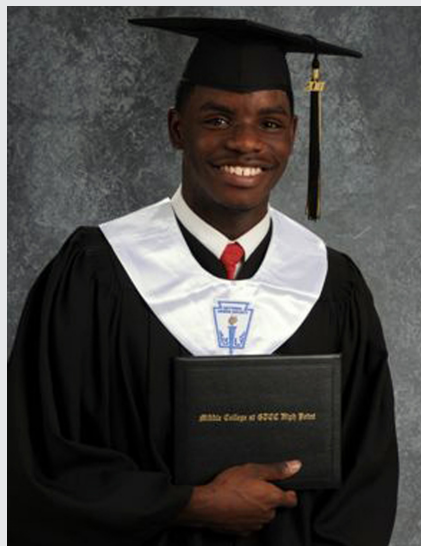




- Staying in Miami, p.3
- Dropouts Graduate, p.6
- LEGISLATIVE**
- NCLB: The Sequel, p.10



Deshawn Adams

North Carolina Student Turns Life Around

When people look at Deshawn Adams, a 2011 graduate of Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., they see an excellent student who received a full scholarship to college, a student leader who advises the superintendent and a volunteer mentor who created his own tutoring program for 100 elementary and middle school students.

Yet, Adams wasn't always the model student he is today. His adoption at a young age caused him trouble in understanding his identity and he eventually began to act out in school and struggle with his grades.

North Carolina continued on page 4

Washington Post Ranks Urban Schools Among the Best

Five urban schools in districts represented by the Council of the Great City Schools rank in the top 10 of the best public high schools in the nation, according to the *Washington Post*.

The School of Science and Engineering in Dallas ranked No. 1, and the Dallas school system's School for the Talented and Gifted rated second in the *Post's* 2011 High School Challenge Index.

Of the leading 200 schools ranked in the index and behind the top two, eight Council schools ranked in the top 20:

- No. 5 -- Stanton College Prep in Jacksonville, Fla.;
- No. 7 -- Suncoast Community in Florida's Palm Beach school system;
- No. 9 -- City Honors in Buffalo;

- No. 13 -- Carnegie Vanguard in Houston;
- No. 14 -- Paxon School for Advanced Studies in Jacksonville, Fla.; and
- No. 16 -- New Explorations into Science, Tech and Math in New York City.

Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent James Williams pointed out after reviewing the national rankings, "When you have best practices in schools like City Honors in cities around the nation, it's a wonder that state and federal government authorities don't come into these schools and observe them as models when mandating new initiatives."

Washington Post continued on page 6

Good Return on Investment

In 2006, Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall won the nation's top leadership award in urban education -- the Richard R. Green Award, named in honor of New York City school system's first African-American chancellor.

With the honor, she received a \$10,000 scholarship from the Council of the Great City Schools and the ARAMARK company to give to a student of her choice.

Atlanta Student continued on page 6



Atlanta Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall congratulates Tiara LaVette Smith as she graduates from Emory University as her father looks on. Hall invested in Smith's education with a scholarship.

Council Awards ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math, Science Scholarships

The Council of the Great City Schools recently awarded 2011 ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships to four graduating high-school seniors from school districts in Baton Rouge, Chicago, Miami and Pittsburgh.

The scholarship program was created last year by the first African American to walk in space and the ExxonMobil Foundation to increase the number of underrepresented students pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM).

The annual scholarships are awarded to two African American and two Hispanic graduating seniors from high schools in the 65 urban school districts represented by the Council. The scholarships are named for former NASA astronaut Dr. Bernard Harris Jr., who came from humble beginnings to become an astronaut, physician, businessman and author.

More than 300 graduating high-school seniors from 52 Council districts nationwide applied for the scholarships. The award recipients were selected based on academic performance, plans to pursue post-secondary academic studies in a STEM-related field, as well as leadership qualities and commitment to the community.

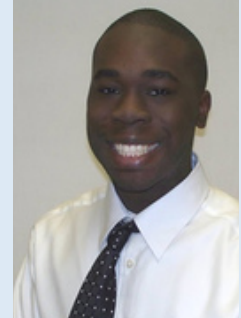
“Through our support of math and science educational programs, ExxonMobil is investing in the future of America’s young people,” said Suzanne McCarron, president, ExxonMobil Foundation. “We are proud to honor these accomplished students by awarding them with scholarships to not only help them pursue their studies in the critical fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics, but to follow their dreams.”

Each of the recipients received a \$5,000 scholarship to continue his or her education in a STEM-related field. This year’s award winners are:

- Alexander Barreiro, Miami-Dade County Schools
- Jazmin Branch, Chicago Public Schools
- Aileen Lerch, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Justin Moore, East Baton Rouge Parish Schools



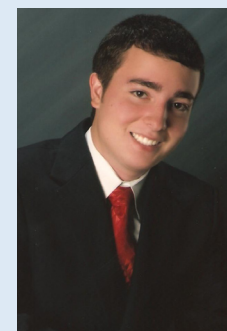
Aileen Lerch



Justin Moore



Jazmin Branch



Alexander Barreiro

Scholarships continued on page 3



Council officers

Chair

Dilafuz Williams
Board Member, Portland, Ore.

Chair-elect

Beverly Hall
Superintendent, Atlanta

Secretary-Treasurer

Candy Olson
Board Member, Hillsborough County (Tampa)

Executive Director

Michael Casserly

Editor

Henry Duvall
hduvall@cgcs.org

Associate Editor

Tonya Harris
tharris@cgcs.org

A newsletter published by the Council of the Great City Schools, representing 65 of the nation’s largest urban public school districts.

Albuquerque	Chicago	Fort Worth	Louisville	Oklahoma City	St. Louis
Anchorage	Cincinnati	Fresno	Memphis	Omaha	St. Paul
Atlanta	Clark Co.	Greensboro	Miami-Dade	Orange Co.	San Diego
Austin	Cleveland	Houston	Milwaukee	Palm Beach	San Francisco
Baltimore	Columbus	Indianapolis	Minneapolis	Philadelphia	Seattle
Birmingham	Dallas	Jackson	Nashville	Pittsburgh	Shreveport
Boston	Dayton	Jacksonville	Newark	Portland	Tampa
Broward Co.	Denver	Kansas City	New Orleans	Providence	Toledo
Buffalo	Des Moines	Little Rock	New York City	Richmond	Washington DC
Charleston	Detroit	Long Beach	Norfolk	Rochester	Wichita
Charlotte	East Baton Rouge	Los Angeles	Oakland	Sacramento	

All news items should be submitted to:
Urban Educator

Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 702 • Washington, DC 20004
(202) 393-2427 • (202) 393-2400 (fax)

Miami Leader's Tenure Extended; Changes at the Helm In Dallas, Charlotte, Fort Worth and Other Districts



Alberto Carvalho

The Miami-Dade County school board recently voted unanimously to extend Superintendent Alberto Carvalho's contract by two years to 2015.

Carvalho has led the Miami-Dade County Public Schools since 2008. His administration is credited with restructuring the nation's fourth largest school system's business functions, returning the district to financial solvency, improving student achievement and instituting innovations and efficiencies that the board considers promising for continued success.

While Miami maintains its leader, Dallas has lost its superintendent to another school system.

Michael Hinojosa has served as superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District for six years and is the district's second longest serving superintendent. But he is giving up the reins in Dallas, the nation's 14th largest school system, to accept a position with the nation's 26th largest school district. Hinojosa is leaving Dallas in June to become superintendent of the Cobb County School District in Georgia.

Alan King, the district's chief financial officer, was recently selected to serve as interim superintendent in Dallas.

Charlotte, Fort Worth Lose Leaders

And after five years, Peter Gorman, the superintendent of North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, is leaving the school system to take a position with media company News Corporation.

Gorman was recently named the senior vice president at News Corporation's newly formed Education Division, which is focused on individualized, technology-based content and learning opportunities that support student and teacher performance.

In his new position, Gorman will work with school districts to implement the division's programs.

Back in Texas, Dallas is not the only school district in the state that will lose its leader. After serving at the helm of the Fort Worth Independent School District since 2005, Melody Johnson recently submitted

her resignation.

The 81,000-student school system has named deputy superintendent Walter Danby to serve as the interim superintendent. He is a graduate of the school district.

Interim Leaders Named

The Atlanta Board of Education recently named retiring chancellor of the University System of Georgia, Erroll Davis Jr., as interim superintendent. He succeeds nationally recognized Superintendent Beverly Hall, who has led Atlanta Public Schools for some 12 years. Her contract expires June 30.

Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has named Donnie Carter, the district's chief operations officer, as interim superintendent. He will succeed James Notter, who is retiring from the district at the end of June.

And Rhode Island's Providence Schools has appointed Susan Lusi as interim superintendent of the district. Lusi is currently the superintendent of Rhode Island's Portsmouth Public Schools and will succeed Thomas Brady, who will leave the district in July.

Planning Departure



James Williams

James Williams, the superintendent of New York's Buffalo Public Schools, recently announced his retirement from the district, effective June 30, 2012. He has led the school system since 2005.

Also, John Dilworth, the superintendent of East Baton Rouge Parish School System in Louisiana, has decided not to seek an extension of his current contract. He has led the district since 2009 and plans to stay at the helm until June 30, 2012.

Scholarships *continued from page 2*

Barreiro is a graduate of Miami Palmetto Senior High and plans to attend California Institute of Technology where he will pursue electrical engineering.

A graduate of Morgan Park High School in Chicago, Branch will be attending Washington University in St. Louis and aspires to be a doctor.

Lerch, from Taylor Allderice High School in Pittsburgh, is attending Stanford University in the fall to study chemical engineering.

Moore is a graduate of Baton Rouge Magnet High School and plans to become a neurosurgeon after attending Yale University.

"These scholarships create a launching pad for the winners of this highly competitive scholarship program to reach for the stars," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly. "Thanks to the support of the ExxonMobil Foundation and Dr. Harris, these young men and women will go out into the world representing the best in America's Great City schools."

Last year, graduating high-school seniors from school districts in Dallas, Miami, Tampa and Albuquerque won the inaugural ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Scholarships.

Administration of the scholarship program, including the application process, pre-selection and presentation of awards, is provided by the Council of the Great City Schools. Dr. Harris participates in the final selection of the recipients.

North Carolina continued from page 1

After his older brother died, Adams could have strayed farther down the wrong path but his teachers and family members refused to give up on him. He was accepted into the Middle College at GTCC-High Point, which serves students who are not reaching their full potential by offering small class sizes and personalized instruction.

Adams also realized that strong role models can have a positive impact, so he embarked on a self-created speaking tour through the district. He used his life story to stress to students the importance of goal-setting, listening to teachers and keeping a positive attitude. He also spoke about his experiences at student assemblies and staff meetings at elementary and middle schools.

An active participant in student government, Adams became a member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council where he provided feedback and suggestions on major districtwide initiatives and programs.

And along with three other students, he created U-Succeed, a student-run tutoring and mentoring program for elementary and middle school students who need additional academic support and relationships with good role models. Adams was also among the first students in the district to earn a Service-Learning Exemplary Award, given to students who complete at least 50 hours of recognized service-learning.

His deeds have not gone unnoticed. Adams received a full scholarship to Morehouse College in Atlanta, which he will attend in the fall as well as a \$20,000 Horatio Alger National Scholarship given to high school students who have faced and overcome great obstacles in their lives.

Guilford County Schools Superintendent Maurice Green says that Adams is an amazing young man, whose personal desire to become a well-rounded student and inspirational leader have helped him grow into a tremendous example for his peers.

"I'm excited to see what's next for Deshawn," Green told the *Urban Educator*. "He has the drive, work ethic and self-awareness to make a big impact in this world."

The Class of 2011



Orlando Student Athlete is a True Fighter

Nate Winters, graduating from Orange County Public Schools' Winter Park High School in Orlando, Fla., has not only achieved success in athletics but also in academics, receiving an academic scholarship to attend Rollins College in Florida.

But his journey as a star student athlete has in no way been an easy one.

As a freshman, Winters played on his school's varsity baseball team where he pitched 30 innings. But in the summer before his sophomore year, he lost his left leg in a boating accident and an inch of his right Achilles tendon. He endured nine surgeries and went through a slow and painful year-long rehabilitation process.

But Winters never completely lost his desire to play baseball and after being fitted with a prosthetic leg returned to the baseball field in his junior year. His return to the mound, however, was not easy. In one

game, he disconnected his prosthetic leg between innings and couldn't re-attach it correctly, forcing his coach to find another pitcher. And several times while pitching, he fell off the mound. But his hard work and perseverance paid off. As a junior, he started two varsity baseball games and finished with a record of 1 and 0. And his senior record was 5 and 2 with 8 starts.

He has also done well outside the baseball field. He served as senior class president, performs in a band, and speaks to local groups about the importance of blood banks and making donations.

"I don't think of myself as being handicapped or anything like that," said Winters in

an article that appeared last year in *AOL News* after he resumed playing baseball. "If I want to do something, I'll still find a way to do it. And right now, I just want to play baseball."



Nate Winters pitches in a baseball game after losing his leg in a boating accident.

Milwaukee Student Overcomes Language Barrier



Arli Mohamed

Arli Mohamed arrived in Milwaukee nine years ago from Somalia with her family after waiting 10 years to come to the United States. Unable to speak English, Mohamed was bewildered on her first day of school in the sixth

grade because she didn't know anyone and was unable to communicate with her classmates.

Mohamed was so anxious to learn English that she was stressed to the point of depression and often went without eating or drinking properly for weeks. She was always in her room doing her homework.

Eventually, she learned English and became valedictorian of her middle school.

Milwaukee Student continued on page 5



Alexander Glaze holds a Wheaties cereal box with his photo on it after receiving a \$4,000 scholarship from the Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota. Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, left, accompanied Glaze to the "Beat the Odds" awards event.

Minneapolis Teen Beats the Odds

Alexander Glaze, a recent graduate of Southwest High School in Minneapolis and headed to Stanford University, is the first in his family to attend college. But Glaze had to overcome family drug addiction and homelessness before he could become a high school graduate.

When Glaze was only 8 years old, he, along with his twin sister, were removed from their mother's care due to her addiction to drugs. The siblings were then sent to live with their father who was granted custody, but according to Glaze never really cared for him.

When Glaze was in ninth grade, his mother died from an overdose. "Although my mother was an addict," said Glaze, "she supplied me with more love and care than I could have asked for."

In addition to dealing with the grief of losing his mother, the teen had to work part-time to buy his own food and clothing. And on his 18th birthday, his father asked him and his sister to leave his house and never return. Faced with being homeless, a family friend provided a place for the siblings, which allowed them to stay in

school.

Despite the upheaval in his personal life, Glaze has excelled in and outside the classroom. He has taken numerous advanced courses, was active in student government, played football and was nominated twice to attend the national Youth Leadership Council. He is graduating from high school with a 3.5 grade-point average and after attending Stanford University plans to attend graduate or law school.

"Although my life has been filled with adversity, in my opinion, it has made me a better person," said Glaze. "I learned early on that hard work in high school would be the only way I could improve my situation. I made up my mind that I would try to get the best grades I could, no matter what."

The Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota has recognized his remarkable success by rewarding him with a \$4,000 "Beat the Odds" scholarship, presented annually to four local youths who have overcome extreme adversity to succeed in school.

Glaze was nominated for the award by his high school counselor, Mary Morseth, who said, "In my 30 years as an educator, Alex is one of the most outstanding students I have ever known."

Tampa Students Excel Academically



Ana Reyes

Ana Reyes is a student at Gaither High School in Tampa, Fla., who has a long list of achievements: valedictorian of her senior class, 4.0 grade-point average, National Hispanic Scholar and National AP Scholar. She can now add

one more thing to her list of accomplishments: Harvard University, which she will attend in the fall.

Reyes, who is president of the National Honor Society, said her ultimate goal is to become a doctor.



Roberto Villalba

And she is not the only student from Tampa's Gaither High School who will attend an Ivy League institution. Roberto Villalba, who at the age of 9 immigrated to the United States from Cuba and unable to speak English, will enter

Cornell University in the fall to study computer science or mechanical engineering.

Villalba has achieved a perfect score on the math section of the ACT and has a 3.9 grade-point average.

Milwaukee Student *continued from page 4*

At Riverside University High School, Mohamed was a member of the National Honor Society and took several pre-college courses.

And the young girl who came to this country unable to speak English will enter the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the fall and major in criminal laboratory science.

"I serve as a role model to my siblings because my cousins want to be as determined and successful as I am," said Mohamed. "They come to me for help with their homework."

Birmingham District Graduates First Class In Dropout Recovery Program

The cheers were extra loud and the joy felt by both graduates and family members was obvious in May when 33 young people walked across the stage in Birmingham, Ala.

The new graduates were the first class of the Dropout Recovery Program begun in the Birmingham City Schools during the 2010-2011 school year. Just months earlier, the students – all between 17 and 21 – had been dropouts who desired high school diplomas instead of GEDs, but did not want to or could not return to a regular school.



Graduates of Birmingham's City Schools inaugural Dropout Recovery Program.

Atlanta Student continued from page 1

Hall presented the scholarship to Atlanta student Tiara Lavette Smith, a scholar-athlete and graduating senior of the Class of 2007. She took the scholarship to Emory University.

Now four years later, Smith in May graduated from the university in four years and on hand to congratulate her at Emory was the superintendent, witnessing a good return on investment.

One of the nation's longest serving urban-school superintendents, Hall is departing Atlanta Public Schools this summer after some 12 years at the helm. She remembers Smith as "a brilliant student who personifies all that we at Atlanta Public Schools want our graduates to be: intelligent, articulate and highly personable, with a strong sense of personal responsibility and commitment to community service."

Smith is reportedly the first in her family to attend and graduate from college after being raised by her father. She majored in history with a concentration in the U.S. Constitution at Emory, and now plans to pursue a master's degree in education policy with a concentration in secondary education. Her long-range goal is to become a lawyer, according to an Atlanta schools official.

The Dropout Recovery Program allowed them to go to a church facility instead of school campus and take classes through a computerized curriculum called Grade Results.

"Some students have difficulty in regular schools but can do well in a different setting," said Superintendent Craig Witherspoon. "Our students are not one size fits all, and neither should our programs be."

"We have youngsters who have had such a hard time in school and at home" that they gave up and dropped out, said Maxine Pijeaux, who directs the program. Some of the soon-to-be graduates had low self-esteem or felt like others looked down on them. One student dropped out after his mother died.

All found the kind of support and educational program they needed in the dropout recovery program. Several young women were having trouble attending classes because they lacked child care. "We told them to bring their babies and we would look after them," Pijeaux said. "That's what it takes – a whole community, a whole village – to make our students' dreams come true."

Many of the students have education and career plans they would not have been able to achieve without a diploma. Several will attend college, while others will enter the military.

Transportation Industry Recognizes Houston District

Government Fleet magazine recently recognized the Houston Independent School District's transportation operation among the industry's top 100 fleets for 2011, reportedly the only school district listed among the best fleets in the nation.

The Houston public school system operates and maintains more than 1,000 school buses. The fleet transports 29,000 students daily, logging in more than 13 million miles a year. The district also has a large non-school bus fleet composed of gas, diesel and hybrid vehicles that rack up 8 million miles annually.

"I am proud of our entire transportation team for achieving this prestigious honor and the work of our bus drivers, mechanics and all other staff for their commitment to safely transport our students to and from school everyday," says Houston district Chief Operating Officer Leo Bobadilla in a news release.

Transportation continued on page 11

Washington Post continued from page 1

The *Washington Post* rankings are based on its Challenge Index created in 1998 by education columnist Jay Mathews, who rates schools on "the breadth of participation in college-level testing."

Formerly hosted by *Newsweek* magazine, the High School Challenge Index specifically ranks schools on the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year and divided by the number of graduating seniors.

The *Post* published a special section called the "The High School Challenge" in late May that shows a number of urban schools listed among the nation's top 200 schools ranked.

Tennessee Approves Memphis Teacher Evaluation Measure For State Use

The Tennessee State Board of Education recently approved the statewide use of the Memphis City Schools Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) for evaluating schoolteachers.

With unanimous approval, the board opens the way for school districts throughout the state to adopt the Memphis model for assessing the performance of their teachers.

Created by Memphis educators in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, TEM considers teacher content knowledge and the perceptions of stakeholders like students, colleagues and parents, as well as other measures in evaluating teacher practices in the classroom -- rather than solely relying on the observations of school principals.

"Memphis City Schools is in the vanguard of the national push to increase effective teaching," says Superintendent Kriner Cash in a news release. "Our work is focused on providing effective teachers in every classroom, every day. The approval of the TEM is a major endorsement of our efforts."

Cincinnati, Nashville Schools Honored

Ethel Taylor Academy in Cincinnati and Glencliff High School in Nashville are winners of the 2011 Community Schools National Awards for Excellence.

Sponsored by the Coalition for Community Schools, the awards were presented to three schools that have successfully engaged families and the community.

Ethel Taylor Academy has improved students' academic performance and increased parental involvement, while Glencliff High School has more than 70 community partnerships.

Students Strive for More Than Just a Diploma In North Carolina's Third Largest District

Community service has a new meaning and significance in North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro.

More than 400 high-school graduates recently earned the district's first award for "service learning" in addition to their academic diplomas.

Service learning has become an integral part of the school district's Character Development Initiative, which Superintendent Maurice "Mo" Green has incorporated into his strategic plan for providing civic and character education to students.

"Through service learning, our students take what they are learning in their classrooms and then translate that so we can improve our community and our schools," he says in the district's Service-Learning Handbook.

The first Service-Learning Exemplary Award was recently given to 440 graduates in the Class of 2011. The seniors logged

33,537 hours of service activities -- equivalent to more than 46 months of service to schools and community groups across the county, according to the district.

To receive the award, students were required to log a minimum of 50 hours of service-learning experience. That number will be raised to 75 hours in 2012 and 100 hours in 2013.

Next year, students will also have the opportunity to earn a service-learning diploma, reflecting 175 hours of commitment, a news release notes.

With 100 percent of Guilford County schools engaged in character development, the district is believed to have emerged as a leader in character education.

"The impetus for this initiative was a cry from our community, parents, and staff that there was something missing from the

Guilford Co. continued on page 12



A First in Boston

Students from Boston Public Schools' sailing team recently competed in the Massachusetts Bay League Championship. It was the first competition for Boston's inaugural citywide public school sailing team, composed of 15 students. The students came in fourth place. The team is the brainchild of Boston teacher Mark Racine, who wanted to expose urban students to the sport of sailing. The team receives donations that enable students to compete at no cost.

St. Louis Teacher Wins Top National Science Prize

Andrew Goodin is a science teacher at Soldan International Studies High School in St. Louis, who pays for materials out of his own pocket to enhance his students' educational experiences and has received grants and formed partnerships with a university and other scientific organizations.

As a result, Goodin was recently selected as the grand prize winner in the first-ever NSTA Shell Science Lab Challenge. Sponsored by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and Shell Oil Company, the competition encouraged science teachers in grades 6-12 who have found innovative ways to deliver quality lab experiences with limited school and laboratory resources to share their approaches.

Goodin beat out four other finalists and as the winner of the competition will receive a science lab makeover for his school valued at \$20,000. In addition, he will receive an \$8,000 Shell cash grant, \$8,000 in donated lab equipment and \$1,000 in NSTA prizes.

Goodin has encouraged his students to study chemistry in college by developing a curriculum focusing on the real-world aspects of chemistry that includes crime-scene investigation and manufacturing and testing soap. And by incorporating project-based learning that emphasizes work in the laboratory, student performance in his chemistry course has improved.

The NSTA Shell Science Lab Challenge was created as a way to bring much needed lab materials and resources to schools that may not have the funds to invest in quality lab equipment, especially those schools in urban and rural areas.

The competition was open to science teachers in the United States and Canada who were asked to describe their school's laboratory resources and their approach to science education utilizing their school's current lab facilities. Teachers were also required to explain why their school's laboratory facilities needed funds.

A panel of science educators reviewed the entries and selected the winners.



St. Louis chemistry teacher Andrew Goodin helps students working on a science experiment. Goodin was the winner of a science lab challenge.

N.Y. Times Article Triggers Aid for Orlando School

A *New York Times* article on Fern Creek Elementary in Orlando, Fla., has resulted in the school receiving more than \$40,000 in cash and donations.

Written by columnist Mike Winerip, the article followed three students who are part of the school's 20 percent homeless population.

Readers from across the world responded to the article with donations of money, gift cards and books. In addition, the Public Broadcasting Service affiliate in Tallahassee has committed to partnering with Fern Creek to provide reading programs for at-risk students and to promote science education.

The donations the school has received, and which are still arriving, will be used to assist students with their needs.

"Thank you to everyone who has reached out to help our students who face the burden of homelessness," said Fern Creek Elementary Principal Patrick Galatowitsch. "Your donation will make a big difference in the life of our children and we will forever be grateful."

According to the *New York Times* article, there are 2,953 homeless students in the Orange County school district, up from 1,463 in 2008.

The article can be found at: <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Discount Computers Offered to Students In Chicago

In an effort to bridge the digital divide, the nation's third largest school district will offer its students discounted computers as well as discounted high-speed Internet access.

Chicago Public Schools is partnering with the Comcast Corp. to launch the Internet Essentials program, which will provide vouchers worth \$150 to the families of 330,000 students who receive free lunches. Families can use the vouchers to buy computers and broadband Internet service for \$9.95 a month for as long as each family has a student in the school system.

The program is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2011 and Comcast will provide free digital literacy training. There will also be no activation or equipment rental charges.

According to district officials, the pilot program is the first of its kind in the nation and will enable every child to compete in the 21st century economy.

"Having access to high-speed Internet service allows children to do school work, adults to find jobs and grow the city's economy, and families to learn and explore together," said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel in a press statement.

Chicago is the first school district that is implementing the Internet Essentials program, but eventually Comcast plans to make the program available to school districts nationwide within its Internet service area.

Change Schools Honored

The School of International Business at the Kearney High Educational Complex in San Diego and Lafayette Elementary School in Long Beach, Calif., were two of six schools in the nation to receive an award for having significantly changed and improved student achievement.

The 2011 Panasonic National School

Change Schools continued on page 9



Boston Public Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson (far right) is joined by Parent University Director Cyntoria Grant (second from left) as they congratulate Parent University graduates Nellie Yarborough (second from right), 85, and Gina Haynes (far left).

Boston Holds Graduation Ceremony for Parents

Boston Public Schools recently held a graduation ceremony for parents or guardians of students.

More than 150 graduates of the district's Parent University received their certificates of diploma for completing the year-long education training program.

Created last year by Boston Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson, Parent University holds sessions focused on child development, curriculum awareness,

advocacy, parent leadership and effective parenting skills. The program offers three day-long Saturday learning sessions during the academic year, with additional sessions offered throughout the year and is free for all Boston Public Schools parents.

Parents who complete all the required credits attend a graduation ceremony in June. This year, more than 1,000 parents participated in more than 100 classes.

Charlotte Educator Recognized for Work With English Language Learners



Katherine Meads

Katherine Meads, the executive director of North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' ESL Student Education Department, recently won the Award for Outstanding Contributions to English Language Learner Achievement, sponsored

by McGraw-Hill Education and the Council of the Great City Schools.

She was presented the award at the Council's Bilingual, Immigrant and Refugee Education Directors Meeting in May in Las Vegas.

The award program was launched to recognize an educator in an urban school district represented by the Council who has made a significant difference in improving the academic achievement of English Language Learners.

Clark Co., Memphis Named Among Best Districts in Music Ed.

Clark County School District in Las Vegas is a strong supporter of music education, which is why it was recently selected as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education in America."

This is the 11th consecutive year the district has been selected to receive this designation by the NAMM Foundation, a music advocacy organization, which conducts a survey each year measuring school districts and schools for their support of music education and their efforts to ensure access to all students as part of the core curriculum.

In addition to Clark County, the survey also recognized Memphis City Schools for its commitment to and support for music education.

The survey was given to teachers, administrators, school board members, parents and community leaders. Participants were required to answer detailed questions about several issues, including funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities and support for the music program. Each school receiving the "Best Communities" designation scored in the 80th percentile or higher in the survey's grading process.

This year, 172 school districts were recognized out of 279 that submitted surveys.

Change Schools *continued from page 8*

Change Award is sponsored by the Panasonic Corporation and the American Association of School Administrators and is presented to schools that have achieved significant, positive change in school culture over a 3-5 year period.

The winning schools each receive a \$5,000 grant and an awards presentation by the U.S. Department of Education. Schools also get the opportunity to participate in a major national research project focusing on school change.

NCLB: The Sequel

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

The education committees of both the U.S. House and Senate continue to work on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Yet, many individuals—on and off Capitol Hill—are not optimistic about the prospects for passage. In fact, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan anticipates slow going and has recently announced a “back-up” plan for operating under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) involving a variety of statutory and regulatory waivers.



Congressional education leaders, particularly on the Democratic side, indicate skepticism about the Secretary’s new waiver plan because it sidesteps the legislative process. But, school officials at state and local levels are eager to escape some of the Act’s more punitive and unworkable provisions.

Waivers are nothing new, of course. After the first few years of NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education offered a series of waivers, some of them under the guise of needed “flexibility” and some to accomplish policy goals that were not otherwise included in the statute. For example, the Department allowed for a one-year exemption in testing new immigrant students who were limited English proficient (LEP) that had not been included in the statute. It also permitted states and school districts to count former LEP students for two years under the law’s accountability provisions. Later, the Department allowed States to provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES) before implementing public school transfers, something that was required in reverse order under the legislation. And, States received approval to use “Progress Models” as alternatives to the “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) metric—probably the most popular use of the Department’s waiver authority in recent memory. Without waivers, none of these options would have been allowable under a strict interpretation of the Act.

In addition, a number of the Great City Schools received approval to provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES) on their own, an arrangement that essentially waived the Department’s own regulations, rather than the statute, that otherwise prohibited districts in improvement status from providing their own SES services. Most people still think this prohibition is found in the statute, but it is not. In fact, the regulatory requirement to reserve (set-aside) an amount equivalent to 20 percent of the annual local Title I allocation for SES and choice is not in the statute either.

Nonetheless, it is unclear how Secretary Duncan’s new waiver proposal would work, what it would contain, or even when it might be available. Because the previous Administration’s *No Child Left Behind* regulations remain intact to this day, any new Department waivers will likely entail selectively waiving the Act’s statutory requirements as well as waiving the Department’s own regulatory requirements. The Secretary’s announcement indicates that the waivers would be provided in “trade” for further education reforms along the lines as those contained in *Race to the Top*. This waiver initiative is being marketed not as “a reprieve from accountability, but, rather, to unleash energy for reform at the local level.”

The exact nature of the statewide or local reforms that will be required in trade for selected NCLB relief has not yet been specified and, no doubt, will be the subject of considerable negotiation and discussion. The Department does not appear to be ready to grant blanket waivers of NCLB, but will probably offer them to the States on a case-by-case basis. The Council of the Great City Schools has already suggested that requests from local reform-minded school districts also be entertained. The most sought-after waiver provisions are likely to involve AYP; school improvement interventions; SES and school transfer requirements; and some standards and assessment requirements. *Race to the Top*-type reforms the Department might consider could include areas such as teacher evaluations, staff reconstitution, data-based decision-making, extended learning time, charter schools, and the implementation of new standards. But, all is uncertain at the moment, including when the waivers might be available—although the Department has indicated that it will give Capitol Hill some additional time to demonstrate its seriousness about moving the reauthorization forward before triggering the new waivers.

Still, it is not clear whether the Department’s waiver gambit will affect the reauthorization process one way or another. The Department can’t waive everything, for everyone. And many difficult issues, concerns, and problems that are grounded in the legislation ultimately need a legislative solution. However, Secretary Duncan’s announcement suggests that a waiver-based sequel to NCLB now seems more likely than not.

Broward Co. Middle School Student Wins \$50,000 Scholarship

Math whiz Zachariah Chou, a student at Trail Middle School in Florida's Broward County Public Schools, recently emerged as the winner among hundreds of students nationwide who flocked to New York City to compete in the inaugural DimensionU Games National Scholarship Tournament.

The students wanted to showcase their math savvy in an educational-based videogame competition presented by software developer Tabula Digita, who developed the DimensionU game-based learning platforms in math, science and literacy.

With viewers watching the competition from around the world as the event was streamed live via Facebook, Chou stepped up to receive top honors and claimed the \$50,000 college scholarship and \$1,000 in cash.

Moreover, the eighth-grader was awarded a trip to Las Vegas to attend an upcoming concert featuring Lady Gaga, the Black Eyed Peas and Beyonce.

Students from 48 states, in grades three to eight, competed in the tournament. Another Florida student, Johnathan Von Walton, from Liberty Middle School in Tampa, won second place.

Chou began playing the DimensionU games after school and on the weekends at a Broward County library. An academic alliance between Broward County Public Schools, based in Fort Lauderdale, and Broward County Public Libraries was created to allow students to play the immersive videogames and extend their learning of math after school hours.



Zachariah Chou, center, honored by game developer Tabula Digita and Lady Gaga manager Troy Carter.

Dallas Mavericks Champs on Basketball Court and in Classroom

When the Dallas Mavericks won the National Basketball Association championship on June 12, the Dallas public school system was one of the first local organizations to applaud the team's victory over the Miami Heat.

The team has been a strong supporter of the Dallas Independent School District and its schools over the past few years.

The Mavs contributed to a school library and media center makeover at Ray

Elementary School. Five players attended an event during the NBA finals to celebrate the school's newly renovated facility, along with Head Coach Rick Carlisle and NBA Commissioner David Stern.

The team helped refurbish Rusk Middle School; supported Vaccines for Teens, an NBA Cares program emphasizing the importance of vaccinations for middle and high school students; and Mavs player Shawn Marion visited Tasby Middle School last March to talk with students about the importance of making healthy choices throughout life.

Moreover, the team established the Mavs Reading Challenge to encourage students across Dallas to read; supported a Mavs Scholarship for high school seniors; encouraged Dallas students to recycle through a contest; and helped build a new playground at Burnet Elementary School.

"The Dallas Mavericks are a world-class organization from the top to the bottom," said Dallas Schools Interim Superintendent

Alan King. "They have taken the time to support our students in a number of ways and we want them to know that their efforts off the court are appreciated every bit as much as what they accomplished this season on the court."

Transportation continued from page 6

Each year the transportation industry magazine chooses the top 100 fleets based on documentation of key performance measurements used to track work progress, use of technology, as well as evidence of high employee trust and confidence, and efficient and effective vehicle repairs.

The Houston school district has converted all of its school buses and diesel light-fleet vehicles to biodiesel derived from renewable sources such as soybeans, which is expected to reduce harmful emissions by up to 5 percent and extend the life of engine parts, according to a news release. The district is also purchasing 25 propane buses through a \$2.2-million grant.



Veteran Dallas Mavericks player Jason Kidd meets Dallas student at Jackson Middle School.



Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 702
Washington DC 20004

PRESORT
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MERRIFIELD, VA
PERMIT NO. 2333

Council Fall Conference Registration Begins

The Council of the Great City Schools will hold its 55th Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 26-30, in Boston.

The conference will be hosted by Boston Public Schools and more than 800 urban school superintendents, board members, senior administrators and college deans of education will convene at the Westin Copley Place Hotel to discuss issues and what's working in urban education.

To register for the conference, access the Council's web site at: <http://www.cgcs.org/conferences/fall.aspx>.



Guilford Co. continued from page 7

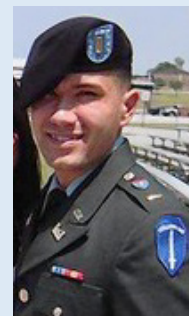
education that our students receive," says Brenda Elliott-Johnson, executive director of student services for North Carolina's third largest school district.

Through Superintendent Green's "Mo Wants to Know" forums held around Guilford County, Elliott-Johnson points out that "stakeholders repeatedly responded that it was not enough for our students

to be academically competent. They emphasized that students also needed to have good character and a desire to positively impact their community through service."

She believes that service learning has the potential to transform how students are educated in schools across the nation, and would improve the quality of education students receive.

Great City Grads



Michael McGahan

U.S. Army Second Lieutenant

Died in Afghanistan on

June, 10, 2010

2005 graduate

Olympia High School

Orlando, Fla.

Orange County Public Schools