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Long Beach Program Called 'Miracle'

"The Long Beach Miracle – How the working-class California city saved its schools." That's the headline in a recent article in *The Atlantic*, a national publication recently named 2016 Magazine of the Year.

The article spotlights the Long Beach College Promise, an innovative collaborative between the Long Beach Unified School District and local colleges to prepare elementary and middle school students for college.

The program has been so successful that it has been recognized by city, state and federal authorities.

"In Long Beach, student test scores, AP-class enrollment, high-school graduation rates, and college-attendance rates have all risen, even as the city's challenging demographics remained almost unaltered," the Feb. 2 article pointed out.

Launched in 2008, the Long Beach College Promise offers Long Beach public-school students a pathway to higher education, beginning with high-quality early childhood education, and providing incentives, services and support while removing barriers, according to the district.

The measures include college visits and college planning for elementary and middle school students in a collaborative that includes tuition-free semesters at Long Beach City College and preferred admission to Long Beach State University.

Long Beach continued on page 4

Houston District Partners with University To Offer Free Tuition for Prospective Teachers

The Houston Independent School District has partnered with the University of Houston to offer the school system's brightest students free teacher preparation if they want to return to the classroom upon their college graduation.



PREPARING OUR CITY'S FUTURE EDUCATORS

In a fellowship program called *Teach Forward Houston*, Houston district graduates interested in earning a degree in education are eligible for free tuition at the University of Houston in exchange for a commitment to teach four years in the Houston public school system after graduation.

"This program is going to have far-reaching effects," said Houston Schools Superintendent Terry Grier before recently stepping down from this post. "Our graduating seniors won't just have the opportunity to get free college tuition, they'll have

Houston District continued on page 4



Los Angeles student Cedrick Argueta, right, poses with his calculus teacher Anthony Yom. Argueta was one of only 12 students in the world to receive a perfect score on the AP Calculus exam.

12 of A Kind In the World

Last May, 302,532 students from around the world took the Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus AB exam, a three-hour, 15-minute exam, which tests the fundamental theories of calculus in a series of multiple-choice and free-response problems.

Only 12 students scored a perfect score on the exam, and Cedrick Argueta, a 17-year-old senior at Los Angeles' Abraham Lincoln High School, was one of them.

The College Board, which administers the exam, called Argueta's feat of getting every question correct a "remarkable achievement." The AP Calculus course is roughly equivalent to a first semester college calculus course devoted to topics in differential and integral calculus.

Argueta is the son of immigrants. Both of his parents came to the United

Perfect Score continued on page 4

Dayton Police Officer Lunches with Students Weekly

A major topic of conversation in recent months has been the often strained relationship between police and minority communities, but a police officer in Dayton, Ohio, is doing his best to improve the relationship in his city, one lunch at a time.

Once a week Zach Hastings, who is in his eighth year with the Dayton Police Department, has lunch with students at Belmont High School.

Hastings is a crime prevention officer responsible for community outreach, including leading the “Coffee with a Cop” program in which officers interact with residents in casual settings to share ideas. Belmont’s assistant principal, Daniel Hinshaw, attended one of those events and invited Hastings to the school for lunch.

“All anyone sees on TV are the negative things police are doing,” said Hinshaw in an interview with the *Dayton Daily News*. “And I wanted the students to get a different view of the police.”

The first few times Hastings came to the school, students asked him whether he was there for somebody and were reluctant to talk with him. But with each visit the students started to respond and now invite



Dayton Police Officer Zach Hastings has lunch with students at Belmont High School. Hastings lunches weekly with students at the school.

Hastings to have lunch with them.

Hastings believes that students will be more accepting of the laws he enforces when they see him on their level, and he hopes they will be less reluctant to approach a uniformed police officer on patrol.

“Students can ask me whatever is on their minds,” said Hastings. “It really breaks down barriers.”

During one lunchroom conversation, a student expressed his desire with Hastings to become a firefighter. Hastings, who is a

Officer Lunches *continued on page 3*



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Find the Council on:



K.C. Selects Leader; Charlotte Superintendent's Tenure Extended; Houston Names Interim Chief



Mark Bedell

Missouri's Kansas City Public Schools recently selected Mark Bedell to become the district's new superintendent.

Bedell is an assistant superintendent for high schools at Baltimore County Public Schools in Maryland and will succeed Stephen Green, who left the district after three years to lead Georgia's DeKalb County School District.

According to the *Kansas City Star*, during Bedell's tenure in Baltimore County, he started a one-to-one mentoring program that was credited with improving test scores and producing higher graduation rates at several low-performing schools. Bedell hopes to bring the mentoring program to Kansas City.

Prior to working in Baltimore County, Bedell was a teacher, assistant principal, principal and school improvement officer in the Houston Independent School District.

Officer Lunches *continued from page 2*

reserve firefighter for the Air Force, then helped guide the senior through the application process to become a Dayton firefighter.

Belmont Principal Melanie Walter can see firsthand the positive impact Hastings' has made at the school, whether during weekly lunchtime visits, walking through the hallways, playing basketball or attending extracurricular events. "Now, when they see him come in, the students no longer identify him with a negative or dangerous situation," said Walter. "Rather, they see him as a police officer who has their best interests as his top priority."

The visits at Belmont have worked so well that Hastings plans to start having lunch with students at two more schools.



Ann Clark

Following contract negotiations, Bedell is expected to take the reins of the district in July.

Tenure Extended

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education recently voted to extend the contract of Superintendent Ann Clark for one year to June 30, 2017. The extension gives the board more time to conduct a search for the next superintendent while advancing its student assignment, budget and bond priorities.

Clark joined the school system in 1983 and has served in a variety of teaching and administrative positions.

"It has been my honor and privilege to be a part of Team CMS," said Clark, in a press release. "I remain fully committed to this district, every member of the board and helping all of our students achieve academic success."

The school board also voted to continue the search for a long-term superintendent.

Houston Names Interim

The Houston Independent School District recently selected Ken Huewitt, the district's chief financial officer and deputy superintendent, as interim superintendent of Texas' largest school system.

Huewitt will succeed Terry Grier, who recently departed the district after serving seven years at the helm.

Huewitt oversees all financial operations of the district, as well as day-to-day operations in the superintendent's absence. Last year, he was the recipient of the Council of the Great City Schools' Bill Wise Award recognizing a school business official who exhibits outstanding service to urban education.

Miami Superintendent Receives Top Education Prize



Alberto Carvalho

Alberto M. Carvalho, superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, was recently selected to receive the 2016 Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education.

The award recognizes outstanding individuals who have dedicated themselves to improving education through new approaches and whose accomplishments are making a difference.

Carvalho was one of three winners of the award, founded by McGraw-Hill Education in 1988 to recognize innovation. Honorees receive an award of \$50,000.

Carvalho will receive the U.S. K-12 prize for his exemplary leadership in raising standards and improving graduation rates in a complex urban district.

Carvalho has served as superintendent of the nation's fourth largest school district since 2008, and under his leadership, the achievement gap has narrowed, graduation rates have increased, and the district's finances have been restored.

In 2014, he was named the National Superintendent of the Year.

Born in Portugal, Carvalho arrived in the United States at age 17 speaking no English, and was the first person in his family to graduate from high school.

This year, for the first time, the public had the opportunity to submit nominations by visiting McGrawPrize.com. More than 200 public nominations were submitted and considered alongside other individuals identified by McGraw-Hill.

"I am both humbled and honored to receive this recognition," said Carvalho in a press release. "It's a testament to the unparalleled work and dedication of our teachers and education leaders, and the visionary leadership of our School Board."

Perfect Score *continued from page 1*

States as young adults; his mother from the Philippines and father from El Salvador. His mother is a licensed vocational nurse and his father is a maintenance worker who never attended high school.

The teen not only credits his parents for his success but his teachers, including his calculus teacher Anthony Yom, who is also the coordinator of the Math, Science and Technology Magnet at Lincoln. Yom is also a high achiever. During his five years teaching at Lincoln, every student in his AP Calculus classes has passed the rigorous exam.

“We make sure that our kids not only focus on math, but we have fun too,” said Yom, who offers tutoring to students on weekends and during vacations. “We’re changing the game here, and our students are learning they can master whatever the thing is they want to do.”

Argueta took two AP courses last year and is taking four this year, including Calculus BC, the next in the math sequence. And the calculus AP exam is not the only test he achieved a perfect score. He also earned perfect scores on the English and math sections of the ACT college-entrance examination.

After graduating in June, Argueta would like to attend Caltech and eventually pursue a career with NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Argueta’s feat has made him something of a celebrity; he was congratulated at a school assembly, has done several media interviews and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton sent him a congratulatory note on Twitter. He also received congratulations from another prominent political figure, President Obama, who after learning about Argueta’s achievement, sent a tweet: “Cedrick: way to go on your perfect score! How about you come by the next White House Science Fair?”

In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Argueta said reading the tweet from President Obama was a surreal experience. “The first thing I felt – my heart was pounding. To have the most important man in the world tweeting about you? You have to be excited.” said Argueta.

Long Beach *continued from page 1*



Jane Close Conoley, left, president of California State University, Long Beach, appears with Long Beach school board president Felton Williams at a Long Beach College Promise annual community celebration.

In 2014, the City of Long Beach began providing internship opportunities for students in an initiative called the Long Beach Internship Challenge as a component of the College Promise.

“You can’t do it by yourself,” said Long Beach Schools Superintendent Christopher Steinhauser in *The Atlantic*. “It doesn’t mean we have unlimited resources and everyone’s going to get everything we want, but we’re going to prioritize and go for that north star, which in our case is student achievement.”

Seventy-five percent of Long Beach Unified School District graduates attend college within one year, and 80 percent within two, according to the Long Beach College Promise *Annual Report to the Community*.

Houston District *continued from page 1*

the opportunity to come back and make a difference in the lives of countless children across the district.”

The program aims to attract bright, motivated Houston public school students who otherwise might not be able to afford college. It gives them an opportunity to earn a degree in teaching and learning, a University of Houston program specifi-

Human Rights Medal Awarded to Educator

Maurice Green, superintendent of North Carolina’s Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, was recently named the 2016 recipient of North Carolina A&T State University’s Human Rights Medal for his commitment to serving the children and parents of Guilford County.

The Human Rights Medal is awarded to an individual with a proven track record of contributing significantly to uplifting humanity. The medal is presented at the university’s annual Sit-In Breakfast, marking the anniversary of North Carolina A&T’s historic Sit-In movement. The award also includes a \$1,500 honorarium.

During his more than seven years as superintendent, Green has worked to prepare students for college and career readiness. Under his leadership, the district has experienced higher graduation rates and increases in the percentage of high school students taking advanced level courses as well as an increase in the number of students passing college-level courses and exams.

When presented with his award, Green stated he would accept the honor on behalf of educators, employees and the board of education for Guilford County Schools.

“I accept it on their behalf because it validates the infinite amount of time, resources and passion they have poured into and continue to put towards transforming our district’s vision of achieving educational excellence...,” said Green.

cally designed to prepare teachers for urban-school environments. They will also receive additional professional development and internship opportunities, as well as coaching and mentoring throughout the fellowship.

Up to 100 students are expected to enroll in the program at the University of Houston this fall.

Council to Sponsor National Summit For Principal Supervisors



Michael Casserly

The Council of the Great City Schools will co-sponsor the first National Summit for Principal Supervisors, May 11-13, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The summit, aimed at improving the outcomes of school principals through professional development, will be hosted by Florida's Broward County Public Schools.

The conference, with the inaugural theme "Rethinking Leadership, Transforming Leaders," will be a mix of learning opportunities that include workshops, panel presentations, roundtable sessions and a keynote address by Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

The summit is also part of the Wallace Foundation's significant five-year commitment to helping big-city school districts improve the effectiveness of principal supervisors.

To wrap up the conference, Broward Schools Superintendent Robert Runcie will host a "lunch and learn" professional development session based on a recently released book and film titled *Most Likely to Succeed* by author, filmmaker and Harvard University Expert-in-Residence Tony Wagner.

"The film and book presents a new vision of American education and is intended to be a light, but reflective conclusion to the Summit," said Superintendent Runcie.

For more information about the first National Summit for Principal Supervisors, visit: www.principalsummit.com.

Ten Districts Join White House Initiative

In an effort to address and eliminate chronic student absenteeism, the U.S. Department of Education is partnering with 10 big-city school districts.

As part of President Obama's *My Brother's Keeper: Every Student, Every Day* Campaign, the newly created Success Mentors Initiative is designed to pair students with mentors to help students improve attendance and succeed in school.

The Success Mentors Initiative aims to reduce chronic absenteeism by connecting over one million students with caring mentors. It is the nation's first-ever effort to scale up an evidence-based, data-driven mentor model to reach and support the highest risk students – using existing resources already linked to schools. The Initiative is a partnership between the Department of Education and Johns Hopkins University.

The mentors initiative will launch with participation from school districts in 10 cities – Austin, Boston, Columbus, Denver, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, San Antonio and Seattle. Additional cities are expected to join by the spring.

The White House requested the initiative be piloted in three schools in each district, but Boston Public Schools will launch the program in four schools. The school system is working with several partners, including City Year and Big Brother Big Sister, to launch Success Mentor Teams--mentors in four schools who will work with students who are chronically absent or at high risk to become chronically absent.

In addition to the mentors initiative, the Ad Council will launch a multi-million dollar parent engagement campaign to raise awareness about how chronic absenteeism negatively affects children, and provide parents with tips and resources.

Political Commentator to Address Council Fall Conference in Miami



Donna Brazile

Political commentator Donna Brazile will address urban educators at the Council of the Great City Schools' 60th Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 19-23, in Miami -- a couple of weeks before the Presidential Election.

The veteran political strategist and author is often seen as an on-air television contributor on CNN and ABC, where she appears regularly on the *This Week* program.

Brazile is also vice chair of voter registration and participation for the Democratic National Committee, where she had been interim national chair as well as the former chair of the DNC's Voting Rights Institute. Moreover, she's an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and a syndicated columnist.

Hosted by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the conference will celebrate the Council's 60th anniversary.





Las Vegas teacher Clarence Moody

Corporate Official Departs Job to Teach In Las Vegas

For Clarence Moody, a fourth-grade teacher in Las Vegas' Clark County School District, teaching truly is his life's calling.

The former Fortune 500 company executive left a successful career as a human resource manager, which included a six-figure salary, because he believed he could have a greater impact in the classroom rather than working in a corporate office.

As the district sought to hire new teachers, Moody seized his opportunity to change his occupation. One of more than 2,000 teachers hired for the 2015-2016 school year, Moody became a teacher through the district's Alternative Route to Licensure program. The career change, coupled with his real-world business experience, has proven to be an asset at Clyde Cox Elementary School.

He admits the shift from working with adults to molding the minds of children can be challenging at times. However, he uses many of the same principles from the corporate world in the classroom to help his students excel.

"I want to help to develop young people," said Moody. "I want them to be excellent students and excellent people, and I am going to use everything I learned in the business world to help them succeed by focusing on the mission."

According to Moody, the call to the classroom was a leap of faith, and although he may not have the six-figure income he once commanded, his impact is greater now that he is a teacher.

\$3.1 Million Anonymous Gift Opens Door To Austin Technology Center

Texas' Austin Independent School District recently opened a 14,500-square-foot facility to increase access to education and technology for students in the district as well as the community.

The newly constructed Applied Technology Center at Anderson High School was made possible by a \$3.1 million anonymous gift made by a private donor. The center houses computer, design and electronics labs, a woodworking and sheet metal shop and high-tech machinery such as mills, lathes and 3-D printers.

With more space and equipment at the center, the district now offers four different four-year pathways in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math): engineering design, computer science, and manufacturing and electronics, in addition to two extracurricular robotics programs.

The need for a new facility initially arose when Anderson's nationally recognized ro-

botics team outgrew the space and students had to disperse to different locations. But as students prepare for the 2016 robotics competition this year in their new location, they now have access to new equipment, space and the opportunity to share the facility with other teams in the community.

The Applied Technology Center will benefit students at Anderson High School as well as six additional district high schools. Students across the district can participate in different courses and programs in the new center.

This facility will complement the current Applied Technology Center located at Akins High School that provides similar access to programs and equipment.

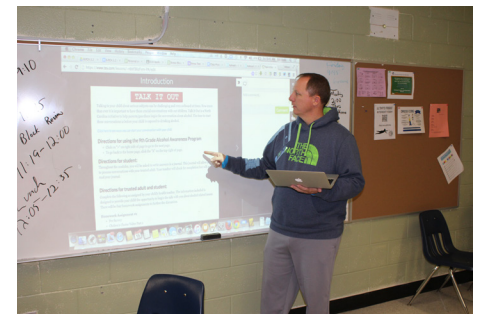
As stipulated by the private donor, when the Applied Technology Center is not in use, the local Boy Scouts of America will have priority access.

Two Charlotte Teachers Create Online Alcohol-Awareness Initiative

In North Carolina, research has found one person in the state dies every week from underage drinking and that more teens die as a result of alcohol use than all other illicit drugs combined. As a result, two health and physical education teachers in North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools took the initiative and developed an online alcohol-awareness program for students and their parents.

The district is providing the online program, designed for grades six through nine, in partnership with Talk It Out North Carolina, an initiative of the state's Alcohol and Beverage Control Commission.

The online program aims to help parents start the conversation about underage drinking with their children. The program consists of a family pledge for students and



Charlotte-Mecklenburg teacher William Bode discusses the district's online alcohol awareness program.

their parents to sign, committing to talking with each other about alcohol use, along with videos they watch together depicting teens in various situations, such as deciding whether to drink at an after-party. Directions are provided, along with discussion

Charlotte Teachers continued on page 12

Three Urban Educators Tapped As 'Leaders to Learn From'



Lewis Ferebee

An urban schools superintendent, arts educator and instructional leader were recently profiled in *Education Week's* annual report called "Leaders to Learn From."

The 2016 report, a magazine supplement to the newspaper's Feb. 24 edition, profiles 13 "exceptional district-level leaders across the country who put new ideas to work and have lessons to share."

They were chosen from more than 700 nominees submitted by readers, education journalists, school administrator groups and experts in elementary and secondary education.

The 13 leaders have an array of accomplishments in a range of school district-level operations and instruction. "They are proving that despite all the forces that make changing the life trajectories of young people so hard – rising poverty rates and tight resources, among them – savvy, committed K-12 leaders can rise to the challenge and succeed," said the *Education Week* editors.

Superintendent Lewis Ferebee of the Indianapolis Public Schools was recognized for his expertise in district-charter partnerships. He "enlists charters as allies" to improve the city's public schools.

Myran Parker-Brass, executive director for the arts in the Boston Public Schools, has led the school system's expansion of the arts. She is pictured on the cover of the magazine-style report.

And urban educator Julio Contreras, instructional leadership director for Oklahoma's Tulsa Public Schools, made the newspaper's class of 2016 "Leaders to Learn From" for his partnership with school principals to improve instruction.

For more information on the leaders, access www.edweek.org.

With Demographic Changes, Des Moines District Develops 'Culturally Proficient' Environment

The Des Moines, Iowa, public-school system has seen an increasingly growing culturally diverse student population over the years, and is now considered a majority-minority urban school system.

To serve a larger proportion of Hispanic, African American and immigrant students, Des Moines Public Schools has embarked on an effort to develop what it calls "a culturally proficient learning community."

"As such, it is an expectation that district leaders, educators and related services personnel be aware and respectful of the values, beliefs, traditions and customs of the children and families they serve," according to an online district statement. "It is also expected that {district} personnel be aware of the impact their own culture may

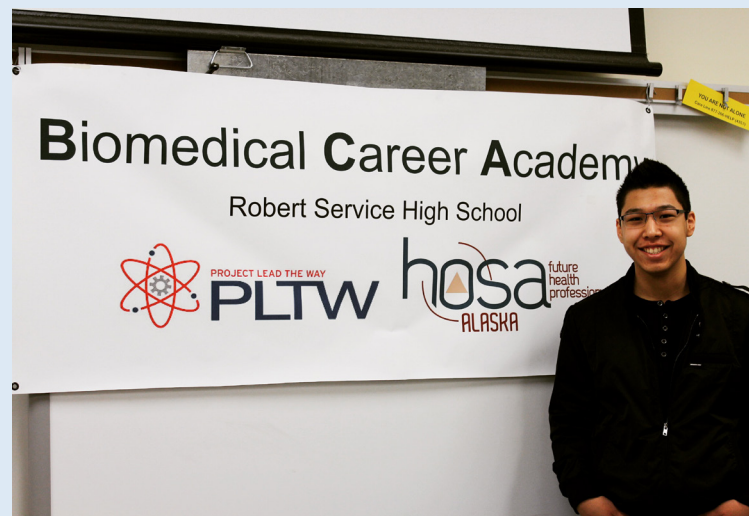
have on interactions with and decisions regarding students and families."

A recent article in *The Atlantic* magazine, headlined "Learning How to Teach in an Increasingly Diverse Classroom," indicates how the school district is adapting to demographic changes.

It points out that Des Moines Public Schools last year partnered with Drake University, which recently launched a master's degree program that focuses on "cultural competency" and English language learners.

"The experiment in Des Moines gives the 32,000-student school district a chance to train a nearly all-white group of instruc-

Des Moines continued on page 8



Anchorage Student Wins Science Award

Michael Martinez, a student at Robert Service High School in Anchorage, Alaska, was selected as one of 100 student recipients of the inaugural Emperor Science Award program. Chosen from an applicant pool of almost 1,200 10th and 11th grade students across the country, Martinez will receive the opportunity to work alongside a university-level mentoring scientist on a multi-week cancer research project. The award program is an initiative funded by Genentech to encourage high school students to explore careers in science, focused on cancer research and care, through a mentoring opportunity.

NYC District Partners with Broadway Musical: The Hit Production 'Hamilton'

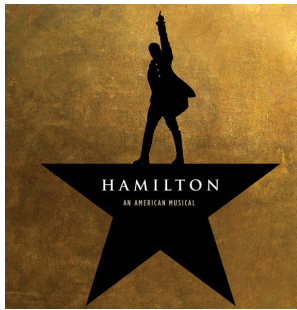
Next month, 20,000 New York City high school students will get an opportunity to see the hottest show on Broadway for only \$10.

Through an educational partnership, students will be able to see the hip-hop musical *Hamilton*, which depicts the life of the nation's first treasury secretary and founding father Alexander Hamilton.

The show will also be integrated into classroom studies in an effort to further students enjoyment of American history as well as music and drama.

The partnership is funded through a \$1.46-million grant by The Rockefeller Foundation to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Under the program, tickets will cost only \$10 for students, who will attend student-only Wednesday matinees, where they will have the opportunity to meet and talk with the cast members. The first ex-



clusive student matinee will take place in April and run through 2017.

High schools selected to participate in the program will include large numbers of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

Students will be provided with a "Hamilton Study & Performance Guide," developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute, featuring an online portal for students and teachers and printed classroom materials.

According to the *New York Times*, the *Hamilton* program is the largest effort to expose students to Broadway and the first to fully involve the New York City school district.

Hamilton creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda is a graduate of the New York City school system and said it is a dream come true to have a program like this exist.

NYC District continued on page 11

Des Moines continued from page 7

tors, many of them born and raised in Iowa, in how to effectively serve an increasingly diverse student population," says the Feb. 1 article in *The Atlantic*, a national publication named 2016 Magazine of the Year.

The school district has other partners as well in its efforts to incorporate cultural proficiency and equity to improve teaching and learning.

In considering a "cultural proficiency" plan of action, Des Moines Schools Superintendent Thomas Ahart said in the article, "We really kept coming back to the rapidly changing demographics of our district and the teachers not being prepared really to address what they were facing in the classroom, with poverty, with English-language learners, mental-health issues, issues...."

The school district has created a cultural proficiency framework with five essential elements:

- Assess culture;
- Value diversity;
- Manage the dynamics of difference;
- Adapt to diversity; and
- Institutionalize cultural knowledge.

These standards for planning and evaluating are part of the district's cultural proficiency plan that includes goals and benchmarks, and the development of support structures to help schools provide a culturally proficient learning environment.

TV Talk Show Host Launches Drive To Help Detroit School

Charles Spain Elementary-Middle School in Detroit offers a college preparatory curriculum for students with a love of the performing arts. But lately the school has received attention not for its academic or artistic achievements, but for its deteriorating conditions.

Students cannot use the gym because the floors have water damage from a leaky roof, the playground is not used because it is deemed unsafe and the school has heating and ventilation problems.

But the Spain school's staff and students recently received some good news from an unlikely source: television talk show host Ellen DeGeneres of *"The Ellen DeGeneres Show."* She heard about the conditions at the school and wanted to help, so she contacted the home improvement store Lowe's, who donated \$500,000 in technology and materials for renovations around the school.

During an episode of the *Ellen* show, students and staff were surprised live on the air with the Lowe's donation. Another surprise included an appearance by singer Justin Bieber, who announced he would donate \$1 per ticket from his upcoming concert in Michigan to the school.

"Of all the people in the whole world," said Spain principal Ronald Alexander, "I am the happiest principal on Earth."

DeGeneres has also created a special GoFundMe account for Spain to help raise money to repair the building. Currently, \$74,000 has been donated.

Detroit Public Schools is facing serious financial challenges and, according to district officials, is projected to run out of money in April, unless the Michigan legislature passes school reform legislation currently being discussed in Senate committee hearings.

The district recently partnered with the Detroit Public Schools Foundation

Detroit School continued on page 11

Jackson, Mississippi, 8th-Grader Develops App to Help Motorists Avoid Potholes; Honored by School Board

Drivers in Jackson, Miss., will soon be able to navigate the city's streets while avoiding potholes and they can thank 13-year-old Chokwe Selassie.

An 8th grade student at Jackson's Blackburn Laboratory Middle School, Selassie has developed an app that warns drivers when there is a pothole ahead.

Selassie was inspired to create the app during a ride to school with his mother. During the ride his mother hit a huge pothole, which resulted in damage to the car.

"I decided I was going to do something about the pothole problem in my city," said Selassie in an interview with *TIME for Kids*.

The app works like this: when the app detects a pothole, it is highlighted in red and when motorists get close to potholes, their phones warn them with a beep. In addition, drivers will be able to use the app to report any potholes they see and to search for other routes they can take to avoid roads that have them.

According to Selassie, the app works by using Jackson's 311 call system, which is used by citizens to report non-emergency problems, such as potholes.

The 8th grader first created the app while participating in the Verizon Minority Male Makers program through Jack-

son State University (JSU). The program focuses on exposing approximately 1,000 minority middle school boys to high-level skills such as app development and 3-D printing and design at historically black colleges and universities across the nation.

"We allowed them to evaluate their community, homes, their schools (and) come up with something that technology could solve," said Jacqueline Jackson, an associate professor in computer science at JSU in an interview with WAPT-TV.

Even though the app is not available for sale yet, Selassie is working to improve it. The prototype includes only 10 streets in Jackson, but he would like to add more streets, eventually including every street in the city. "I want to keep working on the app until it's nationwide," said Selassie in *TIME with Kids*.

In 2014, Jackson Public Schools and JSU created a partnership that designated Blackburn Middle School a JSU Laboratory School, in which JSU faculty and researchers work with Blackburn administrators to transform Blackburn into a highly successful middle school with strategies that can be replicated at schools throughout the district.

Council Offers Scholarships Named For an Astronaut

Four 2015 high school graduates -- from Long Beach, Calif., Austin, Tex., Broward County, Fla., and Philadelphia school systems -- last spring had something in common. They won scholarships from the Council of the Great City Schools.

For the seventh consecutive year, the Council is now offering the ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships to 2016 graduating seniors in its 70 member school districts.

Four 5,000 scholarships for two males and two females each will be awarded to two African American and two Hispanic students this spring.

In 2010, former astronaut Dr. Bernard Harris Jr., a physician and businessman, and ExxonMobil wanted to help under-represented students pursue science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies, and to increase diversity in the STEM workplace.

Last year's ExxonMobil Bernard Harris scholars enrolled as freshmen in STEM-



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

related degree programs at Harvey Mudd College, Harvard University, Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania, respectively.

High school seniors in the Class of 2016 can apply for the scholarships online by accessing www.cgcs.org. Deadline is April 15 for submissions.



Chokwe Selassie, left, was recently recognized by Jackson Schools Superintendent Cedrick Gray at a recent school board meeting for creating a pothole app.

Regulatory Process Begins for the Every Student Succeeds Act

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

Although the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law only a couple of months ago, the regulatory and guidance process at the U.S. Department of Education is well underway. And, prior to the end of 2015, the Department of Education had already sent initial transition guidance to the states, and it announced in the *Federal Register* a process for receiving initial stakeholder input.



The Department has also sought advice and recommendations from interested parties at two public hearings and through an initial Request for Information (RFI). The Council of the Great City Schools offered proposals at the Department's public hearings in Washington, D.C. on January 11 relating to transition issues for school year 2016-17, and on initial implementation issues for school year 2017-18, the first full year under ESSA. Since planning at the local level for the upcoming school year is underway, the Council emphasized the need for immediate and clear guidance for the initial transition year. To its credit, the Department issued four pages of additional transition guidance on January 28. And, on February 26, the Department issued 17 pages of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on transition issues. All guidance can be found at the Department's ESSA website <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/index.html>.

The Department's formal Request for Information also solicited comments on potential regulatory issues to assist districts with ESSA implementation. The Council submitted six pages of comments on January 21 highlighting transition issues, regulations *versus* guidance, interpretations, clarifications, peer reviews, negotiated rulemaking, and regulatory restraint. Some 370 comments were received by the Department from this initial RFI.

On February 4, the Education Department published a notice of Negotiated Rulemaking that sought public nominations for the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee and setting out issues that would be subject to the negotiations process. The following issues will be addressed by the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee:

Assessments:

- Locally selected nationally recognized high school assessments;
- The exception for advanced mathematics assessments in 8th grade;

- Inclusion of students with disabilities in academic assessments, including alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, subject to a cap of 1.0 percent of students assessed per subject;
- Inclusion of English learners in academic assessments and English language proficiency assessments; and
- Computer-adaptive assessments.

Supplement not supplant:

- The methodology a local educational agency uses to allocate state and local funds to each title I school to ensure compliance with the supplement-not-supplant requirement; and
- The timeline for compliance.

If the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee can reach a consensus on these issues, its work will form the basis of a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) that will also be subject to public comment in subsequent months. Other ESSA issues will be identified by the Education Department for public comment and potential regulation. In addition, non-regulatory guidance is anticipated on a number of issues that may not need formal regulations. It is expected that final regulations for ESSA will be issued before the end of 2016 in order to allow for planning and implementation in school year 2017-18.

The Council is continuing its conference calls with member districts on ESSA transition and implementation in preparation for next steps in the regulatory process. The Council's annual Legislative and Policy Conference on March 19 – 22 in Washington D.C. will also delve into ESSA in great depth, and will feature the congressional staff who wrote the new legislation, Department staff who are working on the ESSA implementation and regulations, Acting Secretary of Education John King, and Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, the ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Council Historic Moments

With this issue, the *Urban Educator* launches “Council Historic Moments,” a series of tidbits on the 60-year history of the Council of the Great City Schools.

When the Council was founded in 1956 in Chicago, these 12 urban school districts were the first to join the then-ad hoc group of superintendents and school board members in the early years:

Baltimore	Los Angeles
Buffalo	Milwaukee
Chicago	Philadelphia
Cleveland	Pittsburgh
Detroit	San Francisco
Houston	St. Louis

The coalition has grown from a networking and study group into a national education policy and research organization in Washington, D.C., with a membership today of 70 big-city school districts, serving more than 7.2 million culturally diverse students.



San Francisco District And Oakland School Awarded Google Grants



San Francisco Unified School District’s *My Brother and Sister’s Keeper* program and a school in Oakland, Calif., recently received grants from Google.org.

The grants were awarded as part of Google’s effort to fight racial injustice.

San Francisco’s *My Brother’s Keeper* initiative, which aims to empower African-American high school seniors with the tools and resources needed to pursue secondary education, received a \$1-million grant.

Roses in Concrete, a school in Oakland whose name was inspired by the book of poetry by rapper Tupac Shakur, received \$750,000 for its work in community responsive teaching.

This is the second time Google has awarded racial justice grants. The grants are part of an effort by the organization to “support leaders who are doing critical work to combat endemic educational inequality for black and brown students,” wrote Justin Steele, a principal with Google.org, in a blog post last year announcing the grants.

Detroit Schools *continued from page 8*

to launch a Capital Improvements Fund, where any individual, group, nonprofit, business or corporation can make a donation that will be used specifically to address the district’s facility maintenance and repair issues.

“We are encouraged by the initial outpouring of interest in helping Detroit Public Schools,” said Emergency School Manager Darnell Earley in a news statement. “It is going to take the efforts from a broad range of partnerships to identify the resources necessary to immediately address the myriad of building issues, from the everyday repair to the significant capital expenditures, that are required throughout the district’s 97 school buildings.”

So far, the city has inspected 46 schools, and corrective action plans are in place to address the issues cited. In addition, weekly progress updates are available on the district’s website.

Great City Grads



Jimmy Kimmel

TV Talk-Show Host

1985 Graduate

Clark High School

**Clark County Public Schools
(Las Vegas)**

NYC District *continued from page 8*

“I can’t wait to perform for a theater full of students who are learning about our Founding Fathers in class and seeing how it still relates to their own lives on stage,” said Miranda. “They will see *Hamilton*’s story, and I’m hopeful that the stories it will inspire in them, will change our lives in ways we can’t even anticipate.”

The *Hamilton* producers are making tickets for this student partnership available for \$70 each, \$60 of which is being subsidized by The Rockefeller Foundation.



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Two Districts in Florida and Oklahoma Join Council Ranks

Florida's Pinellas County Schools, which includes St. Petersburg, and Oklahoma's Tulsa Public Schools have joined the Council of the Great City Schools, increasing the urban-school coalition's membership to 70 public school systems.

With enrollment of more than 103,000 students, the Pinellas County Schools "is the only one of the large districts in Florida not yet a part of this meaningful coalition dedicated to the improvement of education for children in city schools," said Pinellas Schools Superintendent Michael Grego in a letter requesting membership.

He believes that the Council could support the district's efforts to improve its schools, and the district's successful initiatives could help benefit other urban school systems.

Notable alumni include Charlie Christ, former governor of Florida; actress Angela Bassett; NASA astronaut Bruce Melnick; and film producer Will Packer.

The Tulsa Public Schools enrolls 40,000 students, and is the largest school district in northeast Oklahoma. Notable alumni include John Hope Franklin, historian and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom; actor Tony Randall; United States Sen. Jim Inhofe; and R. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency.



Charlotte Teachers *continued from page 6*

questions about each video.

"Talking to your child about underage drinking can be uncomfortable," said teacher Mary McCarley, who along with teacher William Bode, created the online sessions. "These online modules can help parents start the conversation before it is too late."

Students are given homework, where they reflect on each conversation and summarize it in a journal entry, while parents fill out a completion form and give feedback in a survey.

The program is also available in Spanish, and hard copies are available for those who do not have access to the Internet.

The program was piloted at 10 middle and 10 high schools last semester and is now available at all middle and high schools.

More than 1,000 students and parents have participated in the program, and the program's website has had more than 8,000 views. "The response by parents has been extremely supportive thus far," said Bode, who has received requests for the program from other districts in the state.