



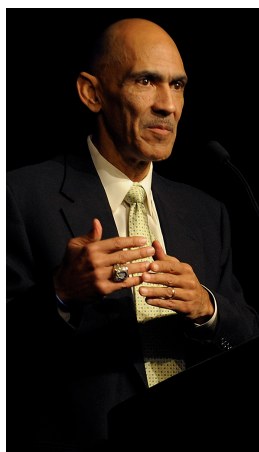
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SPECIAL EDITION
Fall Conference

Football Coach, Military Veteran and Journalist Address Urban School Leaders

ALBUQUERQUE—Tony Dungy is the first African American coach to win a Super Bowl, a bestselling author and a football analyst for NBC. And he also volunteers with the Prison Crusade Ministry in Tampa, speaking to inmates about how to improve their lives. And working at the organization is where he found out that government officials decide how many prisons they are going to build based on the results of third-grade reading tests.

“If young men do not read at grade level in the third grade when they are 8 years old, they have a good chance of ending up in a prison cell at 18,” said Dungy to nearly 1,000 urban school superintendents, senior administrators, board members and



Tony Dungy

deans of colleges of education assembled here for the Council of the Great City Schools’ 57th Annual Fall Conference.

“The success of our country is determined by how well we educate our young people.”

Football Coach *continued on page 6*



Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree, left photo, asks a question as moderator of the Council’s Town Hall Meeting while San Francisco Schools Superintendent Richard Carranza, left above photo, responds and Florida’s Broward County Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie looks on.

Race, Language, and Culture Focus Of Televised Town Hall Meeting

ALBUQUERQUE—“Trayvon Martin could have been me 35 years ago.” This quote from President Barack Obama after a jury found the man who shot the Florida teen not guilty sparked conversations not only in the White House on the issue of race in America but also across the nation’s urban schools.

In conjunction with the Council of the Great City Schools’ 57th Annual Fall Conference, a lively and introspective national town hall meeting was held that focused on the topic of race in the country but also language and culture. The conversation in the round was moderated by Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree Jr., who addressed his questions to the audience, and

was televised by New Mexico PBS.

In this very diverse audience, featuring educators from the nation’s largest urban school districts, “why are we talking about this issue of race?” asked Ogletree.

“The fact that we have an African American president who has been elected and reelected has brought the issue back to the surface,” said Felton Williams, school board member of California’s Long Beach Unified School District. “It’s opened up discussions about race again and that has been emphasized with the case of Trayvon Martin that race is back on the national agenda.”

“Is there room for not just race but cul-

Town Hall *continued on page 4*

Cleveland Board Chair Named Urban Educator of the Year

ALBUQUERQUE — Denise Link was appointed to Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s school board in 2007 and has chaired the school board since 2009. In this role, she has led the policy body’s efforts to transform the school district with academic and fiscal reform plans that have received strong mayoral support and funding from local foundations.

In recognition of her efforts, Link was recently presented with the Green-Garner Award, the nation’s highest honor for urban education leadership, at the Council of the Great City Schools’ 57th Annual Fall Conference.

Sponsored by the Council, ARAMARK Education and Voyager Learning/Sopris Learning, the award is named for Richard Green, the first African American chancellor of the New York City school system, and Edward Garner, a businessman and former school board president of the Denver Public Schools.

Upon accepting her award, Link addressed the crowd of urban educators amid cheers from her district colleagues.

“I am humbled and honored to receive this award and I think as you can see it’s

not just me receiving this award, it’s all of Cleveland,” said Link. “We all work so hard for the schoolchildren of Cleveland, and in the past year we have done so many things, such as pass a tax levy, but there is still so much more to do.”

Two other awards were also presented at the Council’s fall conference.

Queen Smith Award

Eric Hines, director of equity and inclusion for Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., was the recipient of the Queen Smith Award for Urban

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Denise Link (center) holds her \$10,000 oversized check and is congratulated by Voyager Learning/Sopris’ Carolyn Gettridge, ARAMARK’s Dennis Maple and Council Executive Michael Casserly as her son looks on.



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Three Superintendents Recognized



Alberto Carvalho

Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, was recently named Florida's Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents.

Carvalho has served as superintendent for five years and under his leadership, the district won the 2012 Broad Prize for Education and dropout rates have decreased while graduation rates have risen.



Barbara Jenkins

Another Florida superintendent was also recently honored. Superintendent Barbara Jenkins of the Orange County Public

Schools in Orlando received recognition from the Florida Department of Education, which named her 2013 District Data Leader of the Year.

The award recognizes school superintendents in the Sunshine State who are using data to improve student achievement, and communicating the relevance of using data in innovative ways.



Bernadeia Johnson

Another urban-school district superintendent recently won honors as well. Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson received the

2013 Profiles in Courage Award from the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers for her "courageous leadership in eliminating the achievement gap for minority students in Minneapolis."

Implementation of New Standards Focus Of New Council Publications

The Council of the Great City Schools recently published a report on the progress of implementing the Common Core State Standards and a guide on how to communicate the academic standards in the nation's major cities.

In a survey of big-city school districts, results indicate that they are making substantial headway in implementing the Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

The findings of the survey – *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Year Two Progress Report from the Great City Schools* -- "suggest that the nation's urban school districts are taking implementation seriously and have devoted significant time and energy to imbed these new expectations into all classrooms for the benefit of all students."

Public awareness and engagement play a key role in the success of implementing the Common Core. To help urban-school leaders educate families, staff and the public about the sea change in teaching and learning, the Council produced a booklet titled *Communicating the Common Core State Standards – A Resource for Superintendents, School Board Members and Public Relations Executives*.

Other New Reports

While encouraging awareness and support of the Common Core, the Council continues to monitor the progress of stu-

dent achievement on state-mandated tests. It has published the 12th edition of *Beating the Odds – Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments*, a report aimed at giving the nation an in-depth view at how urban schools are progressing toward the academic goals and standards set by their respective states.

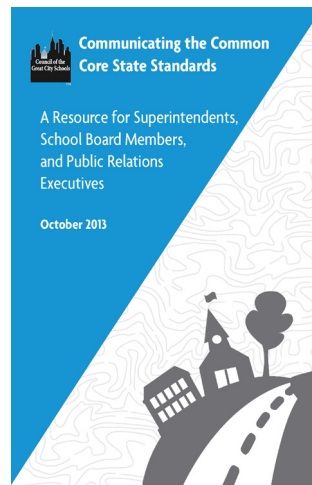
On the business side of the house, the Council has published an update on the progress of its Performance Management and Benchmarking Project, an initiative launched in 2002 to develop performance measures that could be used to improve business operations in urban public school systems.

The report – *Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools 2013* – presents performance indicators in a range of school operations, such as business services, finances, human resources and technology.

The Council has also extended its research on black male achievement. It conducted a survey to capture student perspectives on educational issues, and to find out their views on strategies that would be most helpful in improving their academic success.

It tapped the views of students in Virginia's Richmond Public Schools, published in a report titled *A Call for Change: High School Students' Perspectives on Educational Issues: Survey Results from Richmond Public Schools, 2011-12 School Year*.

All of these new publications can be accessed on the Council's web site at www.cgcs.org.



Town Hall *continued from page 1*



Albuquerque student Alexis Gough participates in the Town Hall Meeting.

ture and language, and are people being educated about those differences and embracing those differences?" Ogletree asked.

San Francisco Schools Superintendent Richard Carranza believes the nation needs to take off the gloves and have a real conversation about race, and that means looking in the mirror and being honest. "There is not one person of color in this country who is not racist as well, but because we all have our biases we need to come to terms with that because those biases can affect decisions we make in school systems where we are supposed to be teaching and educating children," said Carranza.

Ogletree asked what are educators to learn from the Martin incident in terms of race and what to convey to people who may disagree that the nation has a race issue in the 21st century.

Airick West, board chair of Missouri's Kansas City School District, said that people have engaged in actions that are harmful to children of color, but on a much lower scale than what occurred to Martin. "The majority of what our children are going to face are going to be on the lower end of the scale and an amalgam of those harmful incidents over a lifetime is a large part of what is creating the circumstances that are holding our children back," said West. He said the lesson for educators is to look

within and identify actions that schools perpetuate and eliminate them. "Whether that is for people who are white and it is born out of privilege, or people of color and it is born out of internalized racism!" said West. "There is work for all of us to do."

"What does race mean to you in 2013?" Ogletree asked Valeria Silva, the superintendent of Minnesota's St. Paul Public Schools.

Silva replied that race matters and educators need to reexamine their belief system of what their expectations are for children of color. "The data doesn't lie," said Silva. "We have an achievement gap and it's not about poverty, it's about race."

Valuing Public Schools

Winston Brooks, the superintendent of New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools, admits that while his school system has narrowed the achievement gap between students of different ethnicities, it's not at the rate it needs to be. But he praised public schools as one way to alleviate racism. "I think the way kids best get exposed to race and gather a better understanding of race is by going to public schools," said Brooks.

Educators also heard from students and former students from Albuquerque Public Schools who were given the opportunity to share their views.

Senior Alexis Gough explained that as someone who comes from a middle class African American family, she believes it's very important for all races of people to attend public schools because "it not only

provides people with a quality education, but an education on how to deal with a mixed community of people."

Michelle Walker, chief executive officer of St. Paul Public Schools, noted that while she greatly benefited from attending New York City public schools, she says she is fearful of the experience her one-year-old African American son may have when he walks into a school building that may not be ready to receive him.

"Go into any public school across the country and if you are a black male, what you experience daily is not the experience of your average white middle class child," said Walker. "What does that say about me as a public school educator if I don't feel confident to put my own son in public school?"

Eileen Cooper Reed, a school board member with Cincinnati Public Schools, says that students of color can receive a good quality education at a public school and it's a myth that they cannot.

The issue of colorblindness was discussed in regards to how oftentimes many young people say they are blind to a person's skin color, a contrast to the view of older generations.

"I have a lot of problems with the notion of colorblindness," said Ogletree. "It seems that people have to be color conscious to see the differences and appreciate that we are a multiethnic and multicultural generation of people."

He recalled how U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who lived in the era of segregation, believed not in the melting pot theory where one must lose their cultural identity to assimilate, but instead was a proponent of the salad bowl theory, in which people of different cultures are integrated into the same society.

"We have to start thinking we are a salad bowl generation," said Ogletree. "That we are a part of the United States and everyone is part of this massive community."

Angie Estonina, an administrator with the San Francisco Unified School District, said that the nation needs to raise the status of language. "We are a country that doesn't value multilingualism," said Estonina. "We

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Town Hall *continued from page 4*



Omaha school board member Yolanda Williams shares her views.

shouldn't have to struggle to get language materials that represent the students in our schools."

Frank Conversations

Ogletree asked the audience to address the question of how school systems can create an environment where people can have these very frank conversations.

Oregon's Portland Public Schools Superintendent Carole Smith said her school district has engaged in courageous conversations about race over the last five years and has adopted a racial educational equity policy with the district doing business differently than in the past, such as allocating resources and hiring differently. "We are still a work in process but we are engaging the entire organization," said Smith. "How do you change an institution that has learned behaviors that are so entrenched over time? It has to start at the top."

Michael O'Neill, chairperson of the Boston school committee, noted that the two complaints he hears from students of color the most is the lack of teachers who look like them and that the curriculum is not more culturally representative.

According to Ogletree, if students say the teachers or counselors don't look like them, that's a cry for change.

"Think about how to create what young people want; this diverse world," Ogletree told urban educators. "...I hope we can come back five years and say look what we have done, we've transformed our system one step at a time, one individual at a time, one district at a time, one teacher at a time and one child at a time."

Council Chair Delivers Enlightening Address

ALBUQUERQUE-- In a moment of self-revelation, Valeria Silva, chair of the Council of the Great City Schools' Board of Directors, conceded she enjoyed privilege, as part of the majority, as a lighter brown Latina during her youth in South America's Chile. Upon her arrival in America in "the very white world of Minnesota," according to Silva, she lost that privilege and for the very first time in her life understood that race matters.

As she continued her address to her fellow urban educators at the Council's Fall Conference, she confessed that "on a daily basis, and in countless ways, I quickly learned my place in my new homeland."

Silva believes her story of lowered expectations for people of color is a common one, which is why in Minnesota's St. Paul Public Schools where she serves as the superintendent, administrators, teachers and students are having serious conversations about how race matters in education.

"I believe that it is my moral imperative," Silva said emphatically, "and my professional responsibility to interrupt the forces of systemic racism in education. This means I will leverage my integrity as a human being, and my authority as a superintendent, to act in partnership to meet the needs of our most underserved students: Black males."

To illustrate her district's strategic approach to breaking down racial barriers in education, Silva presented a video to conferees detailing the journey taken by teachers and administrators in tackling conversations about race.

According to Silva, the journey toward racial equity began by digging into the educational data of all students to uncover the institutionalized racism veiled

as poverty, language barriers, mobility and lack of parental involvement.

Silva noted that the state of Minnesota has the lowest performing scores for African American students in the country and the second highest for white students, while the data for St. Paul Public Schools mirrors the state. "We, as a system, have failed to successfully educate students of color – especially our black males," said Silva.

She noted that after three years of leading courageous conversations about race in her district, educators are talking about race out loud.

The district has developed a racial equity policy in which all staff share the same mission of creating respectful learning environments where

language and culture is an indicator of success, not a predictor of academic failure. And each school has an equity team that addresses issues at the school level.

She acknowledged that the quest for racial equity has not been easy, but it has been intentional.

Silva urged attendees to challenge their deepest personal beliefs about race and academic expectations. She is a proponent of acculturation for students of color and believes this can be achieved through culturally responsive lesson plans where students see themselves in the curriculum.

"They need to see their images, perspectives and experiences in the lessons," Silva said, "and know that they can bring their authentic selves to the classroom each day."

At the end of her address, she asked conferees to do three things when they go back to their districts.

"Be courageous, look at data and start the conversation about race," Silva said.



Valeria Silva

Football Coach *continued from page 1*

Dungy recalled that the person who had the biggest practical influence on him was his assistant junior high principal. He said the principal sat down with him and his friends at the lunch table every day because he wanted to be their friend.

Yet Dungy didn't realize the impact of this friendship until four years later when he was a senior in high school and got in a dispute with his football coach and quit the team. The assistant principal he had befriended called him and asked Dungy why he would let someone take something from him that he enjoyed. After that conversation, Dungy decided to rejoin the football team.

"That conversation would've never happened if he hadn't sat at the lunch table that first day," said Dungy. "He went above and beyond his job description."

Dungy also praised another educator: Eugene White, the former superintendent of Indianapolis Public Schools, who served with Dungy on a host committee team that was bidding for the 2012 Super Bowl to be played in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis was one of the smaller cities in the competition, but during a presentation White explained how a field used during the Super Bowl would be donated to the school district, as well as an after-school center.

"We got Super Bowl 46 because of his passion for his kids," said Dungy, "that allowed us to overcome the lure of money."

After winning the Super Bowl, Dungy joined President Bush's Council on Service and Civic Participation where he learned that one million kids drop out of high school every year and that those who drop out earned \$9,200 less than a high school graduate.

"I would tell young people if you drop out you are handing me a half million dollars," said Dungy. "And you'd be surprised how the light would click on for them."

The former head coach of two NFL teams is often asked about the differences between coaching now compared to when he started 31 years ago. "The same issues and same answers are there," said Dungy.



Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch

"Motivating kids is about incentive and opportunity."

Dungy recalled that both of his parents were teachers and that their job was to help every child they taught earn an "A." And as a coach, his philosophy was to help every player be the best he can be, and he urged educators to do the same.

"Whatever that student needs, you have to provide, and it starts with building that relationship," Dungy said. "Keep encouraging kids and giving them the motivation and incentive."

Overcoming the Odds

Also addressing the conference was military veteran, motivational speaker and leadership expert Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, who gave a heartfelt address on how she was born in Laredo, Texas, and overcame poverty and discrimination.

She recalled how teachers would hit the back of her hand with a ruler when she spoke Spanish, her first language. But the biggest battle she faced was, as a 6-year-old, a teacher told her to change her name from Consuelo to Connie.

When she refused, she was sent to the principal's office, who asked her what was wrong with changing her name to Connie, especially because it had less letters than Consuelo.

"My mother's name is Consuelo, don't take my name," she pleaded with the principal. "All I have is my family."

The principal understood and didn't make her change her name. But Castillo

Kickbusch believes that too many people think that in order for immigrants to assimilate into society they must leave their culture behind and speak only English.

"I've been around the world and children in Belgium give me directions in four languages," said Castillo Kickbusch.

She recalled that many of the teachers she had were indifferent to her and her fellow Hispanic students as well as their parents. When she entered high school, she was poorly prepared until a white teacher from South Boston called Mr. Cooper taught at her high school and told the students they were brilliant.

"Mr. Cooper believed I wasn't stupid," said Castillo Kickbusch. "He taught me to read and showed me a library and the librarian taught me to discover a world of knowledge."

She eventually tested above average and Mr. Cooper convinced her to attend college even though she had to leave behind everything she had known: her parents, her barrio and her culture.

While a student at Hardin Simmons University, a sergeant approached her about joining the university's ROTC. "I thought of Mr. Cooper who said you can be anything and bring all those skills you learned in the barrio and remind others of their ignorance," said Castillo Kickbusch. "He told me to use your life with a purpose."

She became the only female with 400 male cadets, and eventually joined the U.S. Army as an officer, where she became the highest-ranking Hispanic woman in the Combat Support Field of the Army.

"In 1995, I remembered what my mother asked me in 1987," said Castillo Kickbusch. "To go home and help children like me."

So after a 22-year career in the military, she retired and returned to Texas where she became a community leader and mentor.

Castillo Kickbusch is also the founder of Educational Achievement Services, Inc., a company that works to prepare tomorrow's leaders. As founder of the company, she meets with students, teachers, superintendents and school board members and listens to their concerns.

Football Coach *continued on page 7*

Football Coach *continued from page 6*

And one thing the leadership expert strongly believes is that all children have the potential to learn and that public education can do it best.

“The day we stop believing public education is not the most concrete form of democracy,” said Castillo Kickbusch, “then we will have turned our back on all America should be.”

Optimistic About Education

Urban educators also heard from David Gergen, a senior political analyst for CNN, who has served as an adviser to four U.S. presidents.

He noted that the United States has been in the race for a quality education for more than 100 years and since the 1900s has had the highest percentage of students finishing high school and attending college in the world.

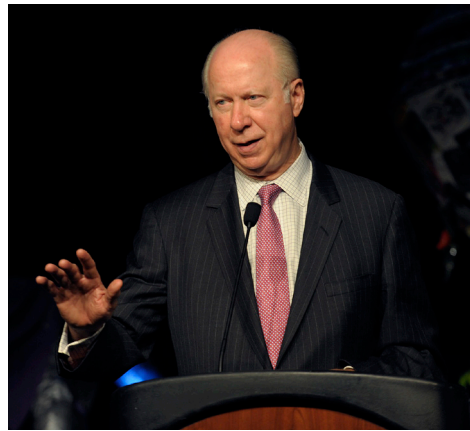
This educational achievement powered America’s rise as a nation but in the late ‘60s and ‘70s the nation’s upward arc on education and progress began to level off. This leveling off, Gergen said, occurred at the same time other nations learned from America’s success and started besting the country in academic attainment.

“If we are going to have good jobs and wages, we have to educate our kids,” said Gergen. “If they are going to be able to compete, they are going to need 21st century skills.”

The Harvard professor is an enthusiastic supporter of the Common Core State Standards and believes the standards will lead to much more progress in education.

But he warned educators that there will be pressure in the next couple of years to meet ever-increasing standards.

He also said that there is a sense that progress is slow, and while educators are trying very hard to close the gap between affluent and economically disadvantaged students, economists have found that over the last 25 years, instead of the gap being closed, it has widened by 30 to 40 percent. “That makes a real difference in terms of



David Gergen

who can compete and who has a real shot in this country,” said Gergen.

And while the former presidential adviser is a short-term pessimistic about what is occurring in Washington, D.C., he is a long-term optimist about the country, particularly in the area of education.

He told conferees that there are good things occurring in education and the districts they represent. “I think progress in education has come to the top of the nation’s agenda.”

Gergen praised U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan for his efforts in pushing change and reform and noted that high school graduation rates are the highest in 30 years, with graduation rates of African Americans and Hispanics increasing, and dropout factories decreasing in urban areas.

He believes that another sign of optimism are the changes taking place in cities across the nation, and that there is a sense that several cities such as New Orleans, New York and Chicago are making a comeback.

He observed that the younger generation of professionals are increasingly drawn to live in cities because that’s where the excitement is and believes that if young professionals move into the cities, it’s going to make the job of educating kids so much better and easier. “We are going to be more effective at it because everyone has a stake at it,” said Gergen.

Teaching at Harvard University, he has also noticed that the younger generation wants to not only live in urban areas but wants to change America.

“With the younger generation, there is a level of idealism about the country,” said Gergen. “They are looking for something to believe in that’s bigger than them and want to work in the trenches and change American lives.”

As an example, he cited Teach for America, which represents an organization he believes has tapped into the idealism of young Americans who are well educated and aim to make a difference in the world.

“This generation is the answer to a lot of things,” said Gergen.

Sacramento Names Interim Leader

When Superintendent Jonathan Raymond of California’s Sacramento City Unified School District leaves his post at the end of December, one of the district’s three area assistant superintendents will take the helm.

The school board in late November voted to name Sara Noguchi, the district’s assistant superintendent who oversees 21 schools, including the superintendent’s seven priority schools, to lead the district as interim superintendent.

She takes the reins from Superintendent Raymond, who has led the Sacramento city school system since July, 2009. In October, Raymond announced he would step down from his post, effective Dec. 31, to return to his native Boston, where he plans to spend time with his immediate and extended family.

During his tenure in California’s capital city, Superintendent Raymond implemented a number of initiatives to improve the quality of education for the public schoolchildren in Sacramento. This included the development of the Superintendent’s Priority Schools initiative, a turnaround program targeting the district’s seven highest-needs schools.

Twitter Allows School District to ‘Lighten Up’ In Communicating with Students

School districts across the country deal with it every year: the threat of inclement weather leads to a flood of phone calls asking, “Are we having school tomorrow?”

This year, North Carolina’s Guilford County Schools (GCS) in Greensboro turned to social media to manage school delay or cancellation questions – with some significant and entertaining results.

“We’ve been announcing delays and cancellations on Facebook and Twitter for a while, but this year, we wanted to focus on increasing our social media presence,” said Cynthia Robbins Shah-Khan, the district’s director of communications. “We put the word out that we’d share any updates on social media *before* using our traditional communications channels, and we got a huge response.”

The experiment started with one Tweet directed at students: “Do your homework! No update on #GCS schools yet—.” Followers immediately responded, posting Tweets like, “YOU GUYS HAVE TO PULL THROUGH I NEED MORE TIME TO STUDY FOR A TEST,” and “I’m holding my **homework** hostage until you declare that there is no school tomorrow.”

Students showed their creativity, posting photos of ten-foot snowdrifts allegedly outside their homes (not true) and asking for schools to close for “safety” reasons. The GCS Twitter account engaged followers, retweeting entertaining posts and responding to others:

@MADDIEEE_LEIGH dear @GCSchoolsNC, we would all appreciate a “school is cancelled” tweet, like any minute now. Sincerely, every student in Guilford County

@GCSchoolsNC: @_Maddiee_Leigh Dear students, we appreciate you spending so much time studying Twitter--we’ll let you know! Sincerely, GCS

“When I was younger, I remember being glued to the radio in the morning,

just waiting and hoping to hear our school district mentioned,” said Shah-Khan.

“Now, students and families can find out this critical information immediately, and can interact with the district and other followers in real time.”

With in

just a few hours, GCS’ Twitter followers grew by more than 50 percent, with thousands of people joining the conversation, retweeting and marking favorites. The @GCSchoolsNC account even trended for a while, which means it was one of the most-popular accounts in the area, Shah-Khan pointed out.

The local Fox and CBS television stations did stories on the creative and funny ways students turned to technology to try to convince the district to cancel school.

“Sometimes you just have to lighten up and take a break from those more-formal communication channels, language and tone we are used to,” Shah-Khan stressed. “We had fun interacting with the kids, and it paid off with a successful boost in followers and a new way to reach our students on their terms.”

So, did the North Carolina school district close schools? It decided on a two-hour delay – announced on Twitter.



Urban Educator continued from page 2



Eric Hines, right, director of equity and inclusion for North Carolina’s Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, is presented with the Queen Smith Award from left, Council Executive Director Michael Casserly, and Arthur Griffin of McGraw-Hill.

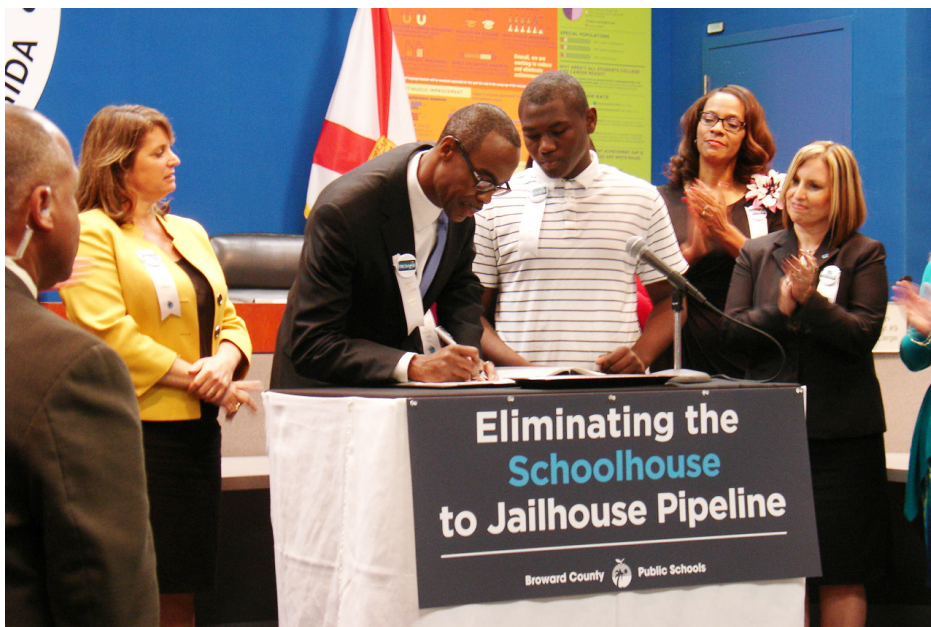
Education. The \$2,000 award is named in honor of the late vice president of urban programs for Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Urban Impact Award

The Council of the Great City Colleges of Education, an affiliate group of deans working with urban school leaders, presented the Dr. Shirley Schwartz Urban Impact Award to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Davidson College for their Charlotte Teacher’s Institute, which is designed to strengthen teaching by cultivating leadership skills among Charlotte’s public school teachers. With the award, the Council gives a \$2,000 scholarship to a Charlotte school graduate who will be attending the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to pursue a career in education.



Winners receive the Urban Education Impact Award from Brookyn College CUNY Dean Deborah Shanley, second from right, and Council Executive Director Michael Casserly, right.



Broward County Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie signs a Collaborative Agreement on School Discipline as school board members, students and community partners look on.

Broward District Aims to Close Schoolhouse-to-Jailhouse Pipeline

In an effort to counter “zero tolerance” discipline measures, Florida’s Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale recently joined forces with local community organizations to approve a new collaborative agreement on school discipline.

The overhaul in disciplinary action comes two years after officials reviewed the number of suspensions, arrests and expulsions, which were mostly for non-violent offenses. Results indicated the district had the highest arrest rate in the state of Florida with minority students—particularly black males—disproportionally affected.

The agreement the district signed with organizations such as the NAACP, local law enforcement and government agencies establishes guidelines and processes for handling non-violent offenses on school campuses to eliminate the schoolhouse to jailhouse pipeline. Guidelines are provided for school personnel when it is necessary to involve law enforcement and when non-violent offenses can be handled through school resources and programs, such as the new PROMISE (preventing recidivism through opportunities, mentoring, interventions, support and education) program.

Under the PROMISE program, incidents such as theft, trespassing, drug and alcohol possession will no longer result in arrests. Instead, students will be referred to an alternative education center where they will receive specific counseling to address their misbehavior. Classes are focused on modifying behavior and conflict resolution.

According to district officials, the re-evaluation of district disciplinary policies has shown immediate results. School-based arrests have dropped by 41 percent, and suspensions, which in 2011 included 87,000 out of 258,000 students, are down 66 percent from the same period in 2012, according to the *New York Times*.

“We need to take a common sense approach to school discipline,” said Broward Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie, in a press release. “Far too many students are being arrested on our campuses for non-violent misdemeanor offenses. By embracing this collaborative agreement, we have the ability to positively impact students’ lives...”

Other big-city districts reforming their zero tolerance disciplinary policies include Wichita, Kan., Columbus, Ohio, and Birmingham, Ala.

Progress Reported In Charleston Schools



Nancy McGinley

South Carolina’s Charleston County School District Superintendent Nancy McGinley recently reported progress in the district’s efforts to close the achievement gap, especially for African American students and students eligible for free and reduced price meals.

During the last five years, the graduation rate increased for all students in the school district, with the percentage of African American students rising by 9.3 percent – more than double the 4.1 percent increase for white students.

Based on the 2013 state report card, the graduation rate gap between African American and Caucasian students shrunk to 11.9 percent from 17.6 percent in 2009. The graduation rate also improved for economically disadvantaged students.

“What pleases me the most is that while the Board sets high goals, our teachers and principals are up for the challenge,” Superintendent McGinley says in a press statement after the district’s Board of Trustees voted to accept her evaluation.

McGinley is in her seventh year as superintendent of South Carolina’s second largest school district.

People Magazine Recognizes Milwaukee Teachers

Brenda Martinez, Radarmes Galarza and Elissa Guarnero, teachers and founders of ALBA elementary in Milwaukee, were the first teaching team selected to receive *People* magazine’s teacher-of-the-year award.

The award was presented to six teachers

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Pictorial of 57th Annual Fall Conference



Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, second from right, poses with the Council leadership, left to right, Chair-elect Eileen Cooper Reed, Chair Valeria Silva and Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.



Albuquerque Schools Superintendent Winston Brooks welcomes conferees to the 57th Annual Fall Conference.



Chicago Schools Chief Executive Officer Barbara Byrd-Bennett participates in a session.



Los Angeles Schools Superintendent John Deasy and District of Columbia Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson present information at a session.



Milwaukee Schools Superintendent Gregory Thornton lets Minneapolis Schools Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson pick a raffle winner. Next year's fall conference is in Milwaukee.

Photos by Clarence Tabb Jr.



Long Beach school board member Felton Williams answers a question at the Town Hall Meeting.



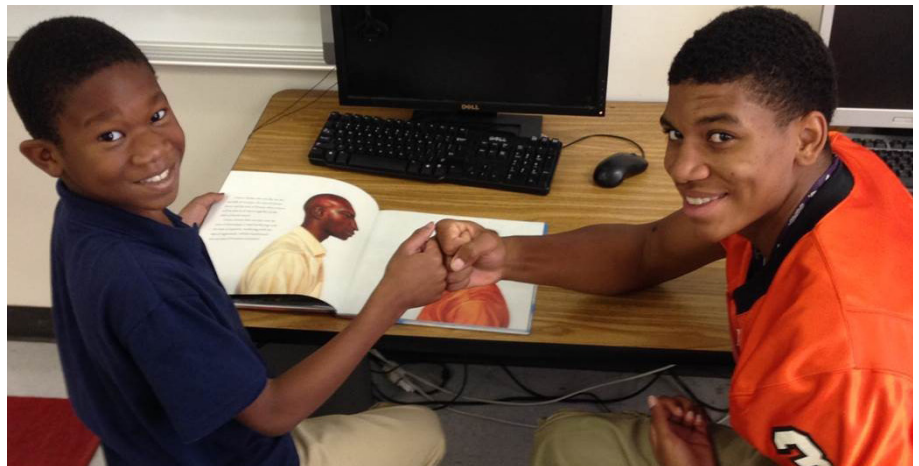
Seattle Schools Superintendent José Banda shares information with conferees at a session.



Providence Schools Superintendent Susan Lusi listens intently during a conference session.



A performer at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.



Jakari McClendon, left, a fourth-grade student at Onesimo Hernandez Elementary School spends quality time with his mentor, Jeffrey Hall, a junior at North Dallas High School.

Dallas Program Pairs High School Athletes With Elementary Pupils

Once a week, student-athletes at Texas' North Dallas High School rise early to head to a neighboring elementary school to mentor third-through fifth-grade students. While there, the older students serve breakfast in the classrooms, tutor and chat about life with their young mentees. Then they head back to campus returning just in time for the first period bell.

The newly launched Neighborhood Bulldogs program is an effort to help students at North Dallas build lasting relationships with younger students at nearby Onesimo Hernandez Elementary. It also aims to teach student-athletes role model behavior and accountability to the younger students that look up to them.

"The Neighborhood Bulldogs program puts me in a position to help these kids when they may need extra help in school or just in life," said Jeffrey Hall, a junior running back on the football team, who participates in the program.

North Dallas principal Dinnah Escanilla hopes that by high school students sharing their stories of trials and triumphs, elementary students will be encouraged to stay in school.

The high school athletes are in the process of extending the program to other elementary schools in the area.

Anchorage Teacher Wins Big on Jeopardy

Mary Beth Hammerstrom, a teacher in Anchorage, Alaska, was one of 15 educators nationwide who recently competed in the *Jeopardy! Tournament of Teachers* game show.

She placed second in the competition and won \$50,000. "I like to think of it as winning the silver medal at the nerd Olympics," said Hammerstrom in the *Anchorage Daily News*.

Hammerstrom's trivia days aren't over;

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Anchorage teacher Mary Beth Hammerstrom appears with *Jeopardy!* host Alex Trebek on the *Jeopardy! Tournament of Teachers* competition. Photo courtesy of Jeopardy



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she also received a *Jeopardy!* classroom computer system, so she and her students can play the game.

Hammerstrom teaches criminology and Alaska studies at Dimond High School.

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across the nation who are helping students succeed.

The three Milwaukee educators created the bilingual fine arts elementary school in order to develop a positive self-identity in bilingual students. Through fine arts and rigorous curriculum, students are taught culturally relevant lesson plans that celebrate their background.

In their essay application, the teachers wrote that at their prior schools, "We found ourselves teaching at schools where bilingual students were treated as though their culture and language was a liability rather than an asset."

As recipients of the award, the winners receive \$4,000 for ALBA Elementary and \$1,000 for their personal use.

Super Bowl Coach Motivates Student Team

As the first African American to lead a professional football team to a Super Bowl victory, former Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy motivates a high school team in Albuquerque at a pep rally before addressing the Council of the Great City Schools. Dungy, an analyst on NBC-TV's *Football Night in America*, visited the Albuquerque High School Bulldogs, and also represented Comcast's Internet Essentials program to help low-income families connect their children to the Internet. Photo credit: Joseph Escobedo

