

Bea Fraenkel-Conrat and Gene Roh for school board

This newspaper has been displeased for sometime with the drift of the Berkeley Unified School District. As a \$34 million per year operation involved in the education of 15,000 children and adults, we believe it is still far from the mark in providing quality education in an integrated setting.

We are aware that many of the problems the district faces are not necessarily of its own making, and we do not hold it accountable for all the ills in society at large.

But among the things for which we do criticize the district and its board, in general, are:

Too much politics in the classroom, too many gimmicks and too little education in basic skills.

We also are strongly critical of the kid-glove approach taken by the district in the most recent of the frequent outbursts of breakdowns in discipline.

In other words, as far as we are concerned there needs to be something on the order of new directions on the school board.

There are no strong candidates running who offer anything like a genuine new direction — but there are two candidates in the field who are at least making emphasis on basic skills their primary concerns. And both of them are well credentialed to occupy the two seats open on the board April 17.

One of them — Alameda County juvenile probation officer Gene Roh — would at least bring an Asian perspective to a board which has, in accordance with the "rivulets" of American social change, jockeyed between integration, cultural pluralism and ethnic separatism.

We do not believe in ethnic quotas, but we are supportive of the basic concept of cultural pluralism, particularly in heterogeneous, multicultural Berkeley, as long as such a concept does NOT interfere with the most important dimension of educational activity, basic skills.

There simply is no Oriental representation on the school board or in city council, the two primary policy-setting boards in a city with a considerable Oriental component.

It is not, however, Gene Roh's Korean extraction which makes him a qualified candidate for the Berkeley Unified School District Board of Directors.

The young county probation officer is making education in basic skills his primary campaign thrust, quite ahead of all other sorties into the world of cultural pluralism. He brings a background of years of work both with students and teachers, and is intimately aware of what both feel.

Mrs. Bea Fraenkel-Conrat, a former president of the Berkeley League of Women Voters, has a lengthy and distinguished record of community service and involvement.

A University of California faculty member, scientist and active researcher, she has been a member of the BUSD's Citizens Budget and Finance Committee and chairman of its subcommittee for special fiscal analysis, and is a member of the California League of Women Voters Education Committee.

Mrs. Fraenkel-Conrat offers emphasis on basic skills, solving the problems of low-achieving children and sound financial policies as her central platform planks.

We believe her presence on the board would bring some fiscal fresh air to the decision-making body of Berkeley's major taxing jurisdiction.

A broad base of citizens supports the candidacies of both Mrs. Fraenkel-Conrat and Gene Roh.

We believe these candidates represent an excellent blend of the thinking and concerns needed by the school district as it faces a difficult four years.

We therefore recommend for school board Bea Fraenkel-Conrat and Gene Roh.