

# New CCSD superintendent initiates progressive changes

By Tasha Pope  
Sentinel-Voice

Clark County School District superintendent, Dr. Walt Rulffes will initiate a new Superintendent's Schools Region in the Clark County School District this fall. It's designed with hopes of improving schools that have failed to meet requirements

as measured by adequate yearly progress goals or AYP in accordance with the provisions of the No Child Left Behind laws.

Rulffes decided to initiate a new region because he felt the community wanted "to make progressive changes in certain areas of the school district," he said.

This new region isn't intended to just improve failing schools, it's also designed to provide relief for the five existing CCSD regions that have grown in student population without their administration being increased.

"I decided to pull out 40 schools as the Superintendent's Schools.

These are schools [at which] we will apply some of the best practices and innovative techniques so we are able to find models that will improve student achievement," Rulffes said.

Some of the schools targeted are Professional Practice Schools, which are schools that are on their third year of being on the "needs improvement list" of schools failing AYP under the No Child Left Behind guidelines.

If changes aren't implemented and drastic improvements made, the state could choose to take control of those educational institutes, resulting in even more extreme changes than proposed by the Superintendent's Schools plan.

"I believe that we should control our own destiny, and we should make improvements before the state takeover option occurs," Rulffes said.

The takeover of schools by a state is an option under the provisions in the national No Child Left Behind guidelines. It has been used in other state's school districts when schools fail for more

than three years to pass AYP goals. CCSD has had takeover of no schools by the state, according to a spokesperson in the communications office.

The Superintendent's Schools Regions will focus on making effective modifications so positive academic results occur quickly. The new region will have four categories: Choice Schools, Empowerment Schools, Language Schools and Distance Education Schools.

Choice schools will be geared toward expanding choice options for students and allow them to select the focus of their educational path.

With the success of existing "choice schools" like Advanced Technology Academy on Vegas Drive near North Rancho, Rulffes has decided to implement similar type of schools within his Superintendent's Region.

"[We want to] build on what's already working. For example, Advanced Technology Academy [is a] school offered on a choice basis. [This category of] schools have high graduation rates and low drop out rates,

"Rulffes explained.

The second category of educational institutes in the new region will be Empowerment Schools.

This type will serve as a pilot where school staff will experience greater independence and have fewer restraints from contracts and central control from the district.

"They will be like new schools. The principal will personally select staff," Rulffes explained.

Staff at Empowerment Schools will have more control over budget and more freedom to implement programs that will serve to help students improve their performance.

Language Acquisition Schools will offer intense instruction to help non-English speaking students learn the English language.

Distance Education Schools, will offer online courses that allow students to earn their degrees from home or other locations and have their classes delivered Web-based, through Internet access.

With every great plan  
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## Reggae Festival 2006 set

By Tasha Pope  
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The fifth annual Reggae in the Desert Festival, which is co-sponsored by Clark County Department of Parks and Recreation for the community, will be held June 10 at the Clark County Government Center Amphitheater located at 500 S. Grand Central Parkway just west of downtown Las Vegas. The festival begins at 6:00 p.m., but the gates open about an hour in advance.

Performances by featured reggae artists Yellowman, Michael Franti and Spearhead, Gregory Isaacs and Four 20 Daze will continue until 11:00 p.m.

Attendees aren't allowed to bring food or drinks but authentic ethnic cuisine will be available at concession stands during the festival.

In addition to the variety of dishes, arts and crafts will also be available at vendor booths. Organizers hint that negotiation skills are welcome at the trade area.

Last year the festival drew around 2,700 people, but this year program administrator Brian Saliba is hopeful that number will increase.

"It's a strong line up so we should do fairly well," Saliba said.

He is also confident that with the new diverse musical line-up, more people will come out for the show. Each performer has a unique, distinctive style that will create a relaxed atmosphere during the festival.

Four 20 Daze, is a band made up of UNLV students. "They're a favorite on campus," Saliba said.

Winston Foster, the artist known as Yellowman, an albino, kept his childhood nickname and developed it into his stage name. Since he hit the scene in the 1970s, Yellowman's musical style developed into dancehall lyrics and beats. With his latest album, "Freedom of Speech," Yellowman earned his first Grammy nomination.



Legendary Jamaican artist Yellowman tops list of performers in Reggae in the Desert Festival. (File photo)

tion.

"[Yellowman] is a legend in Jamaica," Saliba explained.

"Michael Franti and Spearhead [bring] more of a world jazz fusion, funk," he added.

Franti and Spearhead, a spiritual and political band, focus on world issues and spiritual beliefs. Franti, who is the lead singer of Spearhead, has been in the music business since 1986.

He began his career with more of a punk, rock, and reggae style, but after forming Spearhead, his sound has evolved.

Gregory Isaacs is also on the entertainment card for the evening and is considered a veteran in the reggae industry, according to organizers. His career spans over three decades, and he is best known for his love ballads sung with a relaxed nasal style.

The local reggae band, Four 20 Daze, will put a Polynesian twist on their music to add even more diversity to the festival.

The other event co-sponsors include several local radio and television broadcasters.

Saliba said this year they hope for, "great weather, great music and a great turnout."

Although it is an outside event, lawn chairs, umbrellas, coolers, animals (unless they are seeing-eye dogs) and other potential obstructions are restricted. Attendees are permitted to bring personal water bottles, still cameras and blankets.

Tickets start at \$20 and festival goers are required to present a valid ID before entering The Reggae in the Desert.

For more information, call 455-8200 or go to [www.reggaeinthedesert.com](http://www.reggaeinthedesert.com).

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