

West

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of students at the former West Middle School who met standards in reading was 25 percent; writing, 39 percent; mathematics, 26 percent; and science, 22 percent.

Part of the overhaul of the West campus — one of the schools in Clark County operated by the Edison Project whose contract's phasing out — has resulted in the hiring of new school administration within the last month. Local veteran educator Michael Barton, has been named the school's new principal, and Dr. Celeste Jackson Stansberry has been named the school's new vice principal. Barton spoke about the reason behind the school hosting the informational meeting:

"This meeting [had the objectives of] setting the vision for the school while also getting input from the parents and community about what they would like to see here."

Commenting on the academic deficiencies over the previous three years Barton



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

Clark County School Board Trustee Shirley Barber speaks at the meeting announcing changes at West Prep.

stated, "The Edison Project was here over the past five years as an attempt by the school district to get the achievement level up and, unfortunately, that did not happen. Scores were still below the standards, and what we plan to do next year is to make this a sixth through

ninth grade school with a smaller class size of 25 to 1 ratio." According to the 2004-2005 school report card, the average class size at the school was 23 to 1.

He continued, "One of the goals of West Prep is to ensure that students attending this school are able to pass

the Nevada State proficiency exam earning a diploma and not just receiving a certificate of attendance. We will offer classes that will assist our students to prepare for college."

One of the changes Barton has implemented since his arrival at the school last week was the hiring of a success advocate. He added, "Darren McCoy was selected because he grew up in this neighborhood, he knows the neighborhood, and he will help us build connections and organize efforts to reach out to the community."

Stansberry spoke on the issue of accountability at the school and stakeholders involvement.

"I think we all recognize that student achievement is a shared responsibility among parents, staff members and students. We want to make sure that we have a collaboration among all parties in order to make sure that we are making decisions that will allow students to excel in school," Stansberry said.

At present, the school is operating under the Edison governance plan until June 30 and will develop a shared governance proposal beginning July 1.

Campbell charged in assault on maid

NEW YORK (AP) — Supermodel Naomi Campbell was charged with assault for throwing her cell phone at a housekeeper after accusing her of stealing clothes when she couldn't find a pair of jeans she wanted to wear on "Oprah," prosecutors said.

She was released on her own recognizance and allowed to keep her passport after her lawyer argued that her famous face would prevent her from fleeing.

"She is probably the most recognized and prominent model in the world," defense attorney David Breitbart told a judge last week in Manhattan Criminal Court. "There is no place she could go and not be recognized."

Campbell, wearing a white fur poncho, was arraigned on a charge of second-degree assault before Judge Richard Weinberg, who allowed Breitbart to enter a plea of not guilty on her behalf.

In a statement issued late last week, Campbell called the allegation that she hit or injured her housekeeper (See Campbell, Page 14)

The meeting was hosted by Clark County School Board Trustee Shirley Barber, who commented after the event about the change and the poor turnout at the meeting.

"One of the things that I think is important to this effort is that we establish the right climate — or what we refer to as culture — because our students need to be taught, and we do not need people who cannot teach these students. Our turnout

tonight was disappointing, and we must make a better effort to get this information out to the community about what we're doing here at West."

The school will be offering a summer institute program for those students failing academically beginning June 13. Plans are underway to service a school population next year of grades six through nine, and within three to five years, to be a total K-12 school.

Hip-Hop

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Las Vegas," said local entertainment consultant Sweet Lou Collins.

Young's comments are believed to have influenced the Gaming Control Board to send out a memorandum to all casino operators informing them they'd be held accountable for violent acts occurring as a result of gangster rap performances.

Collins feels Sheriff Young didn't have, "the education to decide what [qualifies as] gangster rap," Collins said.

Although Control Board Chairman Dennis Neilander said the memorandum was merely a reminder that gaming licensees need to be attentive in preventing illegal activity, the conference message is a rebuttal of what they see as a direct attack on all hip-hop.

"It's discrimination because they are saying, 'You can come and do country [music], you can come and do rock, but you can't come and do hip-hop,'" said Hasaan Muhammad, CEO of Xradio.biz based in Las Vegas.

Muhammad was planning a musical conference where executives from 42 different record labels, distribution companies and entertainment firms would come together and help boost the careers of local and indepen-

dent artists.

His event had been accepted and approved by a local hotel. Then, according to Muhammad, "Bill Young goes on TV and says [there's] a ban on hip-hop. Two days later I received a call [and the hotel informed me] they didn't want my business," Muhammad said.

The hip-hop rally promoters and supporters emphasized that performance venue executives and law officials may be misinformed about what hip-hop represents.

"The media portrays hip-hop as young and ignorant," said Muhammad.

Collins contends that, "Hip-hop is not a race, it's a culture."

Muhammad insists hip-hop music isn't the cause of violent activity.

"Rap venues are not the problems with violence. How many domestic violence calls do police go on everyday that have nothing to do with rap music?" Muhammad emphasized.

The hour long conference drew a small crowd of about 30, but the artists and promoters vow to do whatever is necessary to alleviate the ban.

"My recommendation is to sit down with executives and Sheriff [Young and department] to give them a whole perspective of quality hip-hop music," Collins said.

Collins believes the ban on hip-hop will only increase negative behavior and violence in the Las Vegas community.

"Everybody can point the finger, but if the [police department] doesn't come together with the hip-hop community, [there will be an] increase in crime. The entire population is going to rebel because they don't have a respective place to hone [their] craft," Collins said.

Collins also believes people usually fear what they don't understand, and, in this case, the police and casinos just don't understand what hip-hop music is all about, he and other advocates conclude. The banning of an entire genre of music is the direct result of a huge "misunderstanding," many advocates said.

And they fear that the misconception about certain beats and expressive rhythmic verses will cause an entire city to eliminate hip-hop music — the music that appears to be medicine to the souls of many Las Vegas youth, across all races and a wide age range, as well.

They feel, at the end of the day, regardless of what type of music is spinning on turntables or gliding across the airwaves, that music isn't the cause of violence, and individuals should be responsible for their own actions.

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