



## ***News for Release***

**USA TODAY AND COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS HOST  
SECOND ANNUAL EDUCATION FORUM**  
***Keynote speaker is Geena Davis, Academy Award-Winning Actor and  
Founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2012

McLean, Va. — USA TODAY and Council of the Great City Schools will host their second annual Education Forum on Friday, March 16, at USA TODAY Headquarters in McLean, Va. “Unite to Make a Difference” ([www.usatodayeducate.com/unite](http://www.usatodayeducate.com/unite)) will bring together leaders from America’s largest urban school districts, corporate executives and the media for a day-long exchange of ideas aimed at improving education in the United States. The keynote will be delivered by Geena Davis, Academy Award-Winning Actor and Founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media.

The invitation-only event will feature more than a dozen superintendents from across the country, and will partner them with influential business leaders, members of the media and other top leaders in education to address the successes and challenges that face America’s urban schools.

“USA TODAY has an unwavering commitment to serve our communities and raise awareness of education issues. We’re delighted to be partnering with the Council of the Great City Schools on hosting this forum and we hope it will shed light on the challenges that face our nation’s schools,” said Dave Hunke, president and publisher of USA TODAY.

"This forum brings together USA TODAY and the country's leading urban educators to discuss progress in our big-city schools and how to build on achievements. Few conversations about the challenge and promise of urban education could be more important," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools.

The Forum’s presenting sponsors are StateFarm and Microsoft Partners in Learning. Additional sponsors include: Best Buy, History Channel, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and Alliance for Excellent Education. To view a live webcast of the event, participate in the dialogue on key questions being addressed by leading superintendents, or to learn more about USA TODAY’s education initiatives and partners visit [www.usatodayeducate.com/unite](http://www.usatodayeducate.com/unite). To join in the conversation, please follow #uniteforum on Twitter.

The event agenda for the March 16 forum includes:

8:15 am      Welcome: Debby Dodge, senior director of education, USA TODAY  
                  Winston Brooks, chair of Board of Directors, Council of the Great City Schools and  
                  superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools

- 8:25 a.m. ***Steps to Build Support for Urban School Students***  
Michael Casserly, executive director, Council of the Great City Schools
- 8:45 a.m. Panel Discussion: ***What's Needed to Improve, Support and Report Achievement in Urban Education?***  
Moderator: Dave Hunke, president and publisher, USA TODAY  
Panelists: Boston Public Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson, Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent Mary Ronan, District of Columbia Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson, Fresno Unified School District Superintendent Michael Hanson, Hillsborough County (Tampa) Public Schools Superintendent MaryEllen Elia, Indianapolis Public Schools Superintendent Eugene White
- 9:45 a.m. **Q&A**  
Candy Olson, chair, Hillsborough County School Board and panelists
- 10:30 a.m. ***The End of Wonder in the Age of Whatever***  
Michael Wesch, associate professor of Cultural Anthropology and Digital Ethnography, Kansas State University
- 11:30 a.m. Luncheon guest speaker: Tracey Howard Holmes, director, NFL & Strategic Partnerships, United Way Worldwide  
Nnamdi Asomugha, cornerback, Philadelphia Eagles
- 1:00 p.m. ***Keynote address***  
Geena Davis, Academy Award-winning actor and founder of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
- 2:15 p.m. Breakout sessions
- 1. How Can Technology Help Urban Students Advance?***  
Moderated by Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho and Siegfried Behrens, general manager of US Education, Microsoft
- 2. How Do You Harness Resources to Support Teaching and Learning in the Nation's Major Cities to combat the Drop Out rate?***  
Moderated by Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officer Jean-Claude Brizard, Kathy Payne, senior director of Education Leadership, State Farm and Mary Wong, president, Office Depot Foundation
- 3. How Do You Gain a Fair and Balanced View of Urban Students and Schools?***  
Moderated by Winston Brooks and Brent Jones, director of standards & staffing administration, USA TODAY
- 3:40 p.m. Breakout session reports  
Moderator: Dave Hunke
- 4:45 p.m. Closing Remarks: Diane Barrett, vice president of National Retail Sales and Strategy, Gannett Publishing Services & vice president of Education, USA TODAY

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 67 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation,

research and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth. [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)

Since 1983, USA TODAY has made a commitment to education that is unparalleled in the industry. USA TODAY's Education program is currently in place in over 30,000 K-12 classes across the country and on more than 450 university and college campuses, impacting over one million students daily. Educators have reached out to USA TODAY for over 25 years because of the unique format, credible non-fiction text, and topics that are relevant and motivating for students. Students like reading USA TODAY because of our unique style, bold color and graphics and easy-to-access information. USA TODAY covers contemporary issues that students can relate to and easily understand.

USA TODAY is a multi-platform news and information media company. Founded in 1982, USA TODAY's mission is to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation. Today, through its newspaper, website and mobile platforms, USA TODAY connects readers and engages the national conversation. USA TODAY, the nation's number one newspaper in print circulation with an average of nearly 1.8 million daily, and USATODAY.com, an award-winning newspaper website launched in 1995, reach a combined 5.4 million readers daily. USA TODAY is a leader in mobile applications with more than ten million downloads on mobile devices. The USA TODAY brand also includes USA TODAY Education and USA TODAY Sports Weekly. USA TODAY is owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI).

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\*Note to press: Members of the press are encouraged to attend/cover. Please contact Heidi Zimmerman in advance to confirm admittance to the event.

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