

West Prep creating path for brighter future

By Tasha Pope
Sentinel-Voice

The newly established Preparatory Institute School for Academic Excellence at West Hall, on the campus formally named West Middle School, will be holding community informational meetings on the school site at 2050 Sapphire Stone Ave. on Monday at 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

A presentation will be given that explains new programs and curriculum changes now in effect after

the middle school officially ended this semester.

"We will promote the summer institute [for students needing remediation] and talk about class sizes. [We'll also discuss] overall ideas for the program," West principal Mike Barton said.

Following the presentation, the floor will be opened for a question and answer session and community members will have the opportunity to express their views and suggestions.

School Board Trustee

Shirley Barber in District C is spearheading the community sessions to alleviate parent and student concerns about the abrupt change in campus status.

"Parents' input will be critical," Barton explained.

"I embrace that input. The community knows what's needed. I want that support," Barton said. He said that his commitment is to improve "West Prep" scores and turn it into a successful educational institute. Barton is an eight-year veteran educator

in the Clark County School District. "These students need a better education, and we need to give it to them," Barton explained.

The then-West Middle School was operated by Edison Schools, no longer a CCSD contractor, and it failed for the third year in a row to meet the federal standard for No Child Left Behind, which is a program that requires students to be tested so their adequate yearly progress or AYP, a relative scoring system, can be mea-

sured against set goals. It was among 13 schools failing AYP for three years in a row.

"I don't think Edison took off at West [Middle School]. It was never [made a part of] the culture," Barton explained. West Prep has about 900 students enrolled in sixth through eighth grade and many have failed to meet their grade level in various subjects, including reading comprehension, writing, math and science.

Barton said the summer institute will allow those stu-

dents who have fallen behind an opportunity to improve their skills. There is no fee to parents for the extra sessions.

Longer school days and smaller class sizes are also additional proposed changes designed to help West students get back up to speed.

"This stuff isn't going to happen unless you have the community support. We have to get the community and parents involved," Barton said.

For more information, call 799-3120.

KCEP

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rated" so we should see them as a unified entity. "KCEP is EOB, and if EOB is in trouble, that affects KCEP." He suggests that EOB and the community be "creative and come up with ideas" for raising money, "set the differences aside," and "come together for the good of our community."

"Now we've heard from the public, and we need to do something about it," Weekly said. The April 6 board meeting will be for looking at options and potential interested buyers, according to Weekly, but he cautions that people concerned about the outcome of EOB and KCEP should not "sit back and wait on that process."

"I think it's just matter of seeing what's out there," Weekly said in reference to possible solutions that will emerge at the next regular board meeting.

"The community needs to put forth a good faith effort... to show we really care about this agency and the radio station... There should be some other measures in place."

Murray is concerned about the vacated board seats and how effectively business can be conducted.

"At present, there are no candidates to fill [open] positions. The board is looking in three different areas: [the political arena, community advocates for low income families, and the business sector]. Those interested can apply during the regular board meeting on April 6."

The state of the board concerns W. Dean Ishman, president of the local NAACP chapter, because the decision to accept a bid is the responsibility of the four people remaining on the board. As Ishman explained, "There are so many questions, not enough answers and this is going to be a quick sale. We want whoever might win this bid to be someone concerned with the programming, [the

local African-American] community and staff of KCEP. Many things need to be considered, and I have faith in those who remain, but given the circumstances, we want all t's crossed and i's dotted. We don't want this radio station to just be purchased for sale to realize a profit."

Ishman, in a written statement, said: "KCEP is more than a Black radio station, it is our 'voice.' It provides a forum for issues; it is a networking tool; it is a community calendar; it is a voice that keeps us together."

One major concern reflected in Ishman's statement is the possibility that the station could be "sold to a speculator that will say all the right things and agree to keep it [KCEP] intact and then turn around and sell it out from under us [the community] at a profit."

Ishman admitted and emphasized that "this sale has to happen, and we understand that. We just want to make sure that whoever buys the station has the community concerns at heart and maintains the integrity of KCEP."

While Murray was not at liberty to discuss the identities of the potential buyers, he did disclose that at least one entity is local, and that he is not familiar with the prospective buyer(s).

Murray also said, "We will look at the bids on April 6 based on offers, which include money, as well as other criteria, such as community concerns and the board's perspective. We do not want to sell out our community. We are looking at the best offer which is beneficial to both EOB and the community, and we have no intention to do away with our Black community voice."

During the public comment session at the special board meeting, one respondent, local business owner Barbara Crockett, firmly stated that KCEP is consid-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Barbara Crockett speaks at Wednesday's EOB meeting.

ered so valuable an asset that she is advocating that members of the community and other concerned parties — entertainers, business owners, local or not — should band together, find the necessary funds in order to ensure that the station is purchased by owners who will maintain KCEP as a vehicle to continue serving the needs of the Black community.

After the meeting, she spoke in more detail about her proposal that a so-called

Black Community Action Committee be formed. "It just came about when they [started talking] about selling KCEP." She emphasized that the station is of "historical" importance to the Black community. "It's the only Black radio station in Nevada... it's the only voice we have. We are coming together to save EOB and save our station."

Crockett feels that is feasible to raise the "\$1 million to \$3 million" needed to rescue EOB. "We need 300 days

to get the total amount owed for EOB," she said, adding, "but the \$250,000, I believe that we can have that within 30 days." She believes that by raising the money, EOB and KCEP can survive without the county funds, in the latter amount, that come with some stipulations she and others do not favor.

Crockett feels that a group like the one she is organizing should be given the option to take control of the station for an initial \$250,000 investment level, which she said the county is offering to give EOB and KCEP so it can go in, "audit the books and bring in their crew." Crockett would like that same option for her action committee in order to "turn things around."

Crockett invites those interested in the committee's efforts to call 638-2561 and to attend planned meetings starting this weekend.


It should be noted that although a sale can be accepted by the board of directors, it still needs to be approved by

the Federal Communications Commission. This is, at best, a lengthy process, which leaves the question about the urgency of a sale, except to gain some immediate income.

EOB has been in existence since the mid-1960s and manages many social programs, including senior citizen day care, substance abuse treatment and food programs. There have also been accusations of mismanagement of funds and other administrative problems. A recent loss of the agency's contract to operate a multi-million dollar Head Start program was an outcome of years of mismanagement and financial woes.

The next general meeting of EOB is on Thursday, April 6, in their headquarters at 2753 South Highland beginning at 11:00a.m. For more information, contact their office at (702) 647-2010.

Parker Philpot contributed to this article.

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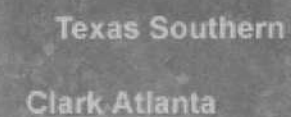
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