



Urban Educator

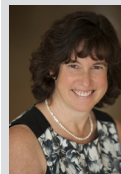
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SPECIAL EDITION
Back to School

New Initiatives, Schools and Technology Begin School Year

The nation's big-city school districts launched the 2014-2015 school year with a variety of new programs, policies, schools and technology. Here's an exclusive run-down of what some urban school districts are offering:

Albuquerque

New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools has a new student policy on acceptable use of technology that students and their parents are required to review and sign, expecting students to use social networking in a "responsible, ethical and polite manner." Not doing so could result in disciplinary action. In addition, employ-

New Initiatives continued on page 6



North Carolina's Guilford County Schools Superintendent Maurice "Mo" Green greets students on the first day of school.



President Obama announces pledge by urban school districts to support his *My Brother's Keeper* initiative as district leaders and students look on. Photo credit: Candace Simon

Council Takes Next Step in Pledge to Help Young Males of Color Achieve

After President Obama this summer announced that 60 urban school districts pledged unprecedented support to help young men of color succeed, the Council of the Great City Schools is turning the pledge into reality.

The Council has been moving forward on several fronts since urban-school leaders in July converged at a White House event to support the president's *My Brother's Keeper* initiative, which he launched last February to help young men and boys of color reach their full potential.

Sixty school districts, represented by the Council, joined in a first-ever collective commitment aimed at improving the educational outcomes for boys and young men of color by implementing a set of evidence-based strategies that range from early childhood to graduation.

Collectively, the school systems educate a third or more of the nation's African American and Latino students and nearly 40 percent of low-income boys and young men of color.

"Today, we've got 60 of the country's largest school districts who are here today announcing new efforts to help boys and young men of color," said Obama at the July 21 event at a Washington, D.C., school. "The Council of the Great City Schools, these are big-city school superintendents, has done an extraordinary thing, pledging, making commitments to each other, as well as to school districts and students and parents that this will be a major focus for them. And we want to thank them for the commitment they are making."

The Pledge continued on page 4

Two 16-Year Olds from Milwaukee and Charlotte to Begin College

Alison “A.J.” Roeth is heading to the University of Oklahoma this fall as a National Merit Scholar after graduating from South Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte, N.C., at the young age of 16.

The budding physicist plans to double-major in physics and Mandarin, a language she has studied since the fifth grade. However, physics is where her strengths lie.

“I remember when I was taking AP [Advanced Placement] physics during my sophomore year,” Roeth recounted, “and everyday I would come home with a smile on my face. I had dreams about physics.”

Roeth followed that dream when she applied to Duke University’s internship program for physics. She was the only high school student admitted into the program.

For six weeks in the program, Roeth developed scholarly research on matter and energy. Additionally, Roeth published a paper that is used by a number of scientists.

Roeth is not the only 16-year-old urban school graduate to have realized her dream.

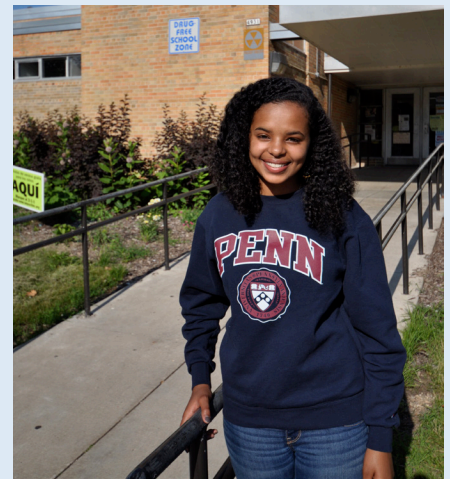
Ivy League school-bound Helen Fetaw, a graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools’ Rufus King International High School, heads to the University of Pennsylvania this fall. She credits her fast-track education path to her family and dedicated teachers.

Fetaw was born in Zogno, Italy, and her family immigrated to the United States when she was age 3. Whether spending time with her father at the local library or watching her mother earn her nursing degree, education is a family focus for the Fetaws.

Family support helped Fetaw skip elementary grades and from there she moved on to a gifted and talented middle school. Not one to shy away from an educational challenge, Fetaw needed more than the advanced classes that her middle school offered. So she was promoted to the 8th grade early.



Alison Roeth, a 16-year-old graduate of North Carolina’s Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, poses in front of her high school alma mater.



Helen Fetaw is a 16-year-old graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools who is attending the University of Pennsylvania.

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Tenure Extended for Dallas and San Diego Superintendents; Albuquerque and Seattle Districts Appoint Interim Chiefs



Mike Miles

Mike Miles began his tenure as the superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District in July 2012.

In that time, he has led several efforts to support student achievement, including the Destination 2020 plan consisting of a new principal evaluation system as well as the Teacher Excellence Initiative that will help the district retain, support and reward the best teachers.

As a result, he was recently given a two-year contract extension that will keep him with the district through July 2017.

In a news statement, Miles said that there is still much to do to improve the district but he has seen progress being made in the last two years. "Our plan of investing in people, focusing on the classroom, strengthening our systems and engaging the community will result in Dallas ISD having the highest percentage of college

and career-ready graduates of any urban district in the country."

Also receiving a contract extension recently was Cindy Marten, who became superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District last year after serving as principal of a district elementary school.

Marten received a one-year contract extension after the Board of Trustees' evaluation acknowledged that Marten "exceeded our highest expectations."

Evaluation topics ranged from effective community outreach, access to broad and challenging curriculum to key operational factors such as budget development.



Cindy Marten

The San Diego board noted that "while many challenges are ahead, we are confident that under the leadership of Cindy Marten, all students will thrive and have op-

portunity for success."

And Marten said she was gratified by the board's confidence and "excited to continue this important work, alongside extraordinary educators and staff in ensuring we serve the needs of all of our amazing students."

Interim Leaders Named

In Albuquerque, Brad Winter, former chief operations officer of Albuquerque Public Schools, is the new interim superintendent of the 87,000-student school system. The 22-year district veteran replaces Winston Brooks, who resigned after six years at the district's helm. Winter was given a one-year contract.

A graduate of the district, Winter began his career in Albuquerque schools as a high school teacher. During his tenure with the district, Winter has built 11 schools to relieve overcrowding as well as built the district's first new football stadium in 45 years, which opened last fall.

And in Seattle, Larry Nyland was appointed interim superintendent following the departure of Superintendent José Banda, who was recently named superintendent of California's Sacramento City Unified School District.

Nyland previously served nine years as superintendent of Marysville School District, a nearby district serving approximately 12,000 students. In that position, Nyland was able to work with school staff to raise graduation rates by 22 percent.

"We feel deeply honored and privileged that Dr. Nyland will be stepping in as interim superintendent," said Sharon Peaslee, Seattle schools board president.

Council to Release Study on Testing

With the advent of the Common Core State Standards, some public opinion indicates that the new academic standards will lead to over testing in schools.

In helping big-city schools to implement the rigorous standards, the Council of the Great City Schools has taken an additional step in collecting data of current assessment practices in urban school systems in a new study to be released soon.

By surveying and analyzing the current testing practices in the nation's big-city school districts, the Council intends "to help intelligently inform issues of testing, its purposes and uses, and how these practices can be improved as we move forward," says Executive Director Michael Casserly.

Begin College *continued from page 2*

At the University of Pennsylvania, Fetaw plans to study pre-medicine and biochemistry with a minor in bioethics and Spanish. In post-graduation, Fetaw desires to pursue research and travel to provide medical services in countries in need.

Her advice to her peers is to take advantage of different opportunities, take responsibility for your dreams and dedicate yourself to hard work.

"Persevere against all odds until the day that comes where your dreams and reality are one in the same," Fetaw said.

The Pledge continued from page 1

Next Steps

In a call to action by the Council, each of the 60 school systems support boosting efforts to prepare males of color for college and careers, to reduce the disproportionate number who drop out of school or who are suspended, and to help them succeed.

To that end, the Council is developing a collection of district best practices in reducing school suspensions and expulsions, as well as in increasing attendance and Advanced Placement rates. It is also deploying academic key performance indicators it has developed to track student progress over time, and has asked big-city school districts to formulate implementation plans to help



Left to right, Richmond Schools Superintendent Dana Bedden asks a question during a meeting with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan and White House officials as Jackson Schools Superintendent Cedrick Gray and Rochester Schools Superintendent Bolgen Vargas look on.

improve achievement of boys and young men of color.

Moreover, the Council is moving forward in partnerships with the National Basketball Association in helping inner-city students stay in school and offering mentoring and with the College Board to increase the number of males of color enroll and complete Advanced Placement courses and tests. It also has monthly meetings with U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education James Shelton, who leads the president's *My Brother's Keeper* task force.

In October, the Council will host a symposium called "United to Make a Difference: Improving the Achievement of



Council of the Great City Schools Chair Jumoke Hinton Hodge addresses White House event as U.S. Deputy Education Secretary James Shelton looks on.

Young Men of Color," Oct. 21-22 in Milwaukee, for urban-school leaders to discuss issues of race and specific steps that school districts can take to realize the promise of their commitment. The symposium is being held immediately before the Council's 58th Annual Fall Conference, scheduled Oct. 22-26 in Milwaukee, and will also focus on school-district implementation plans, best practices, joint strategies, and potential collaborations with other White House partners.

The Pledge

With such a large portion of the country's school-age African American males and Hispanic males enrolled in big-city public schools, urban-school leaders agree that they have an obligation to teach all students to the highest academic standards and prepare them for today's global society.

"Our job as urban educators is not to reflect or perpetuate the inequities that too many of our males of color face; our job is to eliminate those inequities—and that is what we pledge to do," stressed Council Executive Director Michael Casserly. "We are pleased to join forces with the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, and our other partners in an unprecedented shared commitment to improve the educational and social opportunities of our young men of color," he added.

In "A Pledge by America's Great City Schools," each of the 60 urban school sys-

tems committed to carrying out 11 specific actions, which include:

- Ensuring that pre-school efforts better serve males of color and their academic and social development;
- Adopting and implementing elementary and middle school efforts to increase "the pipeline" of males of color who are on track to succeed in high school, and increasing the numbers participating in advanced placement, honors, and gifted and talented programs;
- Keeping data and establishing protocols to monitor the progress of males of color and intervene at the earliest warning signs of problems;
- Reducing the disproportionate number of males of color who are absent, suspended, expelled, or placed inappropriately in special education classes; and
- Working to transform high schools with low graduation rates among males of color and striving to increase the numbers of males of color and others who complete the FAFSA forms for college aid.

A Call for Change

In late 2010, the Council sounded an alarm with the release of an eye-opening report indicating that young black males in America are in a state of crisis.

The widely publicized report – *A Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Black Males in Urban Schools* – led to Council testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families, and prompted the organization to release a companion analysis of Hispanic students.

The *Call for Change* study called for a White House initiative, noting that the education, social, and employment outcomes of African American males are equivalent to a "national catastrophe" requiring coordinated national attention.

A Pledge by America’s Great City Schools

- Whereas, some 32 percent of the nation’s African American males and some 39 percent of the nation’s Hispanic males attend school each day in one of the Great City School systems; and
- Whereas, the academic achievement of Males of Color in the nation’s urban school systems and nationally is well below what it needs to be for these young people to be successful in college and careers; and
- Whereas, disproportionate numbers of Males of Color drop out of urban schools and often have low attendance rates; and
- Whereas, Males of Color disproportionately attend under-resourced schools and are taught by the least-effective teachers; and
- Whereas, the nation’s Great City Schools have an obligation to teach all students under their aegis to the highest academic standards and prepare them for successful participation in our nation:
- Be It Therefore Resolved that, the Great City Schools pledge to ensure that its pre-school efforts better serve Males of Color and their academic and social development, and
- That the Great City Schools will adopt and implement elementary and middle school efforts to increase the pipeline of Males of Color who are succeeding academically and socially in our urban schools and who are on track to succeed in high school, and
- That the Great City Schools will keep data and establish protocols that will allow it to monitor the progress of Males of Color and other students in our schools and appropriately intervene at the earliest warning signs; and
- That the Great City Schools will adopt and implement promising and proven approaches to reducing absenteeism, especially chronic absenteeism, among Males of Color, and
- That the Great City Schools will develop initiatives and regularly report on progress in retaining Males of Color in school and reducing disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates, and
- That the Great City Schools will develop initiatives and regularly report on progress in increasing the numbers of our Males of Color and other students participating in advanced placement and honors courses and gifted and talented programs, and
- That the Great City Schools will strongly encourage colleges of education to adopt curriculum that addresses the academic, cultural, and social needs of Males of Color, and that the district will maintain data on how these teachers do with our Males of Color, and
- That the Great City Schools will develop initiatives and regularly report on progress in increasing the numbers of Males of Color and other students who complete the FAFSA, and
- That the Great City Schools will work to reduce as appropriate the disproportionate numbers of Males of Color in special education courses, and
- That the Great City Schools will work to transform high schools with persistently low graduation rates among Males of Color and others and to provide literacy and engagement initiatives with parents.
- That the Great City Schools will engage in a broader discussion and examination of how issues of race, language, and culture affect the work of our district.

Albuquerque Public Schools	Detroit Public Schools	Newark Public Schools
Anchorage School District	District of Columbia Public Schools	Norfolk Public Schools
Atlanta Public Schools	Duval County (Jacksonville) Public Schools	Oakland Unified School District
Austin Public Schools	East Baton Rouge Parish School System	Oklahoma City Public Schools
Baltimore City Public Schools	El Paso Independent School District	Omaha Public Schools
Birmingham Public Schools	Fort Worth Independent School District	Orange County (Orlando) Public Schools
Boston Public Schools	Fresno Unified School District	Palm Beach School District
Bridgeport Public Schools	Guilford County (Greensboro) Public Schools	Philadelphia School District
Broward County Public Schools	Hillsborough County (Tampa) Public Schools	Pittsburgh Public Schools
Buffalo Public Schools	Houston Independent School District	Portland Public Schools
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools	Indianapolis Public Schools	Providence Public Schools
Chicago Public Schools	Jackson Public Schools	Richmond Public Schools
Cincinnati Public Schools	Jefferson County (Louisville) Public Schools	Rochester City School District
Clark County (Las Vegas) Public Schools	Kansas City (MO) Public Schools	Sacramento City Unified School District
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	Long Beach Unified School District	Saint Paul Public Schools
Columbus City School District	Los Angeles Unified School District	San Diego Unified School District
Dallas Independent School District	Miami-Dade County Public Schools	San Francisco Public Schools
Dayton Public Schools	Milwaukee Public Schools	Seattle Public Schools
Denver Public Schools	Minneapolis Public Schools	Shelby County (Memphis) Public Schools
Des Moines Public Schools	Nashville Public Schools	Toledo Public Schools

New Initiatives *continued from page 1*

ees are required to complete annual social media guidelines training.

Anchorage

Alaska's Anchorage School District is revamping its drug policy, allowing students with two or more drug offenses to transfer to an alternative high school instead of being expelled. The district is also expanding its initiative called BYOD, which stands for Bring Your Own Device, that allows students to bring their own computing devices to school.

Atlanta

In an effort to help parents stay informed about what their children should be learning in each core content area throughout the year, Atlanta Public Schools has created pacing calendars for the 2014-2015 school year. The calendars are available in English Language Arts, math, science and social studies for elementary, middle and high school students.

Boston

Boston Public Schools opened its first K-12 inclusion school, where students with physical and emotional disabilities learn in the same classrooms as their non-disabled peers. The Henderson K-12 Inclusion School is a merger of two existing schools and serves students from pre-kindergarten through high school, allowing students to stay at the same school until they graduate.

Bridgeport

Connecticut's Bridgeport Public Schools is implementing the RULER program to encourage students to recognize, understand, label, express and regulate their emotions. The program was piloted at one school last year and will expand to all schools this year. As part of the program, schools will have "mood meters" that allow students to express how they are feeling first thing in the morning.

Broward

Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is launching its 2014/2015



Atlanta Schools Superintendent Meria Carstarphen places "Day One: Be There" attendance campaign sticker on a student during the first day of school at Bethune Elementary. Photo Credit: Scott King, Atlanta Public Schools

attendance campaign, with the slogan "Attendance Counts! All Day, Every Day!" As part of the campaign, a public service announcement will be used throughout the school year to remind students about the importance of regular school attendance. The district is also launching a chess curriculum for second and third graders.

Charlotte

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is partnering with the University of Virginia to help close achievement gaps and turn around 14 underperforming schools. Called the Beacon Initiative, the district and university officials will spend the next year studying the particular needs of each school and then develop long-term strategies to help those schools improve.

Chicago

The nation's third largest school district unveiled a fully redesigned website, which allows users to access information and resources across all electronic devices.

Cincinnati

Ohio's Cincinnati Public Schools is launching 'My Tomorrow' High School Initiative designed to improve students' career readiness. The initiative combines increased high school rigor, the latest technology and advisory teams to build student-teacher connections. The initiative is being introduced in all of the district's 15 high schools during this school year

and will be implemented at all grade levels within a five-year period.

Clark County

Clark County School District in Las Vegas has created a new online pledge of achievement for students, parents and stakeholders to support the district and improve student achievement. The district has also created a Pledge of Achievement action plan focused on deploying budget and resources in support of better training of teachers and increasing student, staff and parent engagement.

Cleveland

Ohio's Cleveland Metropolitan School District is designating 10 more schools as "Investment Schools" that will be targeted for intensive intervention to raise academic achievement, improve the climate, and increase family and community participation. Last year, the district selected 23 "Investment Schools."

Columbus

Columbus City Schools in Ohio is opening doors to the Hubbard Mastery School PreK-6 in which students move through instruction at their own pace as they master each new skill. The district has also partnered with the City of Columbus to add an additional 160 pre-K seats. And all elementary, middle and high schools will have newly redesigned and user friendly interactive websites.

Dallas

An additional 12 schools in the Dallas Independent School District will implement the Imagine 2020 initiative, redoubling their efforts to increase student achievement using innovative instruction, more professional development and community support. The district is also launching Personalized Learning, a new initiative to provide individual students an education that fits their needs and abilities. And the 159,000-student school district filled more than 99 percent of its teaching positions for the 2014-2015 school year.

New Initiatives *continued on page 7*

New Initiatives *continued from page 6*

Denver

Denver Public Schools is launching the Denver Plan 2020, an effort to ensure 80 percent of all students in every neighborhood will attend a high-performing school by 2020. The plan also calls for 80 percent of third-grade students to be at or above grade level in reading and writing, an increase in the number of students who graduate college and career-ready, and a narrowing of the achievement gap.

Des Moines

Iowa's Des Moines Public Schools celebrated the opening of the Jesse Franklin Taylor Education Center, a 45,000-square-foot facility that provides students with new preschool classrooms and a new home for the district's middle school alternative program.

Detroit

Detroit Public Schools is expanding the number of Pre-K programs, bringing to 205 the total number of classrooms. The district is also implementing the addition of a prep period for K-8 teachers and continuing its emphasis on providing customer service by offering trained customer care staff fluent in the language of the community at all schools.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Public Schools in Washington, D.C., will offer a longer school day at 25 schools, allowing more time for instruction while also paying teachers for their longer work schedule. Also, all elementary, middle and high schools will offer a world language class for students.

Duval County

Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Fla., has made a number of technology improvements, including adding high density wireless and electric retrofits to every school, developing a portal data system to provide easy access to student data and providing all teachers with new laptops. The improvements are being fund-



Columbus Schools Superintendent J. Daniel Good helps a student at the Columbus City Preparatory School with his tie during the school's For Boys Tie Tying Ceremony.

ed with a \$50-million grant from the Florida Department of Education.

East Baton Rouge

The East Baton Rouge Parish School System in Louisiana has added Mandarin Chinese as part of the district's foreign language academic immersion magnet program and is also celebrating the opening of the new Brookstown Middle Magnet Academy, whose programs include broadcast communications, health sciences and an honors academy.

El Paso

Beginning this fall, high school science teachers and students in Texas' El Paso Independent School District will receive electronic textbooks and e-readers as part of the district's e-text device initiative. The district is also implementing a community service requirement for all high school students.

Fort Worth

Texas' Fort Worth Independent School District has opened the World Languages Institute for students who are interested in pursuing careers with an international focus. The school offers instruction in Spanish and English and will serve 6th and 7th grade students, with a new grade added each year.

Fresno

California's Fresno Unified School District celebrated the opening of the Rutherford B. Gaston Sr. Middle School, which

will house the district's first school-based Health and Wellness Center serving children of all ages. The opening of the school ends more than 35 years of busing southwest Fresno students to other district middle schools.

Greensboro

Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., is adding two schools to its turnaround initiative, which overhauls a low-performing school by appointing a new principal and giving them flexibility to make school-based decisions, replacing staff and extending the school day or year. The district is also expanding its Virtual Middle School courses for students in grades 6-8.

Houston

This fall, Houston Independent School District is expanding its dual-language offerings to an additional 14 elementary schools, for a total of 31 schools that will offer students instruction in Spanish and English. In addition, the district will offer students at 21 schools a laptop as part of an expansion of its PowerUp one-to-one laptop initiative launched last year.

Jackson

Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools is requiring all ninth-grade students to enter Freshman Academies, where students will work in small cohorts and enroll in a freshman seminar course designed to provide career exploration. The school system has also adopted a new online grade reporting system that enables parents and students to view grades, attendance and discipline reports.

Los Angeles

The nation's second largest school district launched My Integrated Student Information System (MiSiS) that manages all aspects of student data including attendance and grades. According to district officials, the school system is the largest in the nation to adopt an online student record system. The district is also implementing new school discipline initiatives in

New Initiatives *continued on page 8*

New Initiatives *continued from page 7*

which students aged 13-17 who commit minor violations will no longer be arrested or ticketed but referred to school administrators for intervention and support.

Miami

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is unveiling 52 new choice and magnet programs, including a zoo magnet high school. The district is also implementing a pilot program of random drug testing of students participating in sports, and has a new food truck that will travel from school to school offering meals to students.

Milwaukee

Milwaukee Public Schools has identified 14 low-performing schools and designated them as Commitment Schools, where they will receive rigorous academic and behavioral interventions and additional resources. The district is also adding 50 new art, music and physical education teaching positions as well as parent coordinators in every school to build stronger relationships between families and schools.

Minneapolis

In an effort to increase the achievement of black males, Minneapolis Public Schools has created the Office of Black Male Student Achievement. The department will lead district efforts to tackle issues and barriers that contribute to the achievement gap as well as create opportunities for culturally responsive practices.

Nashville

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools is embarking upon an effort to transform its middle schools into what it calls the Middle Preps of Nashville, designed to prepare students academically, socially and emotionally for high school. The district is also launching a new Parent Ambassadors program in conjunction with the Mayor's Office, in which parents serve as ambassadors helping immigrant families understand the school system.



Miami Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho serves students a meal on the district's new food truck.

New York City

The nation's largest school system is investing \$23 million to expand arts education in the 2014-2015 school year. The money will be used to hire 120 new certified arts teachers at middle and high schools, create a partnership with a local college to train new arts teachers and upgrade art facilities at schools. The district is also expanding its preschool program, adding 51,000 seats. District officials believe the expansion is the largest of its kind in the nation.

Norfolk

Virginia's Norfolk Public Schools is creating a new program designed to help students who have dropped out or have fallen behind academically. Norfolk Public Schools Open Campus – A Magic Johnson Bridgestone Academy will offer 125 students a flexible schedule with a focus on e-learning. Interactive online offerings will be specifically tailored for each student.

Oakland

California's Oakland Unified School District has installed 250 WiFi access points in 44 schools that did not previously have high-speed Internet access. By the end of the school year, all schools will have high-speed Internet access. The school system is also expanding its Teacher Growth and Development System, a teacher evaluation program developed in partnership with the Oakland Education Association, to an additional 25 schools this year.

Oklahoma City

In an effort to improve safety and security at elementary schools, the Oklahoma City school system is adding eight Oklahoma City Police officers as school resource officers to support elementary schools.

Orange County

Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Fla., is advancing digital connectivity at its 184 schools, including increasing the density of wireless access points throughout schools to accommodate more online users.

Philadelphia

The School District of Philadelphia opened three new high schools this fall, including Building 21 where traditional courses are re-organized into "studios" that are based on fields of study, such as finance. The district is also launching a School Redesign Initiative, in which educators, community organizations and universities are invited to submit a proposal to redesign a school. Selected applicants will spend the year working with the local school community to tailor the academic program to the needs of the students at the school.

Portland

After years of cutting staff, Oregon's Portland Public Schools has hired more than 500 educators this school year, including 180 new teachers. The district is also adding the state's first Vietnamese immersion program, and in response to parents' school-based concerns, the district has hired an ombudsman.

Providence

In an effort to address the emotional and social needs of its students, Rhode Island's Providence School District will introduce a program designed to increase positive behavior, develop character and improve school performance. The district is also developing and implementing a customer service training program for all employees.

New Initiatives *continued on page 9*

New Initiatives *continued from page 8*

Richmond

Virginia's Richmond Public Schools is implementing a new attendance policy that addresses unexcused tardies, early departures and excused absences. Under the policy, excessive excused absences will be reviewed by the school attendance support team for recommendation of additional services.

Rochester

New York's Rochester City School District is adding five expanded-learning schools that provide students with an additional 300 hours of instruction time and support. And students at two schools, Rochester Early College International High School and Integrated Arts and Technology High School, will receive computers to access online course material.

San Diego

San Diego Unified School District begins the new school year with a Quality Assurance Office in an effort to create a one-stop shop where parents, students, staff and community members can share concerns related to the district and receive timely responses. And a collaboration with San Diego Community College has resulted in the new Lincoln High School STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Middle College program where students can take college credit classes at the community college and earn an associate degree.

San Francisco

San Francisco Unified School District is providing laptops to all of its middle and high school teachers, and all math teachers will implement the Common Core State Standards curriculum.

Seattle

As a result of the passage of a 2013 capital levy, Seattle Public Schools is opening two schools this school year. And this year the district will transition from the Measurements of Student Progress tests for reading, writing and math in grades 3-8 to the Smarter Balanced tests, which are

designed to align with the Common Core State Standards.

Shelby County (Memphis)

At the start of the new school year, Shelby County Schools in Tennessee launched a new online troubleshooting tool that allows parents to directly report any concerns or issues, such as transportation or registration. The district also celebrated the opening of the Maxine Smith STEAM Academy that integrates science, technology, engineering, the arts and math into all subjects. The school is also part of the district's new blended learning pilot.

St. Paul

Minnesota's St. Paul School District will begin offering an iPad to all students, enabling them to be able to use an iPad during the school day and carry it with them from class to class. In addition, students in grades 6-12 can use their iPads at home after school hours.

Toledo

Ohio's Toledo Public Schools is opening the Jones Leadership Academy, a high school that will educate boys and girls in separate wings with a curriculum that emphasizes leadership, community service and entrepreneurship/financial literacy. And the district will use a \$3.8-million grant from the Obama Administration to implement the Pathway to Prosperity program in which high school students will be dual-enrolled in their high school and Owens Community College.

Wichita

In an effort to protect students, Wichita Public Schools has implemented the Hall Pass Visitor Management System in which visitors at schools are required to sign in by scanning their driver's license each time they visit the school during bell hours. If the system flags a non-authorized visitor, school administrators and the district's Safety Services will be alerted and appropriate procedures will be followed. In addition, the district also began training staff in the Run, Hide, Fight Intruder Response plan, where staff and students assess a situation and respond on which option is best.



A student in Oklahoma City Public Schools receives a free meal as part of a new federal initiative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to offer free meals to students.

Urban Schools Expanding Meals

Since 2011, Oklahoma City Public Schools has offered free breakfast at all of its schools. As the school district ushers in a new school year, students will also begin to receive free lunch at 52 participating sites.

The district is one of the latest big-city school districts to participate in the federally funded U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). School districts that serve predominately low-income students may offer free, nutritious school meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program.

Students no longer need to submit an application or pay a fee to participate. The program will reimburse the district for nearly 100 percent of the cost of providing school meals to all students.

The intent of the CEP is to improve access to healthy meals in eligible school districts and to eliminate the administrative burden of paperwork. Through improved food services, districts can meet the needs of the whole child by removing barriers to classroom participation such as hunger.

In addition to Oklahoma City, other urban school districts participating in USDA CEP include: Chicago Public Schools, El Paso Independent School District, Jackson Public Schools, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Milwaukee Public Schools, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Richmond Public Schools and the School District of Philadelphia.

New Resource Developed for English Language Learners

Thousands of educators in large urban school districts across the nation now have access to a free resource, designed to guide districts in accelerating achievement for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Developed by a team of ELL experts and contributors from member districts of the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), the resource, entitled *A Framework for Raising Expectations and Instructional Rigor for English Language Learners*, addresses challenges faced by educators who are implementing new college- and career-ready standards with their bilingual, immigrant, and refugee students who are acquiring English.

Designed as a practical guide for districts with large populations of English learners and created with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the document introduces a new pedagogical framework for English language develop-

ment that explicitly addresses the higher language demands of new college- and career-ready standards. In recognition of the variety of programs found in districts, the framework also addresses the range of models and contexts in which instruction for ELLs is delivered, and provides a set of considerations for choosing effective instructional materials to accelerate achievement for ELLs.

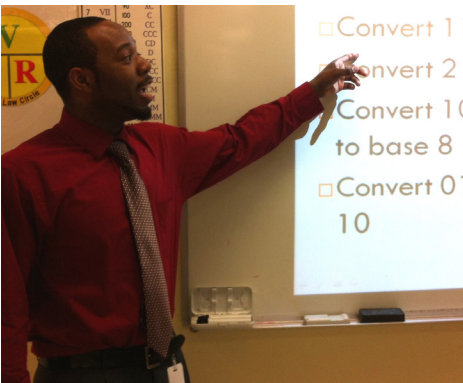
“This is one of those ground-breaking tools that local school districts will be using to reform and strengthen their instructional programs for English Language Learners and to enhance the quality of the classroom materials that teachers use to boost academic attainment for this growing population in our Great Cities and nationwide,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly. “This document is one more piece of evidence of how our urban school leaders are sharing their expertise to

ensure success for all our students.”

A second, parallel project is currently underway to spur the improvement of instructional materials for ELLs. Funded by the Gates Foundation and Televisa Foundation, this project brings together publishers of instructional materials, ELL experts, and instructional leaders from CGCS member districts with large ELL enrollments. Together, they are working to shape the evolution of instructional materials to reflect the more rigorous expectations embedded in the new standards.

Participating publishers include Amplify, Benchmark Education, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and National Geographic Learning/Cengage, all of whom have committed to participating in a series of in-depth meetings and conversations around materials development, piloting new materials in classrooms in the spring of 2015, and integrating feedback into their development cycle.

North Carolina District Partners With Black Colleges to Boost Teacher Ranks



A new teacher in Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., learns effective classroom practices through the district's certification program.

A unique partnership between Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is bringing enthusiastic young graduates into the teaching profession.

The school system faces the same challenge many big-city school districts across

the nation struggle with: filling openings in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) classes. In the past five years, the school system needed 800 teachers in these categories.

And while colleges and universities don't produce enough math and science teachers to meet the demand, they do graduate students in those fields who may not have planned to be teachers.

So in 2010, the Guilford school district partnered with four HBCUs to develop a pipeline of STEM graduates to enter education through alternative-licensure routes. The district used federal Transition to Teaching funds to hire a STEM recruiter, who built relationships with professors in the STEM departments at four institutions: Winston-Salem State, Bennett College, North Carolina A&T State University and North Carolina Central University.

Interested students were then invited to the district to participate in professional development alongside practicing teachers

and decide whether they want to move forward into education.

After graduation, the STEM recruiter helps place these new teachers, working under a provisional teaching license. And it's working: since 2010, the school system has trained 60 STEM teachers, with another 25 joining the ranks this school year.

Among those joining the school system was Daylonda Lee, a science teacher and head of the science International Baccalaureate program at Smith High School.

A graduate of North Carolina A&T University, Lee recalled she never really thought about going back into the classroom as a teacher until she learned about the Guilford certification program, and she is glad she did.

“I feel like I'm making a difference with my students every day, and it was the perfect way to share my love of science with the next generation of STEM students,” said Lee, who is now enrolled in UNC-Greensboro's Master of Education program in science.

Council of the Great City Schools

58TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

“Fresh Water. Fresh Thinking in Urban Education”

Hosted by Milwaukee Public Schools

October 22 - 26, 2014

Hilton Milwaukee City Center
Milwaukee, WI

Tuesday, October 21

8:00 am-5:00 pm

Young Men of Color Pre-Conference Symposium
(pre-registration is required)

Wednesday, October 22

7:00 am-5:00 pm

Conference registration

9:00 am-11:00 am

Young Men of Color Pre-Conference Symposium

1:00 pm-5:00 pm

Task Force Meetings

6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Welcome reception at the Milwaukee Art Museum

Thursday, October 23

7:30 am-9:00 am

Breakfast and Welcome

9:00 am-12:15 pm

Breakout Sessions

12:30 pm-2:00 pm

Lunch and Speaker: **David Coleman**

2:15 pm-5:30 pm

Breakout Sessions

7:00 pm-9:00 pm

25th Annual Green-Garner Awards Banquet:
Urban Educator of the Year Announced



Friday, October 24

7:30 am-9:00 am

Breakfast and Speaker: **Anna Maria Chavez**

9:00 am-12:30 pm

Breakout Sessions

12:30 pm-2:00 pm

Lunch and Speaker: **Neil deGrasse Tyson**

2:30 pm-4:00 pm

National Town Hall Meeting

6:30 pm-8:30 pm

Reception at the Discovery Children’s Museum

Saturday, October 25

8:00 am-9:00 am

Breakfast

8:30 am-12:00 pm

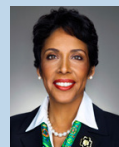
Board of Directors Meeting

12:00 pm-2:30 pm

Legislative Directors Meeting

6:30 pm-9:00 pm

Farewell Event at the Harley-Davidson Museum®



Sunday, October 26

8:00 am- 11:30 am

Breakfast and Closing Session

11:30 am

Adjourn



‘Fresh Thinking’ Focus Of Council Conference

Big-city school superintendents, board members and senior administrators will share best practices and reforms to advance urban education in America when they converge at the Council of the Great City Schools’ 58th Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 22-26, in Milwaukee.

Under the banner “Fresh Water, Fresh Thinking in Urban Education,” these big-city school leaders from around the nation plan to exchange instructional and operational strategies in nearly 80 sessions.

They will discuss topics such as district and school-level implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the school-principal pipeline, teacher effectiveness and evaluation, as well as deferred school-building maintenance.

The urban educators will also hear from three keynote speakers: College Board President David Coleman, astrophysicist, author and TV science commentator Neil deGrasse Tyson, and Chief Executive Officer of the Girl Scouts of the USA Anna Maria Chavez.

And the urban school leader of the year will be announced at the conference’s 25th Annual Green-Garner Award banquet.

The pinnacle event of the five-day conference at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center will be a national town hall meeting, focusing on the issue of testing.

To register, access the Council’s web site at www.cgcs.org. Registration can only be conducted online.





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Anonymous Donor Offers \$500 Scholarships to Students at Detroit School

Students in the incoming ninth-grade class at the Academy of the Americas (AOA) in Detroit will each receive a \$500 scholarship, up to \$15,000, thanks to an anonymous donor.

The school's new 9th grade High School Program will offer a dual language curriculum, honors classes and rigorous academic standards.

To qualify for the scholarship, students must enroll in the Academy of the Americas high school program in the inaugural ninth grade; must graduate from the high school program with a 2.5 GPA; and the student must enroll in a college or university.

"I don't know if this donor is a local professor in international studies, or one of our

extremely supportive community leaders, or a complete stranger," said Nicholas Brown, Academy of the Americas principal. "But I do know that this donation will help us to support a stellar bilingual immersion program that can lay the academic foundation for the next generation's successful college graduates, leaders in world affairs, ambassadors and international entrepreneurs."

Council Publishes Booklet on How It Helps Urban Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools has published a new booklet to summarize services it provides to its 67 member urban school districts.

"The Council and its member districts strive to help urban schoolchildren become successful and productive members of the global community," says *How We Help America's Urban Public Schools – A Summary of Membership Services and Benefits of the Council of the Great City Schools*.

"The Council informs policymakers, the media and the public of the successes and challenges of schools in the nation's

Great Cities," the booklet adds. "And urban school leaders from across the country use the organization as a source of information and a forum for coordinating their joint activities."

The booklet outlines numerous benefits the Council provides large urban public school systems in national advocacy, service and capacity building. Legislative, research, communications, teaching and learning as well as leadership and management functions help improve instruction and operations in the member school districts.

