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Home

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68 SEVEN
Pages in 4 Sections

25 CENTS

APS board rates school series as positive

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Four members of the Albuquerque Board of Education reacted positively to *The Tribune's* "Undercover Student" series and said they hope it will stimulate changes in Albuquerque Public Schools.

But board President Meg O'Keefe said last week's series presented an unrealistic and biased view of an APS high school because *Tribune* Reporter Leslie Linthicum based her articles on only 11 days at Eldorado High School and took only "fluff" courses.

Two board members had no comment.

Ms. Linthicum, 24, posed as a 17-year-old senior at

The principal and faculty of Eldorado High School have reacted to The Tribune's "Undercover Student" series. Their comments appear on Page A-5.

the city's largest high school in January. She was placed by one of the school's counselors in five classes — two electives and three fulfilling graduation requirements. Last week, *The Tribune* published a series of stories about her experiences, and it has prompted considerable controversy.

"I hope it (the series) stimulates kids and the

schools to think on a higher level," said Dr. Susanne Brown, school board member.

"It was disappointing that some of the attitudes and expectations expressed by some of the teachers were not very high."

Dr. Brown added that the articles "verified what we thought was going on at our high school." She has two children who attend Albuquerque High School.

She praised the choice of Eldorado High School for the "undercover" project because its students continually have had the city's highest scores on achievement tests and college entrance exams. "With most of the other high schools, people would have said that that was to be expected."

Board member Bobby Santiago said that if the

report is true about the availability of drugs at the school, it strengthens his feeling that there should be more control of students on campus.

"I'm not for completely closing the campuses, but perhaps we should think about closing them to freshmen and sophomores," Santiago said. "They could still remain open for juniors and seniors."

"It probably enlightens all of us relative to the problems in the classroom and in the schools," he added.

Member Mark Sanchez said he welcomed the close scrutiny of the "Undercover Student" report. "Some-

See APS Page A-14

APS board positive about series

Continued from Page A-1

times we get so far removed from the process that we're not aware of the real situation."

He said, however, that it would be difficult to bring about many changes in the school climate because the schools are a reflection of the community.

"Until it's reinforced by the whole community, there won't be any change," he said.

Board member David Hsi said the report encourages students and school personnel "to take a closer look at themselves."

"There's always room for improvement," he said.

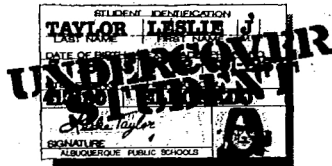
Hsi felt, however, that the report could have been more objective. "She (Ms. Linthicum) tended to only point out the bad things."

Despite the praise for the series, each of the board members said it was unfortunate that the series mentioned teachers and staff at Eldorado by name.

"The only thing I didn't agree with was the mentioning of names," Sanchez said. "It could be damaging professionally for the teachers."

Mrs. O'Keefe was highly critical of the series, although she said she wasn't surprised by its findings, particularly those involving the abuse of drugs and alcohol on campus.

"There is an education for anyone who wants it.



There will always be students who will not want an education," she said.

Mrs. Linthicum "picked only fluff courses and that biased her report considerably," Mrs. O'Keefe said. "She didn't take any math, science, foreign languages or honor courses. If I could pick her schedule, I'd send her back."

Mrs. O'Keefe also criticized publication of the series while the Legislature was in session and discussing school finances.

"If the purpose was to influence funding, then the timing was excellent," she said.

Members John Cantwell and Ralph Sigala said they had no comment on the series.