom from restraint when there is probable cause for arrest.

In *Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Mineta*, Roberts, as legal counsel, appeared on behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America. He argued that Congress failed to make sufficiently specific findings to justify an affirmative action program for Department of Transportation contractors. In *Rothe Dev. Corp. v. U.S. Dept. of* (See LaGrande, Page 11)

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