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## Six Big-City School Districts Approved To Take National Test

Six large urban school districts were recently approved by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to join 21 other big-city school systems that already have their students taking the rigorous federal test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), considered *The Nation's Report Card*.

The six new school districts – Clark County (Las Vegas), Denver, Fort Worth, Guilford County (Greensboro, N.C.), Milwaukee and Shelby County (Memphis) – would participate in the 2017 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8.



“TUDA provides school district leaders, parents and civic leaders with objective and comparable data to measure the progress of student achievement over time in many of the country’s largest school districts,” said NAGB Chair Terry Mazany in a press release.

“The addition of these six new cities to the Trial Urban District Assessment of NAEP is a major step forward for the program and will help sustain efforts to improve the nation’s large-city public schools well into the future,” stressed Michael Cas-

**National Test** continued on page 6



U.S. Secretary of Education John King focuses on the new education law and the need for equity in addressing urban school leaders.

## New Ed. Secretary Addresses City Educators

U.S. Secretary of Education John King, who began his career as a high school social studies teacher, recalled that President Lyndon Johnson in a special address to Congress after the Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, march said, “Let each of us put our shoulder to the wheel to root out injustice wherever it exists.”

King believes that same spirit should be used in conversations around the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the bipartisan education law signed by President Obama in December. The ESSA replaces the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB).

“In ESSA implementation, we have an opportunity to put our shoulders to the wheel on behalf of equity,” King told urban

educators assembled in Washington, D.C., for the Council of the Great City Schools’ recent Annual Legislative/Policy Conference. “But whether or not we are successful will depend on the quality of our collaboration and the effectiveness of our mutual participation in a national conversation about what equity means.”

King, who became the nation’s 10<sup>th</sup> secretary of education last month, said big-city school leaders should be proud of the progress that is being made. Last year, the nation recorded the highest high school graduation rate in history, 82 percent, driven by significant reductions in dropout

**Education Secretary** continued on page 4

# Urban Teachers Win \$25,000 Milken Awards

For Michael Sana, a science teacher at Waipahu High School in Hawaii, his decision about a career path dates back to a promise he made during high school. A young Sana promised his dying, cancer-stricken mother he would one day graduate from college and make a difference in the lives of others.

Although his mother did not survive to see it, the promise he made lives on in his work as the Waipahu High science department chairman. Sana has turned the science program into a college-ready platform that challenges students and ushers them toward college and science careers.

“When Michael first started teaching AP biology, there were only 12 students enrolled,” said Keith Hayashi, Waipahu High principal. “Now there are over 50, over 40 in medical biotechnology, and many of his students have gone on to receive college scholarships based on their science work.”

For his efforts, Sana was recently named a recipient of the 2015-2016 Milken Educator Award. Hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching” by *Teacher Magazine*, the Milken Educator Awards honor outstanding educators across the nation and present them

with a \$25,000 cash prize.

Sana is not the only teacher honored in a school district represented by the Council of the Great City Schools. Also receiving a Milken Educator Award was Melody Coryell, an English and language teacher from Shortridge High School in Indianapolis; Misty

Ayres-Miranda, an English and language teacher from Nashville School of the Arts in Nashville; Ann Cuttler, a mathematics and computer science teacher from North Star Academy Charter School in Newark; and Laura Servin, an algebra teacher from Whittier Middle School in San Antonio.

**Milken Awards** continued on page 3



Michael Sana, a science teacher at Waipahu High School in Hawaii, is shocked as he makes his way to the front of a packed gymnasium to accept the 2015-16 Milken Educator Award. Photo Credit: Milken Family Foundation



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## Council Co-Sponsors Webinars on Legal Issues In Urban Education

“Guns in Schools: How School Districts Can Respond to Shifting Gun Laws Nationwide.”

That’s the title of a webinar to be held May 19 as part of a bi-monthly series of free webinars on emerging legal issues in urban education, sponsored by the Council of the Great City Schools and the national law firm Husch Blackwell.

The webinar, scheduled 2:30 to 3:45 p.m., EDT, will give an overview of federal and state legal and compliance issues related to guns on school campuses and a discussion of the options for local school districts.

The Council and Husch Blackwell launched the webinar series last November.

The inaugural webinar focused on legal issues surrounding the implementation of the Council’s pledge on helping males of color succeed in life. Big-city school districts in the Council committed to the



pledge in July 2014, and the webinar in November discussed how to implement the pledge in a way that is fully consistent with federal civil rights laws.

Two other webinars have also been held, focusing on accommodating transgender students and staff and how school districts should respond to recent guidance on Title IX and sexual violence.

All three prior webinars can be accessed on demand at <http://www.cgcs.org/do-main/225>.

To register for the May 19 webinar on guns in schools or to receive email announcements on upcoming programs, contact Shana Hoy at shana.hoy@huschblackwell.com, or call 816-983-8809.

The bi-monthly webinar series on emerging legal issues in urban education will take a hiatus during the summer and resume in September.

## Santa Ana Leader To Step Down

California’s Santa Ana Unified School District recently announced that Superintendent Rick Miller will retire from his position on July 1.

Miller has led the 56,000-student school system since 2013. He has more than 45 years in education.

“In my experience, I have not worked with a group of parents and students that are more committed and dedicated to success,” said Superintendent Miller in a press statement. “...I am sure the next superintendent will be pleased to continue to share the wonderful story of student success and accomplishment in SAUSD.”

The district has begun the process to find a qualified replacement for the 2016-2017 school year.

## Dayton School District Launches Office For Males of Color

In an effort to raise the achievement and graduation rates of black males, Ohio’s Dayton Public Schools is establishing an Office for Males of Color.

School board members unanimously approved establishing an office, joining similar big-city school districts from Minneapolis to Oakland, Calif., to help the Dayton school system tackle challenges that contribute to the disproportionate rate at which black male students are suspended or expelled and lag behind their peers academically.

The district’s school board initiative will take effect in the 2016-2017 school year to support the district’s more than 4,700 Af-

frican American male students.

The new office aims to reduce disparities in suspensions among males of color, increase the graduation



rate over a four-year period, reduce chronic absenteeism, increase the number of black male students taking advanced coursework and reduce the number of expulsions.

In addition, the Office for Males of Color will provide mentors, dropout recovery, summer programs and employment, and other supports to increase student success.

“We are stepping up our efforts,” said David Lawrence, Dayton Schools chief of innovation, “and committing resources to improving student outcomes among young men of color. By focusing on males of color and increasing their achievement, we will increase the achievement of all students.”

### Milken Awards *continued from page 2*

Up to 100 educators are recognized for the award without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state’s department of education. Recipients of the award are selected on the basis of such criteria as exceptional educational talent, outstanding educational accomplishments beyond the classroom and an inspiring presence that motivates students, colleagues and the community.

Sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, the first awards were presented in 1987 and more than 2,600 educators have received more than \$66 million in cash awards. The awards are presented to educators who are early to mid-career and alternates yearly between elementary and secondary educators, with this year honoring secondary teachers.

**Education Secretary** *continued from page 1*

rates among African Americans and Latinos.

Yet despite the progress, the secretary recognized that there are still gaps in the academic achievement of African Americans, Latinos, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students from economically disadvantaged families. He also lamented the fact that there are still high schools where less than half of the students graduate and that the prison to school pipeline still exists.

“We look at the reality that America should be leading the world in investing in education,” said King, “but we are leading the world instead in incarceration.”

### **Advancing Equity**

King, who once served as the commissioner of education for the state of New York, believes that educators should use ESSA as an opportunity to drive the nation closer to the goal of equity.

And reaching that goal is deeply personal for the nation’s top education official, who lost both of his parents by the time he was 12. He then lived with different family members so school became a place that was reliable and consistent and where he found teachers who cared for him.

“If those teachers had looked at me and said here is an African American, Latino male student with a family in crisis what chance does he have, I wouldn’t be standing here today,” King said. “Instead they saw hope, possibility, and invested in me, so how we use the new law to advance equity is deeply personal for me.”

And he assured conferees that President Obama would not have signed ESSA if he didn’t believe the law would not advance the civil rights legacy found in the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act, adopted in 1965.

“In this new law, we have important opportunities, but the measure of our success is can we collaborate to take advantage of those opportunities?” asked King. “Can we use those opportunities to advance equity and excellence in all of our students?”



Education officials Michael Yudin and Ruth Ryder.

### **Fixing Struggling Schools**

King said that one of the most promising aspects of ESSA is around intervening in struggling schools. He acknowledged that one of the biggest problems with NCLB was its one-size-fits-all approach to struggling schools.

“You had an intervention that bore no relationship to the challenges that were being experienced inside a given school,” said King.

While states and districts are required to intervene when schools are struggling, according to King, ESSA creates new flexibility and opportunity to rethink intervention in schools.

King said interventions can include a number of things: from replacing exclusionary disciplinary practices with restorative practices, to providing mentors to schools with chronic absenteeism, to building wrap-around services in high-poverty schools.

The secretary believes that one of the benefits of ESSA is that the law allows states to define what educational excellence looks like in a broader and more well-rounded way and places more emphasis on subjects such as science, social studies, art and music.

The Department of Education is currently gathering input from educators across the country and beginning negotiated rulemaking, in which a panel of education stakeholders from the general public – including parents, teachers, school district leaders, and state commissioners – work to

develop draft regulations around the new law.

“We want to work to implement this law collaboratively with you and your states,” said King. “It’s critical we have an open, collaborative and collegial relationship, and we need you as partners in this work and to be engaged in those state level conversations,” he urged urban educators.

The new federal K-12 law also requires states to adopt standards that reflect college and career readiness, and gives states and districts the opportunity to look at the assessments they are giving and to evaluate whether they are the right or wrong ones.

King cited school systems such as Boston, Dallas, Seattle and Sacramento that are in the process of auditing assessments and making sure the time students are spending on tests is focused on quality instruction.

He praised the Council for recently releasing a [student testing report](#) that he believes “helped launch a national conversation” on ways to replace low-level bubble tests with more rich performance-based assessments, and that the nation can’t allow assessments to crowd out good instruction.

King noted that President Johnson ended his historic speech to Congress after the Selma march with these words: “to deny a man his hopes because of his color or race, religion or place of birth is not only undue injustice, but it is to deny America.”

“Together, I hope we can use every moment of the final year of this administration to advance excellence and equity for every child,” King stressed.

Conferees were also briefed on how the new education law would impact special education services from two U.S. Department of Education officials: Michael Yudin, assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services, and Ruth Ryder, acting director of special education and rehabilitative services. Also addressing the conference were staffers from House and Senate congressional committees on education.

## Ohio Congresswoman Advocates 'Fight for Poor Children'

Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) was elected to Congress in 2008 and represents the 11th congressional district of Ohio.

There are 436 congressional districts in the U.S. House of Representatives and according to Fudge, her district is ranked as the 420th poorest.

"There are only 16 districts in America poorer than my district," said Fudge, "so I'm always going to fight for poor children."

She reiterated that fight in an inspiring and passionate speech at the Council of the Great City Schools' recent Annual Legislative/Policy Conference.

An immediate past chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Fudge noted that the United States educates the most diverse student body in the world and believes the nation must do all it can to ensure that children succeed.

### **A Better Education Law**

Fudge serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Education and the Workforce Committee. And while she acknowledges that the recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is not perfect, she strongly supports the new federal education law.

Fudge believes that the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB) left far too many students behind and there was bipartisan agreement that the law needed to be changed.

As the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, Fudge said that it was the subcommittee's responsibility to craft a bill that would provide access to an equitable, first-rate education for all children regardless of their family or zip code.

"My goal was to have a final bill to provide these things: protect Title I dollars, close the achievement gap and make a



Rep. Marcia Fudge discusses her passion for helping children.

quality education available for all children," said Fudge. "The final bill achieved those three goals."

According to Fudge, ESSA preserves Title 1 funds with no change to the funding formula and reinforces the role of the secretary of education.

She recalled that before ESSA was signed into law, Republicans in the House of Representatives passed a bill (H.R. 5) that in her words "gutted education" because states were given block grants to fund education programs, Title 1 dollars were portable, and public schools had to compete for funding against charter schools that were not held accountable.

The congresswoman emphasized that she is not an opponent of charter schools, but a proponent of public schools and decried what she sees in the country as a real movement to disinvest in public education.

"How do you spend all your time putting resources in a place that educates only 5 percent of kids in the country and you leave out the 95 percent?" Fudge posed the question to big-city school leaders. "I fight for the 95 percent, that's my job, and if we don't, public education is going to continue to get worse."

She pointed out that some of the best schools in the country are public schools

and lamented the fact that there may be a time in this country when only the wealthy can afford a good education.

"More than half of the people who serve in the U.S. House of Representatives are millionaires," said Fudge. "That's why you have to get their attention about education."

Fudge told conferees that although she came from a neighborhood where most kids didn't make it out, she went to public schools where

teachers instilled in her the value of education.

"Any child that is taught well can learn," said Fudge. "I wasn't a great student, but people had faith in me and what they understood was a child who made bad choices is not necessarily a bad child."

She stressed that students cannot succeed without good educators and Fudge urged conferees to learn what they can do within the framework of the new ESSA law, especially around interventions, to make a change in a child's life.

Fudge also urged urban educators to support the Go to High School, Go to College Act (H.R. 2065), a bill she introduced that would fund early college programs in high school and has support from both sides of the congressional aisle. The bill would enable students enrolled in early college programs to qualify for Pell Grants so the school district would not have to pay for the programs. As a result, more districts would be able to make dual enrollment opportunities available to students.

A congresswoman for eight years, Fudge stressed that helping children attain a high-quality education will always be her first priority.

"Like the Greek philosopher Aristotle said, 'the roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.'"

## Urban School Leaders Discuss Lessons Learned from NAEP

Big-city school leaders from Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Miami and Washington, D.C., took center stage recently to discuss the significant academic gains their respective school districts have made on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Co-sponsored by the Council of the Great City Schools and the National Assessment Governing Board, the event, [“Lessons Learned from NAEP: A Discussion with Urban School Leaders.”](#) was moderated by Michael Casserly, the executive director of the Council.

“What are some of the things your district did to produce gains on NAEP?” Casserly asked the panelists.

**National Test** continued from page 1

serly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. “We are thrilled that 27 cities will be participating in 2017.”

The idea for a big-city version of NAEP originated in 2000, when the Council of the Great City Schools requested that the National Assessment Governing Board conduct a trial NAEP assessment for large urban school districts that volunteered to participate. Congress first funded TUDA in 2002, and recently approved funding to expand the urban NAEP program by six more districts for a total of 27.

It was six big-city school districts – Atlanta, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles and New York City -- that volunteered for the first-ever TUDA, participating in the 2002 NAEP in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and writing.

Over the years, the school districts in Albuquerque, Austin, Baltimore City, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Jacksonville, Fla. (Duval County), Fresno, Tampa (Hillsborough County), Louisville (Jefferson County), Miami-Dade County, Philadelphia and San Diego joined the Trial Urban District Assessment.

“Leadership matters,” said Miami Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, who in the past few years has replaced 80 percent of the district’s principals. The district has recruited and retained leaders who are data analysts, understand instruction, and do daily classroom monitoring and curriculum reviews.

Another factor that has led to success is the district’s emphasis on teacher effectiveness. “I’m less concerned about teacher quality and qualifications than I am about teacher effectiveness,” said Carvalho. As a result, the district has strengthened its professional development programs and has partnered with colleges and universities to prepare teachers on the art and science of urban education.

Brian Pick, chief of teaching and learning for the District of Columbia Public Schools, credits the district’s success to being an early adopter of the Common Core State Standards and providing students with rigorous academic content.

The school system has also worked to engage families in students’ success, such as conducting home visits. “We lead the nation in teachers going into homes to connect and learn about their students,” said Pick.

Chicago Public Schools has focused on “good old fashion teaching,” said Janice Jackson, the school system’s chief education officer, which has resulted in academic gains despite facing financial challenges.

“We raised expectations, doubled down on our leadership and empowered teachers,” said Jackson. The district also looks at how their schools compare not only

nationally, but internationally as well. “We help our students see themselves as global citizens,” said Jackson.

After several years of low performance on NAEP, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District made substantial progress in 2015.

Karen Thompson, the district’s deputy chief of curriculum and instruction, attributes the school system’s success to focusing on data and getting the data to the school level as soon as possible. “[Data] is not something we look at every two years, but it’s a driver every day,” said Thompson.

She also cited the adoption of the *Cleveland Plan*, which gave the district autonomy and flexibility outside of state requirements. And as part of the plan, the district expanded its pre-K program, which



Council executive director Michael Casserly, left, moderates panel featuring D.C. Schools’ Brian Pick, Chicago Schools’ Janice Jackson, Miami Schools’ Alberto Carvalho, Cleveland Schools’ Karen Thompson and Boston Schools’ Doannie Tran. Photo Credit: Ron Thomas

is in its third year, to 65 of the district’s 80 schools, and partnered with outside agencies to provide high-quality programs using a common curriculum that supports students’ growth.

The importance of pre-K has also been experienced in Boston Public Schools, which has a nationally renowned pre-K program, offering a play-based curriculum aligned to academic and literary skills students should have in order to be successful in later grades.

**Lessons Learned** continued on page 7

**Lessons Learned** *continued from page 6*

According to Doannie Tran, the district's assistant superintendent of professional learning for the district, the program has been a powerful driver of the gains the district is seeing in upper grades.

"As a parent of a 4-year old about to enter the system, I'm incredibly proud of and excited for the learning he is going to have," said Tran.

Casserly asked the panelists what sets their districts aside from others less successful in making gains and what advice would they give.

Jackson from Chicago said that there are so many initiatives in big-city school systems that it is easy to get distracted, but districts need to find their niche.

"I would ask them what is your niche and what are you focused on," said Jackson. "Although Chicago is a large district, it has done a good job on narrowing the focus around instruction."

Cleveland's Thompson said that making the data transparent and user-friendly has been a big change for the district, contributing to increased student performance.

Pick, from the District of Columbia Schools, noted that there is no lack of ideas to reform urban school systems and that in his office he has a stack of ideas dating back to 1901. "But it is the execution of those ideas, the focus and the vision," said Pick, that sets successful districts apart.

Casserly asked the panelists how their districts use NAEP to inform their instructional programs and what value does it provide.

Boston uses NAEP data to identify bright spots in the district and extract lessons that can apply systemwide.

Carvalho said Miami uses the data to determine if the district is on the right path, but also believes the power of NAEP transcends his own district performance.

"I'm always looking at districts that outperform Miami in certain areas and try to learn from those practices," said Carvalho. "The power of NAEP is not just the data itself, but the opening of doors to solutions."

## Des Moines District Wins Fifth Straight Energy Star Award

When it comes to energy efficiency and conservation, the Des Moines Public Schools continues to earn high marks.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently bestowed on the Iowa school district the 2016 Energy Star Partner of the Year – Sustained Excellence Award, recognizing the Des Moines school system's continued leadership in protecting the environment through superior energy efficiency achievements.

Moreover, EPA also recognized the school district with its 2016 Energy Star Climate Communicator Award for outstanding efforts to raise awareness of students, teachers, families and the community to the issue of climate change and the necessity for energy efficiency.

This is the fifth straight year that the Des Moines district has been presented the partner award, and the third consecutive year it has earned the partner award in two categories.

"The effort we put into energy efficiency is literally paying dividends for both our students and the environment," says Bill Good, chief operations officer for the school district. "Each year hundreds of thousands of dollars are being directed towards education rather than energy costs, funds that support our top priority: teaching the children of Des Moines."

The school system, which has school buildings with an average age of 65, has been successful in turning around historic structures into efficient energy models.



## Connecting Schools, Libraries

Superintendent Romules Durant of Ohio's Toledo Public Schools discusses the need for students to have library cards as part of President Obama's ConnectED Library Challenge, an initiative aimed at improving tools to accelerate student learning. Durant spoke at a White House ConnectED event on a panel moderated by Michael Casserly, right, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, which has formed a partnership with the Urban Libraries Council. Looking on is Superintendent Debra Hamm from a South Carolina school district.

## MSNBC-TV Host to Address Council At 60th Fall Conference



Journalist José Díaz-Balart, host of “The Rundown with José Díaz-Balart” on the MSNBC cable TV network, will address urban educators at the Council of the Great City Schools’ 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 19-23, in Miami.



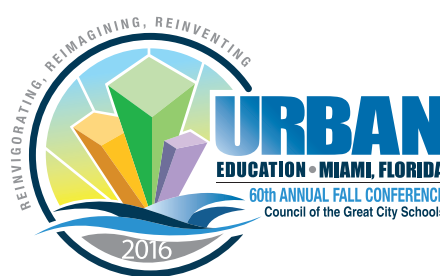
“Noticiero Telemundo.”

He is the only journalist to serve as news anchor on two national television networks in Spanish and English on the same day for an entire season. And his achievements include many awards.

Also addressing the nation’s urban school leaders at the Council conference will be veteran political strategist and author Donna Brazile, who is often seen as an on-air television contributor on CNN and ABC, where she appears regularly on the *This Week* program.

Hosted by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the conference will celebrate the Council’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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## Top Magnet Schools Announced

Nevada’s Clark County School District in Las Vegas has more of its schools recognized among the top magnet schools in the nation than any other school district.

Twelve of its schools recently received the Magnet School of Excellence Award, presented by the Magnet Schools of America organization to magnet schools that show a commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, successful diversity efforts, specialized teaching staffs, and parent/community involvement.

Schools in Clark County were not the only big-city schools to receive an Excellence Award. In addition, nine in Tampa’s Hillsborough County Public Schools; eight in Miami-Dade County Schools; seven in North Carolina’s Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; and four in Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale received awards.

In addition, Los Angeles Unified School District and Houston Independent School

**Magnet Schools** continued on page 12

## Arlington Students Earn College Credit

Texas’ Arlington Independent School District has partnered with the University of North Texas to offer high school students the opportunity to earn dual credits in fine arts.

The program will begin in fall 2016 with a music history course, with additional courses such as music theory to be added over time. This partnership in fine arts is a first for the district.

Adding this academic opportunity to the curriculum furthers an objective set forth in the Arlington Independent School District’s *Achieve Today. Excel Tomorrow* strategic plan, which proposes 100 percent of students will graduate on time and excel

**College Credit** continued on page 12

## D.C. Student Wins Nationwide Google Contest

Akilah Johnson, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Eastern High School in Washington, D.C., was recently named Google’s top student doodler.

Johnson was selected from 100,000 student submissions to the “Doodle 4 Google” competition for young artists. She is the first African American to win the national competition.

Google challenged students in K-12 to doodle “What makes me...me.” For Johnson, that meant weaving a visual depiction of her heritage that celebrates vibrant colors, natural hair and the Black Lives Matter movement.

On the Google website, Johnson explained in detail about how she designed her doodle for the competition.

“My Afrocentric Google is drawn as a box braid, with my personal characteristics

surrounding it. I based this picture off my lifestyle and what has made me into what I am today.”

As part of winning the national competition, Johnson’s prize-winning design was prominently featured on Google’s homepage for a day. In addition, she will receive a \$30,000 college scholarship and her school will be awarded a \$50,000 education-technology grant.

Her inspiration for the doodle, she says, came from a quote: “Be the type of person that not only turns heads, but turns souls.”

“Doodle 4 Google gave me an understanding of why art matters and why MY art matters – it’s because it speaks to people,” Johnson was quoted in a *USA Today* article. “No matter the differences we have, everyone is touched by all art in some way.”



## Social, Emotional Learning Contributing to ‘Calm’ Cleveland Schools

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District is taking disruption out of the classroom by teaching children to control their emotions, starting in the earliest grades.

Testimony comes from the students themselves.

About two-thirds of ninth- and 10<sup>th</sup>-graders, first exposed to social and emotional learning in the second grade, gave their peers’ behavior favorable ratings on “conditions for learning” surveys this year. That is roughly double the levels obtained from juniors and seniors, who did not receive the instruction that early.

Security reports offer more proof. Serious offenses like assault have decreased by 10 percent in each of the last four years.

“Our schools feel like calm and orderly places where students can and do typically engage,” Chief Executive Officer Eric Gordon said.



**Social, emotional learning initiatives help create a calm and engaging classroom environment in Cleveland.**

Cleveland’s far-reaching Humanware program grew out of a tragedy that occurred in 2007.

A 14-year-old student who had been suspended returned to his downtown high school with a gun. He wounded two teach-

ers and two classmates before killing himself.

The district added security guards and metal detectors but also introduced the Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies, or PATHS, curriculum now taught in preschool through fifth grade. PATHS focuses on self-control, understanding emotions and developing positive self-esteem, relationships and problem-solving skills.

To add what Gordon describes as a booster shot, schools were given the option of adopting another curriculum, Second Step, for the sixth through eighth grades this academic year. The district will next turn its attention to high school.

“Social and emotional learning is something that has to be integrated into our normal routines,” said Denine Goolsby, executive director of the Humanware Department.

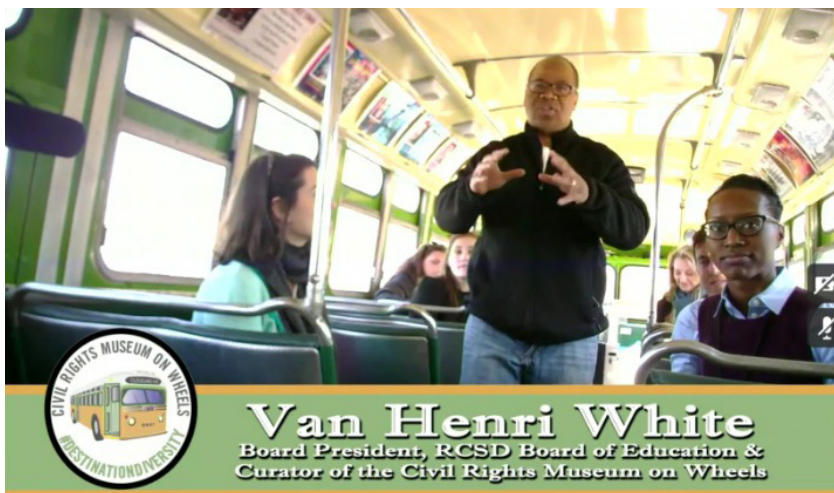
Classroom instruction is just one way the district makes students feel safe, respected and supported, not just by classmates but also by the adults who manage and teach in their buildings.

Class meetings give ninth-graders a forum for airing concerns and building a sense of community. School planning centers, an alternative to suspension, provide places for students to reflect on misconduct and develop strategies for change. Adults on school-based support teams formulate intervention for students in need.

Four times a year, Gordon convenes his Student Advisory Committee, 400-plus high school students who provide him with feedback on various issues.

“We still have work to do,” the CEO said. “There are kids in Cleveland and other cities who have high levels of need based on trauma. But we’ve moved from triage to prevention.”

The Cleveland school district is part of a collaborative of eight big-city school districts that share strategies for social and emotional learning. The other districts are Anchorage, Alaska; Austin, Tex.; Chicago; Nashville; Oakland; Sacramento and Washoe County, Nev., in Reno.



### Civil Rights Museum On Wheels

Van Henri White, school board president of New York’s Rochester City School District, gave a virtual history lesson aboard the Civil Rights Museum on Wheels, which recently made its first stop at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C. The bus will offer students from Rochester’s Schools Without Walls Commencement Academy and Jefferson High School in Florida’s Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa a two-week virtual road trip to historic locations with classes streamed live for the students on the website [www.DestinationDiversity.com](http://www.DestinationDiversity.com). The museum on wheels is outfitted with a digital classroom and is the same model bus as the Montgomery, Ala., city bus that Rosa Parks rode in 1955.

# Pictorial of 2016 Legislative Conference



U.S. Education Secretary John King (center) poses with the Council of the Great City Schools leadership, left to right, Chair-elect Felton Williams, Chair Richard Carranza, past Council Chair Jumoke Hinton Hodge, Council Executive Director Michael Casserly and Secretary-Treasurer Kaya Henderson.



Florida's Pinellas County Schools Superintendent Michael Grego shares notes with school board chairperson Peggy O'Shea.



Nevada's Clark County school board president Linda Young asks education officials a question.



Sacramento Schools Superintendent José Banda talks with Dayton school board member Ronald Lee.



New Orleans school board member Nolan Marshall poses a question to Education Secretary John King.

**Photos by Alex Jones**



San Diego Schools Superintendent Cindy Marten and school board president Michael McQuary listen intently during a conference session.



Congresswoman Marcia Fudge (center) gets a warm welcome from Cleveland Schools CEO Eric Gordon and Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.



Fresno Schools Superintendent Michael Hanson greets Education Secretary John King.



Dayton Schools Superintendent Lori Ward attends a legislative briefing.



Boston school committee chair Michael O'Neill and Boston Schools Superintendent Tommy Chang listen to Education Secretary John King.



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## Motivation Leads to Harvard

“What motivates me is all the statistics saying I can’t,” graduating senior Ethan Ambrose of the New York City school system emphasized at the Council of the Great City Schools’ all-student town meeting last fall in Long Beach, Calif. “Being a young man of color and living in New York City, they say I can’t go to Harvard, but that’s exactly where I’m going to go.” Well, he was recently accepted to Harvard – early admission – for this fall. He wants to be a pediatric neurosurgeon.

**College Credit** *continued from page 8*

at their school or career of choice. District students will not only earn dual credit in fine arts, but also will get a glimpse of university education after graduation.

“Music and the arts have been proven to enhance traditional studies,” said Arlington Schools District Superintendent Marcelo Cavazos in a press statement, “and this partnership with the award-winning UNT College of Music will provide unique opportunities for our students to earn college credit while gaining knowledge and skills from UNT professors.”

**Magnet Schools** *continued from page 8*

District had two schools honored while Indianapolis Public Schools and Florida’s School District of Palm Beach County and Pinellas County Schools each had one school recognized.

The winning schools were selected from 371 schools and had to submit an application that was scored by a panel of educators.