

Urban Districts Name New Leaders

The Birmingham and Des Moines school systems have selected two veteran educators to lead their school systems.



Nancy Sebring

Iowa's Des Moines Public Schools recently chose Nancy Sebring, a native Iowan, to lead the 31,500-student district. She succeeds Eric Wither- spoon, who left the district to head the Evanston Township High School District in Illinois.

New Council Leadership--Page 3

Sebring has served as the deputy superintendent of the Douglas County School District in Colorado, the fourth largest school district in the state with 48,000 students.

"Nancy Sebring will be a great leader for public education in Iowa's capital city," said Des Moines school board president Phil Roeder in a news statement. "She brings the right combination of collaboration and innova-

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Houston Schools Graduate First Class of Katrina Evacuees

Uprooted from their homes, more than 100 students who fled Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina's devastating blow recently donned caps and gowns to graduate from Houston schools.

The Houston Independent School District educated more than 5,000 hurricane evacuees this school year just ending, taking in more students than any other school district outside of Louisiana following the Aug. 29 storm.

For Lynell Thomas of New Orleans, graduation was the highlight of her life after "days of mourning I thought would never end, unless it ended with death.

"Children were crying with questions that mothers were unable to answer. And to see grown men with tears rolling from their eyes was unbelievable," she wrote in an essay.

She stayed in a hotel during the storm "with not enough food, clothes or water," she said. Eventually, Thomas made her way to Houston, then to Kentucky, before returning to Houston and settling at Madison High School.



Lynell Thomas

She recently graduated from Madison as a member of the National Honor Society and ranked in the top 10 percent of her class. She will attend Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, La., in the fall, studying to become a nurse anesthetist.

Another recent Houston graduate from New Orleans also finished in the top 10 percent of his class at Jones High School.

Travis Hill-Williams and his mother had been airlifted from the storm, flown by helicopter to an

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urban Educator

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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Houston Schools...

open field near a causeway and dropped off with thousands of other stranded New Orleans residents. But he and his mother became separated in the crowd.

He went to Houston on a bus and dropped off at the Astrodome. "It was like being dumped into a place I had never been before and then being expected to move on with your life," he said in a school district press release.



Travis Hill-Williams

After eight hours of searching, he was able to contact his mother by cell phone and they found each other at the Astrodome.

Hill-Williams plans to study computer engineering at Prairie View A&M University in Texas.

Commenting on the graduating evacuees, Houston Schools Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra told the Associated Press, "They've hung in there and adapted to a completely different place. They stayed focused in their studies, made friends and became an important, integral part of our schools."

When one Katrina evacuee from New Orleans arrived in Houston, he immediately "availed himself of every opportunity the school gave him," said Lee High School Principal Steve Amstutz.

Aaron Ford took advantage of Lee High's extracurricular activities, and even took the lead in the school's musical production of *Fiddler on the Roof* before graduation.

Fifth-Grader Turns Lesson Into Crusade

"Students Get a Healthy Lesson in Raising Money"

That was the headline in the *Washington Post* on the newspaper's *Kids Post* page in early May, when some 60 fifth-graders from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., visited the nation's capital on a field trip.

It's nothing new for schools nationwide to have student educational trips to Washington, D.C. But what captured the attention of the Fort Lauderdale students is how they raised, or maybe, how they didn't raise money to fund the trip.

Earlier in the year, Daphnie Auguste, a 10-year-old at North Side Elementary School in Fort Lauderdale, spearheaded a student movement at her school to refuse to sell candy and potato chips as a fundraiser for a planned trip to Washington.

The class had recently been taught the importance of healthy eating habits and exercise. And the lessons from the course were not lost on Daphnie, who understood the disconnect between good nutrition and the candy and potato chips she and her classmates were asked to sell to raise money for their class trip.

News media reports on the student protest prompted enough donations for twice as many students to take the class trip to Washington than originally planned.

Veronica Atkins, widow of Dr. Robert C. Atkins, who created the Atkins Diet, saw news reports and said her foundation would donate \$16,000 for the children to visit the monuments and historic sites in Washington.

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Inside the Council

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Urban Districts...



Stan Mims

tion to serve the students, parents, teachers and staff of Des Moines Public Schools.”

Alabama’s Birmingham City Schools also turned to a veteran educator with its selection of education consultant Stan Mims to take the reins of the school district. Mims will succeed Wayman Shiver, who is retiring.

Mims has more than 30 years of experience in education, serving as a district superintendent in New York City, director of curriculum for the Kansas City, Kan., school system and interim chief executive officer of the East St. Louis, Ill., school district.

Interim Leaders Named

Baltimore City Public Schools System recently selected Charlene Cooper Boston as its interim superintendent. Cooper, a former administrator with the school district, succeeds Bonnie Copeland, who recently announced her decision to leave the 85,000-student district, which she has led since 2003.

Under Copeland’s leadership, the school system made gains in student achievement in elementary and middle schools and the district’s finances improved. According to the *Baltimore Sun*, the school system is currently deficit-free for the first time in seven years.

In Ohio, Toledo Public Schools chose a longtime educator, John Foley, to serve as its interim superintendent. Foley, the district’s chief of staff, will take the reins from Eugene Sanders, who will take the helm of the Cleveland school system after leading the Toledo district since 2000.

New Leaders Named To Council

George Thompson III, a board member with the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools in Tennessee, has been elected to chair the Council of the Great City Schools’ board of directors.

He will preside over a national education policy and research organization that represents 66 big-city school districts for a one-year term, beginning July 1. The Council’s board is composed of the superintendent along with a school board member from each district.



George Thompson

As the Council’s new board chair, Thompson, who previously served as the chair-elect, succeeds Arlene Ackerman, former superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District.

Carol Comeau, superintendent of Alaska’s Anchorage School District, has been elected chair-elect of the Council, and William Isler, a board member with the Pittsburgh Public Schools, becomes secretary/treasurer.

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5th Grader...

“I was so proud when the children said you’re telling us not to go out and eat sugar and then you ask us to sell it,” Atkins said in the *Sun Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale’s daily newspaper. “I said no way am I going to let them down and not let them go on the field trip.”

“People really cared about us going to Washington, D.C...,” Daphnie said.

Bronx Student One Of Nation’s Top 10 Youth Volunteers

Geneva Johnson, 17, lives in a dangerous neighborhood in the Bronx, N.Y., and wanted to find an organization that would help steer youths away from violence. When she couldn’t find one, Johnson created her own nonprofit group.

For her efforts, she was recently named one of America’s top 10 youth volunteers in the 11th Annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

The awards are presented to outstanding middle and high school students across the country who have made a positive difference in their communities through their volunteerism.

Johnson, a senior at New York’s High School for Health Professions and Human Services, is the founder and executive director of “Bring It On,” a successful youth service organization that seeks to build self-esteem among inner-city youths through a wide range of volunteer activities.

The group has sponsored environmental projects such as a cleanup along the Bronx River and has created the “You Go Girl Go” project, which encourages middle and high school girls to avoid teen pregnancy.

“My family has a legacy of teen pregnancy, and for many years as an inner-city kid this is what I grew up with and thought my life would be like,” said Johnson. “I felt if I could have one program to change the lives of young girls, this would be it.”

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards rewards the top two youth volunteers from each state and the District of Columbia.

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Top School Leader Honors Norfolk Grad

Winning last year's top honor in urban education, former board member Anna Dodson of Virginia's Norfolk Public Schools wanted to do something different with the \$10,000 scholarship she received as the Richard R. Green Award winner.

When the Council of the Great City Schools and ARAMARK Education last October bestowed the Green Award upon her, Dodson received a \$10,000 scholarship to present to a deserving high school senior of her choice from the Norfolk school system or from her alma mater.

But she wanted to spread the \$10,000 to four students over four years, giving each a \$2,500 scholarship to inspire and motivate African-American male students to excel.

Dodson recently awarded her first \$2,500 Green scholarship to AuSean Williams, graduating from Norfolk's Norview High School to attend Longwood University in Farmville, Va. He plans to study music education.



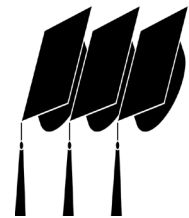
AuSean Williams

When Dodson was a school board member for 12 years, she became concerned about the low number of African-American male students graduating from Norfolk Public Schools with honors. The high school in her neighborhood, Norview High, did not have one honor graduate.

"My dismay and concern prompted the principal to organize a group of bright African-American males in grades

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The Class of 2006



Two Schools in Boston Initiative Graduate First Senior Class

In 1999, parents at Boston's Quincy Elementary School wanted their children to attend a secondary school that would continue the educational and cultural atmosphere their children had experienced in grades K-5, so they helped create the Josiah Quincy Upper School.

Recently, the school reached a major milestone. It held its first commencement ceremony for 35 students.

And Josiah Quincy Upper School is not the only Boston high school holding its first commencement ceremony. TechBoston Academy, a college preparatory school, recently awarded high school diplomas to its first senior class. The school opened its doors in 2002.

The two schools are part of Boston's Public Schools' High School Renewal Initiative, designed to support the creation of small schools and small learning communities in an effort to improve teaching and learning.

The initiative has received funding from the Carnegie Corporation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has invested more than \$25 million. As a result, Boston high school students now attend one of 38 high schools, compared to only 21 options a decade ago.

Josiah Quincy Upper School is a 6-12 school providing students a comprehensive academic and arts curriculum as well as a strong world languages program. All

but two of its 35 graduating seniors plan to attend a two-or four-year college in the fall.

TechBoston prepares students for careers in technology and computer science and has an average of 20 students a classroom. The high school was one of the first of the Gates Foundation Model Schools, designed to serve as a model for schools across the country. Of its 53 graduates, 46 have been accepted to post-secondary institutions.

Older Grads Earn Scholarships In Palm Beach

In Florida's Palm Beach County, more than 200 students earned high school diplomas recently after many of them triumphed over difficult obstacles.

And while their graduation was a little different than some, their perseverance led them to receive GEDs at the School District of Palm Beach County's adult education graduation ceremony, where 10 scholarships were presented to GED grads.

The Palm Beach Community College donated the scholarships, and the first ever "Adult Education Achievement Scholarship" was presented to a deserving GED student.

Inside the Council

Eight Buffalo Students Graduate from Attendance Court

New York State Supreme Court Justice Sharon Townsend and Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent James Williams recently celebrated the graduation of eight special students at Hillery Park Elementary School in Buffalo.

These students were once at risk of failure because of excessive class absences.

With their families looking on, the students were given pizza, gifts and certificates in recognition of their successful completion of the Attendance Court Project, a pilot initiated in 2004 to provide an early, comprehensive, family-systems approach to encourage consistent school attendance.

“What makes this intervention unique is the connection that develops between the child and the judge,” says Justice Townsend in a press release. “As judges and courts are challenged to reach beyond the courtroom to become community problem solvers, participation in early intervention programs like this one is critical.”

“This is a wonderful example of how schools, parents and the community can work hand-in-hand for meaningful change,” stressed Superintendent Williams.

The justice first learned of the Attendance Court concept on a visit to Louisville, Ky., in 2002, and became convinced that it could be applied in the Buffalo area.

A key component of the program is utilizing the authority of a judge to support and reinforce compliance by the children at risk and their families.



Judge Sharon Townsend and John Crabbe, supervisor of attendance for the Buffalo school system, present a student with prizes for successfully completing the Attendance Court Project.

The Attendance Court class has appeared before the judges weekly since the program’s inception. The children were required to attend school daily, to complete their schoolwork and develop strategies for dealing with conflict and behavior issues.

Council Historic Moments

In 1969, the first school board member--the Rev. Darneau Stewart of Detroit Public Schools-- was elected as president of the Council of the Great City Schools. It also marked the first time an African-American man had been tapped to head the organization. Up until 1969, superintendents had been elected to lead the Council since its inception in 1956.



Teen Mother In Cleveland Is Valedictorian

At age 14, Yasmine Williams became a teen mother. Now, at age 18, she is valedictorian of her class at the Cleveland School of the Arts.

“You can use your child as an excuse to not accept challenges, or as the most profound motivation to succeed,” said Williams in an article in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

A budding thespian, Williams has a 4.0 grade-point average and in the fall will attend Northwestern University’s theater program on a full scholarship.

The teen mother recalls there were many nights she sat up with her crying son and attended school on only a few hours sleep, yet always finished her homework.

“It’s about time management and doing the right thing,” said Williams in the *Plain Dealer*.

In addition to maintaining a difficult course load, Williams is an active participant in her community. Last year, she served as a spokeswoman for Ohio Students for Equal Funding, helping to assemble a rally in downtown Cleveland. Williams also has traveled to the Ohio capital in Columbus to address state legislators on the plight of inner-city students.

Continued from page 4
Norfolk...

9-12,” she said in a letter, to be called Dodson Scholars.

She believes awarding a \$2,500 scholarship a year will further the efforts to motivate and support African-American male students to strive for academic excellence at Norview High School.

Memphis District Takes Podcast to Next Level

Students in Memphis will be able to tour the Memphis Zoo and learn how zookeepers care for animals without ever leaving their classrooms.

How? Through computer technology known as a podcast -- audio or video content delivered over the Internet to portable media players, such as iPods, and computers that listeners can access on demand at any time and from anywhere.

A team of technology experts at Memphis City Schools is using podcasts as a way to improve teaching and learning throughout the district.

Using a laptop computer and some headphones, the team produced the district's first podcast for a student art competition. The podcast featured narration and music along with a series of pictures of the artwork entered in the contest.

The team received a lot of positive feedback, which helped them realize the potential power of podcasts as an educational tool.

"We were all pretty aware that we could reach a wide audience, but it was just amazing to see how far we really could go with podcasting," said Linda Eller, staff coordinator for the district's instructional technology department.

"...It allows us to focus on what's happening at Memphis City Schools in a positive, powerful way; and once we get the kids involved, we feel like the learning will just skyrocket."

A goal of district officials is to teach educators the basic skills needed to produce their own podcasts. The podcasts would then be placed on the district's

web site divided into one of four categories: curriculum and instruction, world language, arts in the schools and instructional technology.

According to Eller, one of the advantages podcasts offer is the ability to advance students' education outside the classroom.

"...once we get the kids involved, we feel like the learning will just skyrocket."--Instructional Technology's Linda Eller

The district is currently working with the Memphis Zoo on a series of podcasts that will be used in conjunction with classroom lessons.

The first podcast being developed is a virtual tour of the zoo's new Northwest Passage exhibit featuring animals such as sea lions and polar bears. Students will be able to get an inside look at how the animal exhibits are maintained.

Podcasts also offer another advantage: accessibility. Anyone with a computer or an mp3 player can access the district's podcasts, which are located on the Memphis school system's web site.

As a result, not only can students in Memphis play the podcasts, but they can be used as an educational tool for students across the country and the world.

"We feel like this [podcasts] helps put our school district at the forefront of what's happening in regards to technology..." said Eller.

In an effort to convince principals of the power of podcasts, the district recently held a hands-on training session. Principals who attended the workshop were taught how to produce their own podcasts and how to use them to improve academic achievement at their own schools.

Detroit Schools Partner With Newspaper

In an effort to attract more minority vendors, the Detroit Public Schools is teaming with the *Michigan Chronicle*, an African-American newspaper, to develop a community outreach program.

Under the district's Small Contractor Development Initiative Program, the school system will pay the fee for minority vendors to register with its DemandStar bidding notification system.

As a result, minority businesses will now be notified when the district requests bids from companies.

In addition to DemandStar notifications, advertisements for all bid calls will appear in the *Michigan Chronicle*.

The district is embarking on other steps to reach out to minority businesses such as strengthening relationships with the city's various business groups that have large minority memberships.

Plans are underway to create small contractor development programs that cover subjects such as business plans and pricing strategies.

And the school system will provide the names of certified minority-owned businesses to major contractors and encourage them to use the minority businesses as sub-contractors.

"Detroit is the nation's largest city with a predominantly African-American population," said Detroit Schools Superintendent William Coleman III. "I believe that our school system ought to do all within its power as a major public agency to create an environment that is welcoming for contractors of color, a great many of whom continue to find doors closed to them in so many arenas."

Inside the Council

Columbus Students Adopt ‘Grandparents’ In Community Outreach Project

Sixth-grade students at Monroe Middle School in Columbus, Ohio, have adopted elderly “grandparents” at a local senior citizens center.

They recently completed a community outreach project based on the movie *Pay It Forward*, a concept of doing a favor for another person without expecting any pay back.

Students complete the interdisciplinary project every year, but this year’s project went farther.

Students were assigned to perform three good deeds for people in their community. One of the three deeds was to partner with the Sawyer Towers senior center in Columbus and adopt a “grandparent.”

The program “bridges the generation gap and benefits the seniors as much as the students,” says Columbus Public Schools spokesman Greg Viebranz.

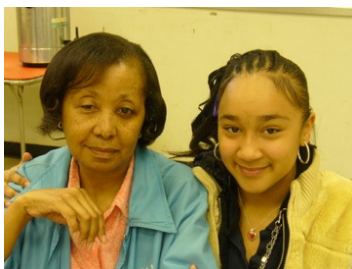


Two Columbus students visit a resident at the Sawyer Towers senior center as part of a school project.

The students initially met and interviewed the senior citizens, then planned and carried out individual activities based on the interests of the seniors.

In late May, the students said goodbye to the seniors before beginning summer break.

“Both the students and the adults have gained a new respect for each other and themselves,” teacher Connie Workman indicated in a press release.



A Columbus student hugs her new “grandparent”

Orlando School Offers Lessons In Literacy to Students, Faculty

Senior students at University High School in Orlando, Fla., operate a help center and serve as peer coaches while faculty gain professional development at the school’s Reading Writing Center, a program that fosters the reading and writing process for students and faculty alike.

Half of the Reading Writing Center (RWC) serves as a classroom demonstration space where the teacher coordinator offers content literary lessons to faculty and their classes.

“The RWC classroom marries professional development with best practice in order to build teacher expertise in literacy,” says Orange County Public Schools spokesman Dylan Thomas.

The other half of RWC serves as a help center for University High School students, operated for and by students. Senior students enrolled in service learning work as peer coaches to provide one-on-one literacy coaching to students

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Career Academies ‘Wave of Future’ In Palm Beach

The “wave of the future” in Florida’s School District of Palm Beach County focuses on career academies.

Currently, the school system operates 94 career academies in 23 high schools, and plans to increase the number to 96 next year, giving students the opportunity to get a college prep education and a skill to immediately enter the workforce.

Academies range from automotive and marine engine technology to finance, medical sciences and information technology. They are primarily marketed to eighth-grade students and their parents.

In creating the academies, Palm Beach educators turned to major industry leaders in the county to develop curriculum plans.

“We believe that every student can and should be able to do anything he or she wants after high school, whether it is entering the world of work, the military, higher education..., a trade school or start their own business,” says Superintendent Art Johnson.

Students are beginning to graduate from the academies and taking internships and paid positions in businesses all over Palm Beach County, according to chief public information officer Nat Harrington.

“Career academies are the wave of the future as our economy demands high tech knowledge of all workers and students who will pursue higher education,” he says.

Career academies at five Palm Beach County high schools recently won national awards.

L.A. School Places Second in National Science Bowl

Los Angeles Unified School District's North Hollywood High School recently placed second in the U.S. Department of Energy's National Science Bowl held in Washington, D.C.

Since 1991, the tournament has been held to encourage high school students to excel in mathematics and science.

The team from North Hollywood High School consisted of five students who were tested on their knowledge of college-level physics, chemistry, earth and space science, calculus, trigonometry and computer programming.

Nine Urban Students Named Presidential Scholars

The Presidential Scholars Program honors the nation's most outstanding graduating high school seniors and recently nine students from urban schools were recognized.

Each year, 141 students are selected as Presidential Scholars, chosen to represent educational excellence.

This year, students in Anchorage, Tampa, Baltimore, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Philadelphia and Houston were selected.

Houston had three students from the High School for the Performing Arts who were selected for their achievement in the arts.

The scholars recently traveled to Washington D.C., and were awarded a Presidential Medallion at a White House-sponsored event.

Urban School Honors



Two Long Beach Elementary Schools Gain National Recognition

Two elementary schools in California's Long Beach Unified School District recently earned national honors.

Inner-city Stevenson Elementary School serves as the hub of the community, where parents take computer and English classes and students brush up on their math skills, gather for computer lab and play basketball and soccer.

For seven years, Stevenson has operated what is considered a community school model, which brings together many partners to offer support to children and families before, during and after school hours.

The community school model has been so successful that the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Community Schools recently named Stevenson as the top elementary community school in the nation. The school received the Community School National Award for Excellence.

It was one of three schools to win the award from more than 300 community schools nationwide, which includes a middle school and a high school. George Washington Community School in Indianapolis won the top high school honor.

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Newark School Year Ends with Parade

Newark students show their pride at the school district's 2nd Annual *We the People* of Newark parade June 20. The Newark Public Schools holds the

event to show the community that the school district applauds its students for their efforts to make the grade.

Inside the Council

Urban Educators Win Disney Award

Eight urban schoolteachers are winners of the 2006 Disney Teachers Awards.

They were among 44 educators from across the nation to receive the award, which is presented to teachers who exemplify creativity, innovative teaching methods and the ability to inspire students.

The eight educators represent urban schools in Oakland, Rochester, Denver, San Diego, Miami-Dade County (2), Albuquerque and Los Angeles.

One of the Disney winners, Carolyn McKnight, teaches theater arts at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles.

“Her accomplishments make the LAUSD family proud,” said David Tokofsky, a Los Angeles school board member.

The honorees receive \$10,000, a trip to Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif., and a \$5,000 cash award for their school.

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Long Beach...

But Long Beach school officials had reason to be doubly pleased. Roosevelt Elementary School received the National School Change Award for gains in student achievement from the National Principals Leadership Institute at Fordham University’s Graduate School of Education.

The award recognizes schools that have turned themselves around to become exemplary.

About 85 percent of students at Roosevelt are English-language learners, and all students are on free lunch programs, according to the district.

Big-City Teachers Win Presidential Awards In Math/Science

Several big-city school district teachers across the nation were recently named recipients of the 2005 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

This year, 100 outstanding middle and high school mathematics and science teachers were recognized for their contributions in the classroom.

Urban educators from Anchorage, Las Vegas, Oakland, Albuquerque, New York, Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., Newark, Del., and Columbus, Ohio, were honored at a ceremony held in the nation’s capital.

“This award gives me the confidence that I am a skilled practitioner and can connect effectively with my students,” said Thomas Trang, an award-winning teacher from Centennial High School in Columbus. “It helps me to skillfully develop instruction for all my students...”



Thomas Trang

Recipients receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

The Presidential Awards program was established by Congress in 1983 and is administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation.

Mathematics and science teachers from grades K-12 with at least five years of experience are eligible for the awards.

Elementary teachers receive the award in even-numbered years and secondary teachers receive the award in odd-numbered years.

Two City Students Named to All-USA Top Academic Team

Stephanie Brinton, a student at East High School in Salt Lake City, is an international piano competition winner who has performed in Italy.

Aliza Malz, a student at Hunter College High School in New York City, has qualified three times for the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair and won an award for her research.

Brinton and Malz were among the students named to the 2006 All-USA High School Academic First Team, sponsored by *USA Today*. The program honors 20 exceptional high school students across the nation.

An accomplished pianist, Brinton, 17, created Musical Portraits of Famous Composers, a 50-minute program she presents to elementary schools. She has a 4.0 grade-point average and will attend Harvard University in the fall.

Malz, 18, is editor-in-chief of a school math journal, vice president of her school’s math honor society and co-directed a project to provide educational materials to students in Liberia. She has a 96 grade-point average and will attend the California Institute of Technology.

As members of the 20th annual ALL-USA High School Academic First Team, they will receive a trophy and a \$2,500 cash reward.

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Orlando School...

throughout the high school, including Advanced Placement students needing assistance.

The peer coaches are trained at the University of Central Florida’s Writing Center.

Inside the Council

109th Congress Poised to Cut Education Funding Again

By Jeff Simering, Director of Legislation

The House Appropriations Committee has approved its 2007 appropriations bill (H.R. 5647) for the departments of labor, health and human services, and education and moved the measure for floor action.

Spending in the overall bill is well above the President's proposed budget, but it remains less than 1 percent above last year's funding levels.

More importantly for city school systems, H.R. 5647 cuts funding for the Department of Education by \$403 million, including a nearly half billion cut to *No Child Left Behind* programs.

H.R. 5467 reflects the second year in a row of real dollar cuts to Department of Education programs. After being cut in FY2006, Title I formula grants are frozen in the FY2007 House bill. The \$200 million increase for Title I that is included in the bill is allocated to the State School Improvement Grants, which will be distributed to a limited number of schools in a small number of districts.

In some ways, this is a reversal of nearly 40 years of federal education policy that has dedicated scarce federal resources to schools and communities based on their numbers and concentration of children in poverty.

Title II teacher quality and professional development grants, moreover, are cut by \$300 million and the Education Technology program is terminated entirely—a \$272 million cut. Twelve other education programs also are terminated for an additional reduction of \$470 mil-

lion. The Perkins Vocational Education program is frozen at current funding levels. And the IDEA State Grant program would receive a \$150 million increase, a level that does not maintain current services and drops the federal contribution down to 17 percent (in contrast to the promised 40 percent).

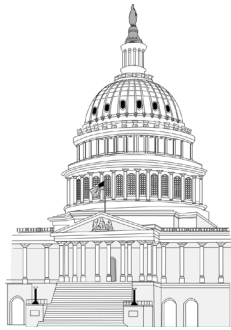
Most other federal education programs—including after-school programs, English language learner programs, and safe and drug-free school grants—are either frozen or cut.

Attempts by Senators Specter and Harkin to increase education and health spending by \$7.0 billion were not successful in the stopgap budget resolution.

The cumulating cuts are now beginning to work in tandem with increasing federal mandates and requirements to undermine earlier Administration and Congressional policies to help local schools and the kids they serve. The result, instead, is likely to be significant cuts to students and a shifting of some costs to state and local taxpayers.

Unfortunately, education spending is not expected to be a pivotal issue when the House of Representatives takes up the Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill later this year. Neither is health care, job training, social services, or biomedical research. The federal minimum wage, instead, is likely to dominate the debate.

Even in an election year, education is taking a backseat. It is not a good sign.



LEGISLATIVE COLUMN



History Program Launched in St. Paul

Fifteen junior and senior high schools in Minnesota's Saint Paul school district are collaborating with the University of Minnesota to launch a pilot program that will enhance the quality of American History instruction at the secondary level.

The *Historians in the Schools* program will offer historians the opportunity to work side-by-side with teachers and students in the classroom. The major goal of the project is to help teachers and their students think like historians and master deep historical content.

The program was funded with a three-year, \$835,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Great City Grads

Arthur Ashe

Tennis Player, Humanitarian
(Deceased)

1961 graduate
Sumner High School
St. Louis Public Schools

Inside the Council

Oakland Bond Measure Passes

Voters in Oakland, Calif., recently passed a \$435-million school construction bond that will be used to upgrade science labs and libraries, replace aging portable classrooms, fix electrical systems in classrooms and libraries, and renovate school bathrooms.

The measure was overwhelmingly approved, passing with 77.4 percent of the vote; exceeding the required 55 percent threshold needed for passage.

In a news statement, Randolph Ward, the district's state administrator, praised Oakland voters for understanding the reality of urban education. "This community has the desire and the capacity to give our children a world-class education — what we've lacked is sufficient resources," said Ward. "With this vote, Oakland is taking a big step toward providing students and families with the schools they deserve."



Money from the measure will also be used to build new health clinics and renovate existing student health care facilities.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the bond titled Measure B is the district's largest bond issue ever.

In an effort to provide accountability, an independent oversight committee composed of parents, teachers, experts in construction and finance and taxpayers' organizations will be created to make sure funds from the measure are spent properly.

NYC School District Releases First-Ever Student Fitness Reports

The New York City school system has released first-ever health fitness reports of more than 235,000 students in the nation's largest school district.

The city's Department of Education released NYC FITNESSGRAM reports to parents and students, which are individualized reports based on the results of standards-based fitness assessments.

The assessments show whether a student is in a "Healthy Fitness Zone" and include recommendations for improving health-related fitness.

More than 600 elementary schools and 40 middle and high schools were invited to participate in NYC FITNESSGRAM in this first year of the pilot pro-

gram. Nearly every elementary school with a physical education teacher reportedly participated.

NYC FITNESSGRAM is a web-based physical education assessment and data collection system that came about from what the district calls an unprecedented collaboration between itself and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

"In its first year, NYC FITNESSGRAM has proven to be a tremendous tool for building students' understanding of health-related fitness and helping them set achievable fitness goals with their families and educators," says Schools Chancellor Joel Klein in a press release.

Governance Reform to Be Discussed

The Center for Reform of School Systems is sponsoring its fourth annual conference, *Reform Governance and the Board/Superintendent Relationship*, Oct. 24-25, in San Diego.

The program is a pre-session to the Annual Fall Conference of the Council of the Great City Schools. It will feature case studies from major urban school districts focusing on board/superintendent relationships.

Some 1,000 urban school superintendents, administrators, board members and deans of colleges of education from across the country will assemble in San

Diego to attend the Council's 50th Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 25-29.

Under the theme "Riding the Wave of Educational Excellence," the five-day conference will feature numerous break-

out sessions focusing on issues facing big-city school districts.

For information on the pre-session on governance, contact Susie Crafton, the Reform Center's

director of training and development, at (713) 682-9888 or e-mail her at crafton@crss.org.

To register for the Council's Fall Conference, access its web site at www.cgcs.org.



U.S. Senate Offers Opportunity to Student Officers

The United States Senate Youth Program is seeking student leaders from across the country to participate in a week-long program designed to give them an up-close look at the inner workings of the federal government.

Two students from each state and the District of Columbia will be selected to travel to Washington, D.C., from March 3 to 10, 2007, where they will hear policy addresses by senators, cabinet members and other government officials.

Each student will also receive a \$5,000 college scholarship.

In order to be eligible, students must be a high school junior or senior and be actively involved in student government during the 2006-2007 school year.

For information about the program, access the www.ussenateyouth.org web site. Deadline dates in each state vary.

Baton Rouge Joins the Council

The East Baton Rouge Parish School System in Louisiana, which has grown since last year's Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, has joined the Council of the Great City Schools.

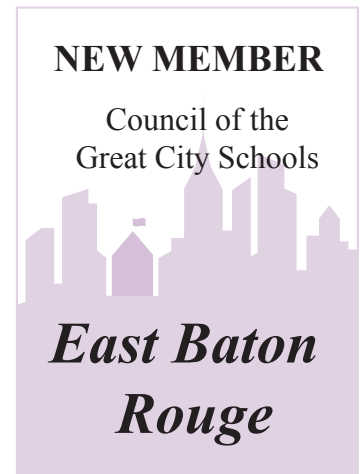
Continued from page 3
Bronx Student...

Subsequently, a national selection committee chooses 10 of the top state-D.C. volunteers to become national honorees, who receive a \$5,000 cash award and a \$5,000 grant toward the charity of his or her choice.

The award program is conducted by Prudential Financial Inc. in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals and supported by several youth and service organizations, including the Council of the Great City Schools.

"Though challenged by the recent storms that brought devastation to many of our neighbors, Baton Rouge has accepted these challenges as opportunities for growth and goodwill – rather than decline and despair," says Courtney Scott, the district's public information officer.

Following the two hurricanes, the student enrollment increased to 50,000 students from approximately 45,000.



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