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Education Secretary To Address Council



Arne Duncan

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will brief the nation's urban school leaders on the latest federal initiatives and issues at the Council of the Great City Schools' Annual Legislative/Policy Conference, March 22-25, at Washington's Renaissance Mayflower Hotel.

The conference will focus on a range of Obama administration and congressional topics, such as the ongoing budget battles in Congress and Fiscal Year 2014 appropriations and sequestration.

Other topics include the status of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and other education reauthorizations, waiver renewals for *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), and early-childhood education legislation.

Conference highlights are on page 9 and registration information can be accessed at www.cgcs.org.

Big-City Schools Show a Decade Of Progress on Nation's Report Card

For the past 10 years, public school students in the nation's large cities have seen a steady upward trend in their average reading and mathematics scores in grades 4 and 8 on the rigorous federal test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), according to *The Nation's Report Card: 2013 Mathematics and Reading Trial Urban District Assessment* (TUDA).

Academic achievement in the large city schools over the past 10 years has outpaced public-school performance in the nation with gains significantly larger than increases nationally. The improvement is reflected in the large percentages of big-city students who have scored at or above proficient levels in 4th and 8th grade reading and math compared with the nation's public-school students.

"The 2013 TUDA results show student performance in large cities continues to both improve overall and that large-city schools nationwide are improving at a faster pace than the nation as a whole," said U.S.



Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in a press statement during the Dec. 18 urban NAEP release.

Although with the exception of a few cities, math and reading scores in

fourth and eighth grades are still higher in the nation than in the large cities. But since 2003, the achievement gap in average scale scores between the nation's large-city public schools and the nation has narrowed substantially.

The scale-score gap between the large cities and the nation has narrowed by 32

Report Card continued on page 4

New School Chiefs Named in NYC, Columbus, Toledo and Richmond

Ushering in the new year, four big-city school districts begin 2014 with new school system leaders.

The new mayor of New York City recently appointed Carmen Fariña, an educator with more than 40 years of experience, to take the reins of his city's 1.1 million-student school system, the nation's largest.

Fariña is no stranger to the New York City school district, having begun her

career as a teacher at a local elementary school, where a reading curriculum she developed was so successful that the board of education recruited her to expand it for second through ninth grades and to train teachers on its use.

Fariña went on to serve as a principal, community superintendent and regional superintendent. In 2004, she was appointed deputy chancellor for teaching and learn-

ing, increasing interventions for middle school students, which included Saturday classes, counseling for parents, and study skills workshops. In 2006,



Carmen Fariña

School Chiefs continued on page 3

Council Program Helps Create ‘Leaders and Innovators of Tomorrow’

Last summer, four graduating seniors of urban schools in the Class of 2013 had one thing in common, although they did not know each other or live in the same city. They were ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholars.

They had received the highly competitive national scholarships from the Council of the Great City Schools, selected from several hundred applicants by former NASA astronaut Dr. Bernard Harris Jr., the first African American to walk in space.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Council is gearing up to offer the ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships to students in the 66 big-city school districts it represents who are pursuing career fields in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The scholarships will be available soon at www.cgcs.org to 2014 graduating high school seniors. Four \$5,000 scholarships for two males and two females each will be awarded to two African American and two Hispanic students.

The scholarship program was created by Dr. Harris, who is also a physician, businessman and author, to help under-

represented students pursue STEM studies and careers and increase cultural diversity in the STEM workforce.

Last summer, the scholarships were awarded to students graduating from Florida’s Palm Beach County School District, Memphis City Schools, Oregon’s Portland Public Schools and Florida’s Orange County Public Schools in Orlando.

They enrolled as freshmen in STEM-

related degree programs at Harvard, Vanderbilt, MIT and the University of Florida.

“These young men and women will have an opportunity to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow thanks to the generous support of ExxonMobil and the encouragement of Dr. Harris,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.



Former NASA astronaut Bernard Harris shows students how to reach the stars.



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A newsletter published by the Council of the Great City Schools, representing 66 of the nation’s largest urban public school districts.

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she retired from the district.

In a press release announcing her selection, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio noted that Fariña has worked at nearly every level of the school system while praising her for finding innovative new ways to reach students and transform troubled schools.

“She knows our students, teachers, principals and parents better than anyone, and she will deliver progressive change in our schools that lifts up children in every neighborhood,” said de Blasio.

“True change happens not through mandates and top-down decision making, but through communication, collaboration and celebrating the successes along the way,” said Fariña. “Raising the success rate of our students is the only goal.”

Fariña succeeds Dennis Walcott, who led the school district since April 2011.

Ohio Districts Stay the Course

Instead of embarking on a national search for a leader, two big-city school districts in Ohio decided to look no further than their interim superintendents.



J. Daniel Good

Columbus City Schools, Ohio’s largest school district with 50,000 students, named

interim superintendent J. Daniel Good as its superintendent/CEO.

Good was named interim superintendent in June 2013, succeeding Gene Harris.

Before being named interim superintendent, Good was the superintendent of Ohio’s Westerville City Schools for six years, and was superintendent of Ohio’s Wooster City Schools for four years.

Gary Baker, the president of the Columbus school board, praised Good for his efforts, including establishing a plan to meet with staff and community members, developing strong relationships with civic and business leaders, establishing district

interim goals and refocusing efforts to help students improve achievement at the primary level.

“As a board, we are pleased with his performance and the momentum and positive spirit he has developed over the past six months,” said Baker in a press release. “We are very much looking forward to working with Dr. Good to help lead the district forward – to higher levels of student achievement and success.”

And Ohio’s Toledo Public Schools has named a former graduate of the school district to lead its 23,000-student school system.

Romules Durant, who was appointed interim superintendent in August 2013 to replace Jerome Pecko, was given a five-year contract to become the 30th superintendent of the Toledo school district.

Durant graduated from the district’s Waite High School and began working for the school system in 1999 as a classroom teacher. He has served as an assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent in the district before being named interim superintendent.

Durant, who played a pivotal role in creating the district’s multi-year transformation plan, which addresses increasing community partnerships, expanding educational opportunities for students and establishing neighborhood schools, wants to continue the implementation of the transformation plan as superintendent.

Durant is also the founder of two popular student leadership groups, Young Men of Excellence and Young Women of Excellence, with 2,000 students from 15 schools in the district participating.

New Leader in Richmond

Also beginning the new year with a new superintendent is Virginia’s Richmond Public Schools, which named Dana Bedden the leader of the 23,649-student

school system. Bedden was the superintendent of Texas’ Irving Independent School District for three years, and under his leadership, Advanced Placement courses were expanded, as well as the number of students taking the courses. Graduation rates also increased.



Dana Bedden

Bedden will succeed Jonathan Lewis, who served as interim superintendent for six months.

Chicago District Employees Become Mentors to Students

Many big-city school districts provide community members the opportunity to volunteer and mentor students, but Chicago Public Schools is going one step farther and offering their employees the chance to become mentors.

The nation’s third largest school district recently launched *Mentoring the Next Generation*, a new district-wide school volunteer initiative created to provide students with academic support and positive role models.

As part of the program, district employees will have the opportunity to pay weekly visits to elementary schools and participate in one-hour mentoring sessions with either kindergartners, who are just beginning their academic journey, or eighth-grade students, who are preparing for the transition to high school. The mentors will help the students improve their reading and writing skills.

Employees can enroll as mentors for either two kindergarten students for one half hour each or one eighth grade student for a full hour.

Chicago District *continued on page 8*

Report Card *continued from page 1*

percent in fourth-grade reading over the 10-year period, 34 percent in eighth-grade reading, 38 percent in fourth-grade math, and an eye-popping 43 percent in eighth-grade math.

Three urban school districts – Austin, Texas, Charlotte, N.C., and Florida’s Hillsborough County in Tampa – posted significantly higher 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores in 2013 than large city averages.

“The NAEP scores are the best data available for making valid comparisons, so it’s very gratifying to see our students performing at the highest levels,” said Hillsborough County Public Schools Superintendent MaryEllen Elia.

Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, weighed in on how real the progress on the national test has been since 2003 as well as 2011. “The 2013 NAEP results show gains in large city schools over this last decade that are statistically significant and educationally significant,” he noted. “We estimate that nearly 100,000 more of our fourth graders score at or above the proficient level in math than 10 years ago, and some 50,000 more are at the proficient level in reading.”

In addition to measuring student performance between public schools in all cities with populations of 250,000 or more and the nation, 21 individual urban school districts with similar characteristics volunteered for the urban NAEP in 2013 to assess the effect of their reform efforts, demonstrate their commitment to higher standards and compare themselves with each other.

Besides Austin, Charlotte and Hillsborough County, the other school districts include Albuquerque, Atlanta, Baltimore City, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, the District of Columbia, Fresno, Houston, Jefferson County in Louisville,

Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, Milwaukee, New York City, Philadelphia and San Diego.

Reading Progress

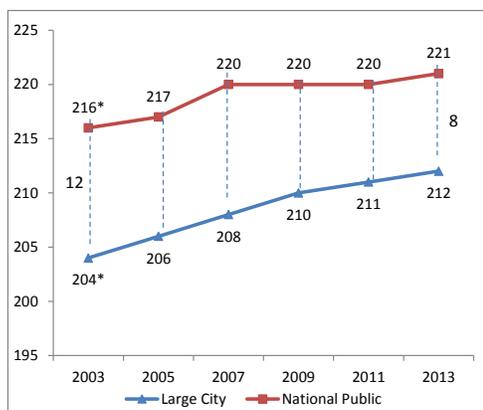
Between 2003 and 2013, the TUDA report shows major gains in fourth- and eighth-grade reading scores on the

paced the nation’s gains in reading.

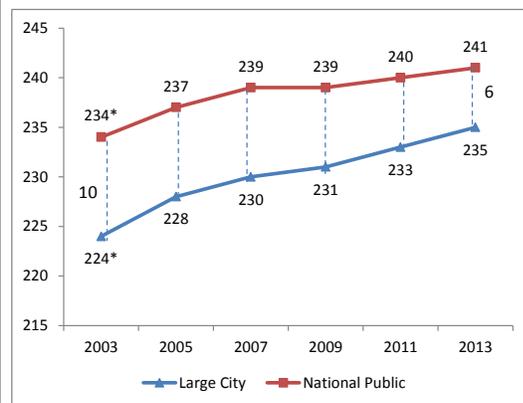
Mathematics Progress

Mathematics data show that average scores among students in the large cities also increased significantly on the NAEP

4th Grade Reading Average Scale Scores

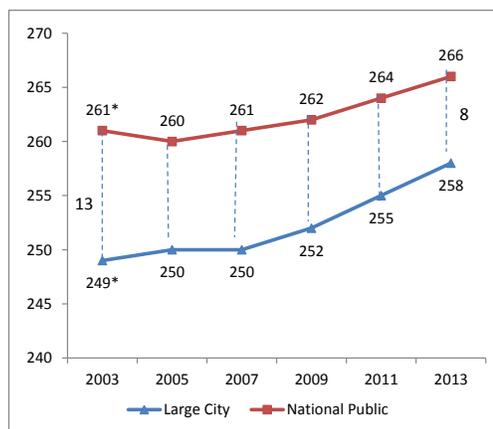


4th Grade Mathematics Average Scale Scores

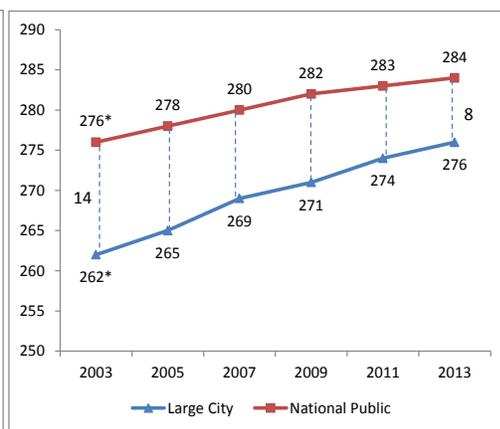


NAEP reading and math scale ranges from 0 to 500; *Statistically significant difference from 2013; Differences are not exact due to rounding; SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

8th Grade Reading Average Scale Scores



8th Grade Mathematics Average Scale Scores



NAEP in large city schools – with the achievement gap closing with the nation.

Between 2003 and 2013, five urban school districts have significantly outpaced the nation’s gains in average grade 4 reading scores. Atlanta, Boston, District of Columbia, Los Angeles and San Diego have significantly greater gains. In eighth-grade reading, three districts – Atlanta, Los Angeles and San Diego – significantly out-

paced the nation’s gains in reading. in grades 4 and 8 since 2003, narrowing the achievement gap with the nation’s public schools.

Six big-city school districts had significantly greater score gains from 2003 to 2013 in grade 4 when compared with the nation. Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, District of Columbia, Los Angeles and San Diego have significantly greater gains. In eighth-

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grade math, seven districts – Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles and San Diego – significantly outpaced the nation’s gains in math.

Progress of Black, Hispanic and White Students

The 2013 TUDA findings also show that the average NAEP scores of various student groups in large cities increased over the past 10 years in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and mathematics.

In reading, average scores of black students in large cities rose nine scale points from 2003 to 2013 in fourth grade, while scores of white students and Hispanic students increased eight and seven points, respectively. In eighth-grade reading, NAEP scores rose by six points for black students in large cities in 10 years; eight points for whites and 12 points for Hispanics.

In mathematics, scores from 2003 to 2013 jumped by 11 points for black and white students in large cities, and 10 points for Hispanic students in fourth grade. In eighth-grade math, average scores of black and Hispanic students in large cities increased 14 points, and white students saw a 10-point increase.

Council PSA to Air At Daytona 500

The Council of the Great City Schools public service announcement (PSA) to increase public awareness of the Common Core State Standards will be featured at the Daytona 500, Feb. 21-23.

The 30-second spot will be aired on the jumbo screen at NASCAR’s prestigious motor race, held at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Dayton District Welcomes Refugees With Open Arms

Lori Ward, the superintendent of Ohio’s Dayton Public Schools, is a passionate advocate for district initiatives that foster a culture of diversity and belonging. Under her leadership, the district has put a number of programs in place to welcome students of all nationalities, including a new mentoring program for refugee high school students who have been in the country three years or less.

Funded with a Refugee School Impact Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program provides a student with a mentor who visits the participant’s home once a week. The mentor not only works with students on academics, but also on everyday cultural issues. In addition, mentors provide information for the refugee student’s family who may need to access community resources.

Mentors must be able to make a long term commitment to the program and are provided with free literacy and English as a second language training.

Most of the refugees fled their country due to war and persecution.

The program is administered by Hubert Matumaini, a refugee himself from Burundi, who accompanies each mentor on home visits to ensure that families are on board with the program. And in order to participate, the students and their

families must sign a contract with Matumaini, pledging they will participate in the program.

According to Teresa Troyer, who oversees the district’s English as a Second Language program, there are 105 English Language Learners who qualified under the grant. “Hubert has connected 20 of the students in just a few months, focusing on the one-on-one connections that will lead to long-term improvements in academic achievement and acculturation.”

One of those students is junior Regan Twite from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who arrived in Dayton after spending time in a refugee camp and resettlement program in Zambia. His mentor is Melissa Bertolo, who has been mentoring Twite an hour a week since last July.

“I have homework that I don’t understand that they give me in school,” said Twite in an article in the *Dayton Daily News* profiling the program. “She can explain it to me. She makes me understand the words.”

But Twite is not the only one benefiting from the program. Bertolo is proud of Regan and the work she is doing as a mentor. “The amount of impact someone can have on someone’s life is really important,” said Bertolo in the *Daily News*.

Currently, Dayton Public Schools serves more than 725 English Language Learners, a growth of about 125 from last school year.



Volunteer mentor Melissa Bertolo, right, works with Regan Twite, a junior in Ohio’s Dayton Public Schools, as part of the district’s refugee mentor program. Photo credit: Chris Stewart/Dayton Daily News



Los Angeles school board member Marguerite LaMotte joins Mayor Eric Garcetti, far right, and other leaders to encourage students and residents to remain calm after the George Zimmerman verdict last July.

Longtime L.A. Board Member Dies

Marguerite Poindexter LaMotte, a longtime board member of the Los Angeles Unified School District, died in December while attending the California School Boards Association's annual conference in San Diego, according to the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

The lifelong educator's body was reportedly found in her hotel room. She was 80 years old.

She was hailed by public officials in Los Angeles after the announced death. "When you think about her life and her accomplishments, she was an educator's educator," said Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., in the *Daily News*.

Her work to improve the education of inner-city students went beyond the City of Angels. She had a national presence as a long-serving member of the Council of the Great City Schools' Executive Committee.

"Marguerite was well known and respected by her colleagues for her unwavering advocacy for urban schoolchildren and strong sense of social justice," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

A Houston School Board Member Steps Down After 50 Years in Education



Houston school board trustee Lawrence Marshall, right, gives remarks at his retirement reception as Houston Schools Superintendent Terry Grier looks on. Photo credit: Houston Independent School District

when after graduating from Houston's Booker T. High School, he returned to the district four years later as a teacher in 1955.

In 1962, he became a principal at his former elementary school and then rose through the administrative ranks, serving as area superintendent, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent and deputy superintendent. As an administrator, Marshall was instrumental in creating and overseeing the district's highly touted magnet school program.

He retired from the school district in 1991, but six years later offered his services again to the school system by winning a seat on the school board. He served as president in 1999 and 2009, when under his leadership, the board unanimously selected Terry Grier as superintendent after conducting a national search.

In December, a retirement reception was held for Marshall honoring his service as both an employee and school board member. Houston Schools Superintendent Grier listed all of the positions Marshall had held throughout his career noting that "Larry's knowledge base is just second to none." And fellow board trustee Greg Meyers admired Marshall for his leadership and tenacity. "I know wherever he goes, he's going to continue to shape what we are doing for kids in our district," said Meyers.

College Board Names Urban School Districts To Advanced Placement Honor Roll

Cincinnati Public Schools has made strides in sharpening academic skills through increasing student participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Since 2011, the school district has increased the number of students participating in AP courses by 12 percent while improving the percentage of students earning AP exam scores of 3 or higher.

As a result of its efforts, the district was one of six urban school districts recently named to the College Board's 4th Annual AP Honor Roll.

The Honor Roll recognizes 477 school districts in the United States and Canada that have achieved increases in access to AP coursework while also increasing the scores of 3 or higher.

College Board continued on page 7

University Expands Full-Scholarship Program to Nashville Students

Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn., last March launched a pilot program to offer 26 students in two Nashville high schools full scholarships leading to four-year college degrees.

With success of the 2013-14 charter class, the university recently announced it will expand its *Bridges to Belmont* scholarship program to 30 current high school seniors from two additional high schools for next fall's freshman class.

"At the heart of Belmont's mission is our desire to provide a transformative education to our students in the hopes that they can then take their skills, passions and talent and make a difference in the world around them," said Belmont University President Bob Fisher in a news release. "I'm thrilled to have these local students as part of the Belmont community."

Bridges to Belmont is designed to enroll high potential students from Metro Nashville Public Schools who may not have previously been able to consider Belmont, ranked in the top 10 of regional universities in the South by *U.S. News and World Report*, as an option.

The program aims to provide students in Nashville and Davidson County, especially those of whom are economically disadvantaged, opportunities for higher education and future careers.

"The *Bridges to Belmont* program is a life-changing opportunity for our students," said Metro Nashville Schools Director Jesse Register. "They know with hard work, they can achieve their dream of a college education."

Bridges scholars receive all-expenses paid tuition, room and board, as well as required fees and books for four consecutive academic years. These full scholarships translate into a potential investment by Belmont that could exceed \$10 million in the first four years of the program.

"I have been thrilled by the response of donors who have become enthusiastic givers to support these kids," said Fisher, the university president.

The inaugural class of 26 *Bridges* students lived and worked on the Belmont campus last summer while attending an intensive institute to prepare them for a successful transition to the college environment. Many of them are first-generation college students.

The pilot program provided scholarships to students from Maplewood and Stratford High Schools in the Metro Nashville school system. In the second year, the program is expanding to include students at Whites Creek and Pearl Cohn High Schools.

Preferred candidates for the program are nominated by the high schools' leadership and are expected to be taking a college prep curriculum with a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average in core academic courses. Other qualifications for applicants include demonstrated leadership abilities and academic



Belmont University President Bob Fisher announces expansion of scholarship program while Metro Nashville Schools Director Jesse Register looks on.

motivation as well as significant financial need.

With *Bridges to Belmont*, the university administration is trying to enhance the cultural and ethnic diversity on campus while providing higher education opportunities to students in Nashville and Davidson County.

College Board *continued from page 6*

percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher (out of 5) on AP exams.

In addition to Cincinnati Public Schools, California's Santa Ana Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Charleston County School District and Miami-Dade County Public Schools also made the Honor Roll.

Districts were selected for the Honor Roll based on the examination of AP data from 2010 to 2013. Honor Roll criteria included increasing AP participation by at least 4 percent in large districts, 6 percent in medium districts and 11 percent in small districts.

Districts also had to ensure that the percentage of African Americans, Hispanic

and Native American students taking AP exams did not decrease by more than 5 percent for large and medium districts and by more than 10 percent for small districts.

"Cincinnati Public Schools is committed to increasing the number of students engaged in rigorous coursework so our students are competitive in college and career," said Mary Ronan, Cincinnati Public Schools superintendent in a press release.

"We have worked hard to ensure that all of our students have the required college admission test and coursework. We are including more students than in years past because postsecondary training is so essential to be successful in the new world economy."

Two Urban School Chiefs Named Finalists For National Superintendent of the Year



Alberto Carvalho

Alberto Carvalho became the superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools in 2008 and under his leadership, the district was among the highest-achieving school districts in 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics on the National Assessment for Educational Progress.



Terry Grier

Terry Grier was selected as superintendent of the Houston Independent School District in 2009, and his district recently won the Broad

Prize for Urban Education for gains in student achievement.

These accomplishments are just two of the reasons Carvalho and Grier were recently selected as finalists for the 2014 National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators.

They were among four superintendents chosen for the award, which is open to all U.S. superintendents who plan to continue in the profession.

The applicants for the award were measured against the following criteria: leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, and community involvement.

Since Carvalho has headed the Miami school system, graduation rates have increased to 77.2 percent and the school district made the 4th Annual AP District Honor Roll for increasing access to Advanced Placement coursework while simultaneously maintaining the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher

on AP exams. In addition, Miami-Dade schools was also the winner of the 2012 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Under the leadership of Grier in Houston, the school district's dropout rate has decreased to an all-time low of 11.8 percent, while its graduation rate has increased to an all-time high of 78.5 percent. The district also recently won approximately \$30 million in federal Race to the Top funds, which will go toward the district's "Linked Learning" model of teaching from elementary through high school that enables students to begin early college and career readiness through project-based learning.

A national blue-ribbon panel of judges selected the four finalists from among the 49 eligible state Superintendent of the Year nominees. The finalists will be interviewed in Washington, D.C., in January, and the winner of the 2014 National Superintendent of the Year will be announced in February.

Chicago District *continued from page 3*

Before participating in the program, all mentors must undergo a two-hour professional learning session. The mentors will also be given learning packets, including a variety of literacy materials, designed to help to structure activities and stimulate learning with students.

Principals at schools partnering with the program will oversee the matching of mentors to students and schedule classroom visits.

"All students need mentors and positive role models to advocate for them and support their success," said Chicago Schools' CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "I strongly encourage this endeavor that will help build the solid literacy skills that are essential to the foundation of a promising future for all students."

The *Mentoring the Next Generation* initiative aligns directly with the vision of Byrd-Bennett's strategic five-year action plan.

Presidential Awards Given to Top Math, Science Teachers



Katrina Abdussalaam
District of Columbia



Amy Laufer
Anchorage



Michael Wallus
Minneapolis

Katrina Abdussalaam was a member of the first DC Teaching Fellows Program in the nation's capital, launched in 2001 to provide teachers to underserved communities.

For 10 years, she taught math in the District of Columbia Public Schools, sharing her excitement and love of math with her students as well as tutoring struggling students.

For her efforts, Abdussalaam was recently one of 102 mathematics and science teachers President Obama recently announced as recipients of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Administered by the National Science Foundation, the award is the nation's highest recognition in math and science for elementary and secondary school teachers.

Abdussalaam was honored along with eight other big-city mathematics and science educators. They are: Amy Laufer, Anchorage School District; Erin Dukeshire, Boston Public Schools; Mary Servino, Connecticut's Bridgeport Public Schools; Josie Burg, Des Moines Public Schools; Elizabeth Grabois, Denver Public Schools;

Presidential Awards *continued on page 9*

Council of the Great City Schools

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE/POLICY CONFERENCE

March 22-25, 2014

Renaissance Mayflower Hotel • Washington, DC



Saturday, March 22

- Conference Registration
- Fall Conference Planning Meeting
- Blue Ribbon Corporate Advisory Group Meeting
- Lunch & Meeting of Legislative & Federal Program Liaisons
- Executive Committee Meeting
- Urban Task Force Meetings
- New Members & New Attendees Orientation
- Welcome Reception

Sunday, March 23

- Conference Registration
- Breakfast Buffet
- Board of Directors Meeting
- Great City Colleges of Education Meeting
- Luncheon with Speaker: **U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan**
- Legislative Briefings

Monday, March 24

- Breakfast with Speaker
- Legislative Briefings
- Luncheon with Speaker
- Capitol Hill Visits
- Reception on Capitol Hill

Tuesday, March 25

- Breakfast and Briefing
- Adjourn

Presidential Awards *continued from page 8*



Josie Burg
Des Moines

Michael Wallus, Minneapolis Public Schools; Helen Rogosin, New York City; and Nancy Bourne, from Florida's School District of Palm Beach County.

The award is presented annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country.



Elizabeth Grabois
Denver

The winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators following an initial selection process done at the state level.

In order to be eligible for the award, teachers must have at least five years of full-time mathematics or science teaching.

Each year the award alternates between teachers teaching kindergarten through 6th grade and those teaching 7th through 12th grade. This year's recipients teach kindergarten through 6th grade.

Winners attend an awards dinner in Washington, D.C., and receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion.

"These teachers are inspiring today's young students to become the next generation of American scientists, mathematicians, and innovators," President Obama said in a press release. "Through their passion and dedication, and by sharing their excitement about science, technology, engineering, and math, they are helping us build a promising future for all our children."

Nominations are now open for the 2014 PAEMST awards. Teachers may be nominated for the award or may nominate themselves. The nomination form is available on the PAEMST web site at: <https://www.paemst.org>. The nomination deadline is April 1, 2014 and the application deadline is May 1, 2014.

Federal Budget Deal Results in Increased Title I and IDEA Funding

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

Avoiding a second government shutdown within a year, the 113th Congress recently passed the Consolidated Appropriations bill (H.R. 3547) that would fund federal agencies and programs for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The new omnibus funding bill allots \$1.1 trillion in defense and domestic funds, including the \$45 billion increase in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement (BBA) enacted in December. The cornerstone federal K-12 education programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I for disadvantaged students and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students with disabilities will receive increases of \$624 million and \$497 million or 4.5 percent, respectively, for the 2014-15 school year.

The bipartisan budget deal in December was essentially an agreement to raise federal appropriations levels (i.e., discretionary expenditures), which had been cut automatically by the “5.23 percent sequestration” in FY 2013. These are the funding cuts that school districts and others are experiencing during the current school year.

The budget deal increased federal domestic program funding levels overall by \$22.5 billion in FY 2014, restoring in the aggregate approximately 87 percent of what was cut under sequestration.

As such, the Appropriations Committees had the choice of raising all domestic funding by 87 percent; to increase or decrease specific programs by more or less than 87 percent; terminate specific programs; or start new programs. These new FY 2014 appropriations levels will be available to school districts beginning July 1, 2014.

The \$624 million increase in ESEA Title I and the \$497 million increase in IDEA in FY 2014 restored 82.6 percent of the FY 2013 cuts from those programs. The



\$30 million increase for ESEA Title III English language learners returned 77 percent of the amount sequestered last year. But many other U.S. Department of Education programs did not fare as well. ESEA Title II (teacher quality) received an additional \$12 million, which was equivalent to only 9.3 percent of what was cut in FY 2013. And School Improvement Grants and Magnet Schools grants received no increased funding.

Even Administration priorities from earlier years fared poorly with Investing in Innovation (I3) receiving no increases and Race To The Top cut by more than half to \$250 million with a new focus solely on early childhood education. Overall, the Education Department recouped only 66 percent of the cuts that occurred under sequestration.

In comparison, the Head Start Program received an increase of over \$1 billion or 13.5 percent overall. Head Start not only exceeded the 87 percent average sequestration threshold but also far exceeded the \$359 million sequestration amount with over \$600 million of new money. The legislation now allows for the funding of the Obama Administration’s Early Head Start and Early Child Care Partnerships priorities.

Similarly, the Child Care and Development Block Grant program had its sequestration amount restored and saw another \$36 million on top of that. The Centers for Disease Control, mental health programs and senior nutrition also exceeded or equaled their full restoration levels.

The annual appropriations bills reflect the process by which Congress and the Administration establish federal spending priorities. The levels for K-12 education, therefore, signal a cause for concern relative to other federal priorities.

Jacksonville District Celebrates 150 Years

It's a new year and a new look for Florida's Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville as the district celebrates its 150th year as a school system. According to historical records, the state's first free public school opened in Jacksonville, Fla., in 1864 and the district has been preparing future scholars ever since.

To commemorate this important milestone, the district has introduced a new branding campaign complete with a new logo, redesigned web site, and exciting new district mascot named Duval Jacksonville, better known as "DJ."

DJ is a smart, friendly dog with an attitude for fun and learning that represents the spirit of students districtwide. DJ will share his passion for learning during school visits and at community sites throughout the year.

When starting the rebranding process, the district enlisted the support of students, parents, administrators and community members to identify public perceptions of the district. The outreach revealed the district's engagement, collaboration, innovation and diversity characteristics as strengths from which the district should build upon. The new logo was created with these exact positive attributes in mind.

In addition to the new logo, a web site redesign was launched that brings the district's site and each school site onto the same virtual platform, which has increased accessibility and improved navigation.

Jacksonville District continued on page 12



New logo and mascot mark 150th anniversary in Jacksonville school district.

Las Vegas Principal Receives National Honor For Transforming Her School

When Kathleen Decker arrived at Walter Bracken Elementary in 2001, it was one of the lowest performing schools in Las Vegas' Clark County School District.

Under her direction, the school gained new life as a science, math and technology magnet and just last year the school incorporated engineering and visual and performing arts into its curriculum to earn the new moniker Walter Bracken STEAM Academy.

In recognition of her efforts and dedication, Decker received the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding Leadership. The award recognizes National Blue Ribbon School principals who have transformed their schools.

Selected as one of seven outstanding principals, Decker was the only big-city principal to receive the honor this year.

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Las Vegas Principal Kathleen Decker, right, receives the Terrel H. Bell Award for School Leadership, as Judith Richardson from the National Association of Secondary School Principals looks on.



Football Star Supports Charlotte Schools

Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, right, recently gave three schools in North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district a boost with a \$75,000 donation from the Cam Newton Foundation (CNF). For the second year, the CNF School Pride Program has provided funding to enhance academic achievement and school pride. The professional football star personally presented the \$25,000 grant to the winning school campuses and is pictured with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent Heath Morrison, left, and district educators.



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Founded in 1999, the Terrel H. Bell Award is named for a former U. S. secretary of education to honor outstanding leaders of U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools who foster successful teaching and learning and elevate their students to meet high standards.

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The new site works well with popular digital trends such as mobile phones and tablets to meet the increased communication needs of district stakeholders.

“We are excited about the progress and future of our school district as evidenced by several recent successes within our district, including the highest graduation and college readiness rates recorded in district history,” said Nikolai Vitti, Duval County Schools superintendent. “...Our new brand is a reflection of our vision and the community of educators, administrators, students and citizens who share our commitment to quality education to make Jacksonville a national model.”

2014 Council Conference Schedule

Chief Human Resources Officers Meeting	January 29-31, 2014	Louisville, KY
Legislative/Policy Conference	March 22-25, 2014	Washington, DC
Chief Operating Officers Conference	April 22-25, 2014	New Orleans, LA
Bilingual Directors Meeting	May 14-17, 2014	Denver, CO
Chief Information Officers Meeting	June 10-13, 2014	Denver, CO
Public Relations Executives Meeting	July 11-13, 2014	Baltimore, MD
Curriculum & Research Directors' Meeting	July 23-26, 2014	Los Angeles, CA
Annual Fall Conference	October 22- 26, 2014	Milwaukee, WI
Chief Financial Officers Conference	November 2014	New Orleans, LA