



urban Educator

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Newsweek Ranks Dallas School No. 1 in Nation

Fanny Frausto, a student at Dallas' Talented and Gifted School, has taken 16 Advanced Placement classes and in the fall will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on a scholarship.

Administrators at the Dallas school strongly encourage students to take college level courses, which is why it was recently named the best high school in the nation by *Newsweek* magazine.



Dallas' Talented and Gifted School students Devan Earle and Chelsea Jones hold the *Newsweek* magazine featuring them on the cover.

The school received the top spot on the magazine's "2006 America's Best High Schools" list of the top 100 high schools in the country that do the best job of preparing students to attend postsecondary institutions.

Dallas also had another school rank in the top 10, with the School of Science and Engineering receiving a No. 8 ranking.

"There are literally thousands of high schools in the United States," said

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Journalist Bill Moyers to Address Urban School Leaders at Fall Conference

Award-winning journalist and commentator Bill Moyers will be the keynote speaker at the Council of the Great City Schools' Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 25-29, in San Diego, marking the 50th anniversary of the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of America's urban public schools.



For some 25 years in broadcasting, Moyers has been the executive editor of the highly acclaimed series *Bill Moyers' Journal*, senior news analyst for the CBS *Evening News*, chief correspondent for the acclaimed documentary series *CBS Reports*, and host of the Friday night national news magazine *NOW with Bill Moyers*.



Bill Moyers

Moyers will address the nation's urban education leaders at lunch on Oct. 27, and then moderate a town hall meeting on a major urban school issue in conjunction with the conference, which will be held at Loews Coronado Bay Hotel.

Under the banner "Riding the Wave of Educational Excellence," the Council will also feature Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, at the five-day conference hosted by San Diego City Schools.



Freeman Hrabowski

As president of the university since 1992, Hrabowski has also co-authored books about raising academic achievement among African American males and females. He delivers a breakfast address on Oct. 27.

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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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Newsletter Staff:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Executive Director | Michael Casserly |
| Editor | Henry Duvall |
| Associate Editor | Tonya Harris |

Council Officers:

- Chair
Arlene Ackerman
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- Chair-Elect
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All news items should be submitted to:
Urban Educator
Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 702
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 393-2427 / (202) 393-2400 (Fax)

Editor's E-mail: hduvall@cgcs.org
Associate Editor's E-mail: tharris@cgcs.org

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Newsweek...

Dallas Schools Superintendent Michael Hinojosa in a news release. "To have two schools in the top ten, with one named the best in the country, is remarkable."

In addition to two Dallas schools, three other big-city schools made the top 10, reinforcing studies showing an upward trend in urban school achievement. City Honors School in Buffalo ranked 4th, Stanton College Preparatory School in Jacksonville, Fla., ranked 5th and Academic Magnet High School in North Charleston, S.C., ranked 10th.

"This is a testament to the ability of our students to succeed academically," said Buffalo Schools Superintendent James Williams. "We are thrilled that a



Students at Buffalo's City Honors School celebrate Newsweek ranking their school No. 4 at a school-wide pep rally.

national entity, such as *Newsweek*, recognizes that inner-city children can and do succeed, despite the challenges they face outside of the classroom."

Schools on the *Newsweek* list were ranked according to the number of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests taken by all students at a school divided by the number of graduating seniors.

The news-magazine indicated that only 30 percent of high school students have taken any AP courses.

In addition to five major city schools ranking in the top 10, Miami-Dade County Public Schools had four schools in the top 100 and North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools had three schools as did Florida's School District of Hillsborough County in Tampa.

Two schools from Tennessee's Nashville School District and two schools from Florida's Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Fla., were also on the top 100 list.

Other Great City school districts with a school ranked on *Newsweek's* top 100 list are Oklahoma City, Rochester, San Diego, San Francisco, Chicago, Cincinnati, West Palm Beach, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Boston and Fort Worth.

In addition to listing the top 100 schools in the nation, *Newsweek* also named the top 1,000 schools, and Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., achieved a rare feat by having, for the third consecutive year, all 14 of the district's high schools on the list. One of the schools ranked in the top 100.

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Conference...

Leading off the guest conference speakers will be Sonia Manzano, who portrays "Maria" on the longtime children's TV show *Sesame Street*. She addresses urban educators on Oct. 26.



Sonia Manzano

That evening, the urban school leader of the year will be announced at the Richard R. Green Awards Banquet, with entertainment provided by The Supremes.

For conference details, access the Council's web site at www.cgcs.org.

Inside the Council

L.A. School Captures Title In National Academic Decathlon

Taft High School in Los Angeles recently won the 2006 U.S. Academic Decathlon Championship, the third consecutive year a school from the Los Angeles Unified School District has won the prestigious competition.

The win by Taft also marks the third time the school has won the national title. Its previous wins were in 1993 and 1988.

The Academic Decathlon is a two-day event in which participants are tested in 10 areas: art, economics, essay, interview, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, and speech.



The topic for this year's competition was "The European Renaissance: Renewal and Reform."

Taft's nine-member team dominated the competition, triumphing over 38 other teams. The team also earned 43 individual medals and several overall medals.

Taft team members also won the "Super Quiz" portion of the academic contest.

"This is the most amazing team I've seen in my six years and maybe the best ever," said Cliff Ker, coordinator of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Academic Decathlon. "They worked hard and they earned it. This was a team victory."

This is the ninth time a school from Los Angeles has placed first in the Academic Decathlon since 1986.

Newark Salutes All-Star Team -- In Academics

Athletes earn their accolades, but good students should be honored as well, according to Newark Public Schools Superintendent Marion Bolden in Newark's *Star-Ledger* newspaper.



Newark Superintendent Marion Bolden, right, congratulates high academic achiever Barbara Lloyd, a senior at Shabazz High School, as Principal Leila Dinkins looks on.

The Newark school system recently cheered high academic

achievers in a way that star athletes are accustomed to being celebrated.

Last month, the school system held an Academic Achievers Awards Celebration to honor 88 students who have maintained a 3.5 or higher grade-point average throughout their high school years, making the All-Star Academic Team.

Showered with sports-style fanfare, the high achievers were presented academic letterman's jackets, certificates, medallions and pins.

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Peggy Carlisle is surprised by Jackson Schools Superintendent Earl Watkins with the announcement that she has been selected to the National Teachers Hall of Fame.

Teachers in Jackson, Albuquerque Inducted Into Hall of Fame

Big-city teachers from Jackson, Miss., and Albuquerque, N.M., were among five educators across the nation recently selected for induction into the National Teachers Hall of Fame.

Peggy Carlisle, a science and mathematics teacher at Pecan Park Elementary in Jackson, is the first teacher from Mississippi to be inducted into the hall of fame, which was founded in 1989 to honor elementary and secondary teachers.

Carlisle has been a classroom teacher for 24 years and is a 1999 recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. In 2002, she was named National Science Teacher of the Year and selected to the All-USA Teacher Team by *USA Today*.

"Mrs. Carlisle is an inspiring, creative and compassionate teacher who welcomes challenges and is constantly seeking unique ways to keep children interested in learning," said Pecan Park Principal Wanda Quon.

Pat Graff is a journalism/humanities/social studies teacher at Albuquerque

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Jackson Students Get Paid To Learn in After-School Program

Thirty ninth-grade students in Jackson, Miss., receive an hourly stipend for participating in an after-school program that focuses on academic enrichment, youth development and community service.

The \$1.25 hourly stipend is matched dollar for dollar by the Eisenhower Foundation, and becomes available to students upon successful completion of the four-year program, allowing students to improve their grades and earn money for college.

The computer-based Quantum Opportunities Program is a partnership among the Eisenhower Foundation, the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation and Jackson's Lanier High School. The Eisenhower Foundation is investing \$155,000 a year in the Jackson Medical Mall QOP for four years.

Launched last fall at Jackson's Lanier High School, the program is housed at the Jackson Medical Mall, a facility that provides health care, human services and retail operations under one roof.

Some community service activities are available on site at the medical mall. "Some of us want to be nurses, and they have speakers who come and help us learn about that," said student participant Vernecia Stewart.

The program is coordinated by educator Ollye Shirley, a former Jackson school board member and president.

"While it is early to look at quantitative data, participation records clearly show that students in the Jackson program are getting hooked on academics and are working hard to pull ahead," said Johnnie Gage, chief operating officer for the Eisenhower Foundation.



Lanier High student Author Bryant works on a math problem. Bryant is a participant in the Quantum Opportunities Program.

As a result, Gage noted that the foundation is looking into expanding the program in the Jackson Public Schools.

Participant Shakera Moore likes the way the program provides academic help "step by step." Plus, she pointed out, "What other type of program can you learn from and get paid?"

Council Historic Moments

When the Council of the Great City Schools was founded in 1956, it focused on three areas of interest and research: vocational education, special educational needs of urban youth and school financing.



Uncommon Partnership Formed In Indianapolis

Believed to be one of a kind, the Indianapolis Public Schools and the KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory, a mayor-sponsored charter school, recently collaborated to form a partnership leading to the creation of two single-gender academies.

Staffers at KIPP Indianapolis will serve as mentors in the training and staff development of Indianapolis school-teachers at the two single-gender academies that are scheduled to open this coming fall.

The KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory, chartered by Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson in late 2002, opened in 2003 as part of the nationally recognized Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), a network of college-preparatory public schools operating around the nation.

The mayor and the Indianapolis Public Schools Superintendent Eugene White recently announced:

- KIPP Indianapolis will move this fall to the Coleman Middle School campus from the Concord Community Center, and will remain a mayor-sponsored charter school, governed independently of the public school system;
- Coleman will also be the home to two new Indianapolis single-gender elementary schools – The Coleman Academy for Boys and The Coleman Academy for Girls, both modeled after KIPP; and
- KIPP will serve as a model for the two Coleman academies with KIPP educators serving as mentors to

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Boston Superintendent Returning to Alma Mater -- Harvard

Longtime Superintendent Thomas Payzant of Boston Public Schools retires in June, then returns to the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he had launched his education career more than 40 years ago.

He has been named a senior lecturer at the graduate school, and will work with students and faculty interested in urban school district reform; focus on leadership; and zero in on ways to connect research, policy and practice in urban school districts, according to a news release.



Tom Payzant

"It is a great pleasure to welcome one of our most accomplished graduates back to campus to share his wealth of experience with our students," says Acting Dean Kathleen McCartney.

Payzant earned master's and doctoral degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

"It is a privilege and an exciting opportunity to return to HGSE more than 40 years after my journey as an educator began to teach those who aspire to careers in education," says Payzant, who has served as superintendent of the Boston Public Schools since 1995.

Departing the school system with a number of significant reform efforts to his credit, Payzant has been recognized by educators regionally and nationally.

In 1998, he was named Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year. In 2004, he received the Richard R. Green Award for Excellence in Urban Education from the Council of the Great City

Schools. And *Governing Magazine* named Payzant one of eight "Public Officials of the Year" in 2005.

"Over the past 11 years, Tom Payzant has provided unparalleled leadership in turning around the Boston Public Schools to the point that it is recognized as a national model for urban education reform in this country," stresses Boston School Committee Chair Elizabeth Reilinger.

Before taking the reins of the Boston school system, Payzant served as assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education in the Clinton administration. Prior to that, he had been superintendent of the San Diego school system.

Payzant has remained close to his Harvard alma mater throughout his career. As Boston superintendent, he has mentored six students from the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Urban Superintendents Program, and has been involved in the school's Conant Fellowship program, which provides one-year tuition to Boston and Cambridge public schoolteachers at the school.

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Newark Salutes...

"This is the first of many celebrations like this," Bolden emphasized.

"This is phenomenal," said Science High School graduating senior Jacqueline Abbey in the *Star-Ledger*, who becomes a student this fall at the College of New Jersey. "You don't usually have awards ceremonies if you aren't an athlete, so it is refreshing to have this."

District in Louisville Graduates 1st Class Of Future Teachers

Kentucky's Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville recently honored its first graduating class of future teachers.

More than 85 students were recognized for completing the school system's four-year career major program in education in the two Jefferson County education magnet programs, which began in the fall of 2002 as a School-to-Career Initiative.



The magnet programs are designed to give students exploratory experiences in the career opportunities available to education professionals. Study includes educational methods, presentation skills, learning styles and standards, as well as technology tools.

Unlike other college freshmen, graduates of the 2006 Jefferson County education magnet programs will have an advantage at colleges or universities.

They have already completed a paid student teaching experience in which they worked two hours daily at a Jefferson County public school with a supervising teacher.

Moreover, the graduating seniors have earned up to seven hours of college credit at universities participating with the two academies.

"We are so proud that these outstanding young people are seriously considering education as a career and that they have had valid, real life experiences to help make that decision," says Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Stephen Daeschner in a news release.

Recruiting, Retaining, Rewarding Teachers -- The New 3 'Rs'



Philly District Launches Drive To Attract Minority Teachers

In an effort to increase the diversity of its teaching ranks, the School District of Philadelphia has joined forces with a U.S. congressman for a campaign to attract more teachers of color.

Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) has partnered with the Philadelphia school district to launch the Teacher Diversity Campaign, designed to recruit and retain minority teachers.

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and Temple University are also partners in the campaign.

Currently, only 38 percent of teachers in Philadelphia schools are persons of color, while the district is composed of more than 85 percent of children of color.

“It is vitally important that the teachers within our schools more accurately reflect the multicultural landscape of our city and our students to provide positive role models for our children,” said James Nevels, chairman of the district’s School Reform Commission, in a news statement.

As part of the Teacher Diversity Campaign, the Ruth Wright Hayre Urban Teaching Institute has been created

to train up to 100 student teachers in techniques to become successful district teachers.

Funding for the institute will be provided by the congressman’s office and the school district.

The student teachers will live together and undergo a rigorous, hands-on student-teaching curriculum, gaining experience through daily classroom instruction and receiving coaching and professional

development from veteran administrators. The program calls for at least 50 percent of participants to be persons of color.

“The student teachers chosen for this program will be the best and the brightest of young

people from 700 of the best teacher-training colleges in America, and they are already committed to making a difference in urban education,” said Fattah in a press release.

The Teacher Diversity Campaign will be marketed aggressively to education and liberal arts graduates from universities with large numbers of African



Rep. Chaka Fattah discusses the School District of Philadelphia’s Teacher Diversity Campaign at a press conference.

Housing Incentives Offered in NYC For Special Teachers

Urban districts across the nation struggle with the challenge of recruiting math, science and special education teachers, but the nation’s largest school system is trying to attract these educators with a program designed to make where they live more affordable.

The initiative, a joint effort between the school district and the United Federation of Teachers, will offer up to \$15,000 in housing subsidies to encourage certified teachers in shortage areas to teach in New York City schools.

Teachers participating in the program will receive up to \$5,000 for relocation expenses and other housing-related costs and down-payment on a mortgage or rental fees, followed by a monthly housing stipend of \$400 for two years.

The housing incentives will be offered to certified middle and high school math and science teachers and special education teachers in grades K-12, who have two years or more experience.

In order to be eligible, teachers must commit to teach in a low-performing New York City school for at least three years.

“These incentives give New York City a powerful advantage in attracting top talent in critical subject areas to our highest need schools,” said New York Schools Chancellor Joel Klein in a news statement.

While other urban districts offer programs to make housing more affordable for teachers, New York City’s program is considered to be one of the most generous, according to the *New York Times*.

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'Mission Possible' Program Launched For Educators

North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro has launched what it calls *GCS Mission Possible*, an incentive program to attract, retain and reward both teachers and administrators in select schools.

The comprehensive support program for educators, which begins this fall, makes it possible for teachers and principals to earn annual incentives up to \$15,000 a year.

"We have to begin competing with industry in providing competitive salaries," says Superintendent Terry Grier. "By becoming more market driven, *GCS Mission Possible* allows us to achieve those goals."

The program is available to kindergarten through second-grade regular classroom teachers, third- through eighth-grade regular classroom teachers who teach math, language arts or reading, and high school math and English teachers. Principals in participating schools are also eligible.

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Philly District...

American and Hispanic students, as well as people in general interested in teaching in urban schools.

The district will also expand its efforts to prepare teachers of color to pass Praxis, the teacher certification exam.

A multi-cultural advisory council, composed of community groups, will be formed to oversee the implementation of the campaign's initiatives.

Philadelphia District Hosts First No Child Left Behind Summit

Focus on Teacher Support

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings chose Philadelphia to launch the Department of Education's first *No Child Left Behind* Summit called "Teachers Make it Happen."

She joined School District of Philadelphia CEO Paul Vallas recently in hosting panels of teachers, administrators and education experts in discussions on methods to ensure America's classrooms have highly qualified teachers.

"All of us know that the hard work of educating our students happens in classrooms, not in the superintendent's office, the state legislature, the U.S. Capitol – or for that matter, the education secretary's office," said Spellings.

Philadelphia appeared to be an appropriate setting for the U.S. Department of Education to kick off its first series of summits on next steps in the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind* law, which was enacted four years ago.

The Philadelphia school system has experienced four consecutive years of increasing student achievement.

"We at the School District of Philadelphia embraced both the spirit and the letter of *No Child Left Behind* and instituted a program of unprecedented, sweeping reforms," said CEO Vallas. "With some focused planning and old fashioned hard

work, we implemented a multi-faceted program in every major area: curriculum, teaching, safety and capital."

Spellings acknowledged results of Philadelphia's reform efforts, telling Vallas, "Since you came here, student achievement has risen by 11 points in reading and 17 points in math. Fifth grade math scores alone increased by 26 points."

The secretary noted that at the heart of *No Child Left Behind* is helping teachers push students to reach their potential

"We don't serve teachers or students well by placing our least experienced teachers in our most challenging environments," she emphasized. "Nor do we serve teachers well by asking them to teach subjects they don't know much about. It's not right. It's not fair, and it sets teachers – and students – up for failure."

To encourage more experienced educators to teach in high-poverty schools, Spellings pointed out that President Bush and Congress recently created a \$100 million Teacher Incentive Fund, which can also reward these teachers for successful achievement outcomes.

"Today's event should inspire...us to step up to the plate and apply innovative, common sense strategies to help teachers focus on helping students learn," Spellings stressed.



Paul Vallas listens as U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings answers questions at the No Child Left Behind Summit.

Wichita District to Launch New Technical Education Programs

Students in Wichita, Kan., will be able to work on motorcycles, repair air conditioning systems, create customized computer software and learn how to fix airplanes, all while earning credits toward a college degree.

Beginning this fall, Wichita Public Schools will implement four new technical education programs at different high schools in the district. Students will be able to enroll in a motorcycle technician program, a skilled mechanical crafts program, an e-Commerce application developer program and an aircraft manufacturing program.

Students in the motorcycle program at Heights High School will learn how to repair motorcycles. The district has developed a partnership with Ft. Scott Community College's Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Technician Training and Professional Development Program, so once students complete the program at Heights, they can enter Ft. Scott with nine credits toward their associate degree. After they earn their associate degree, students can continue their education at Pittsburg State University to earn a management degree.

The skilled mechanical crafts program will provide students with the opportunity to learn heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, refrigeration, plumbing-pipefitting and sheet metal. The program is designed to provide students with technical skills and internships to enable them to continue their education or to go into the workforce.

The e-Commerce application and developer program is a partnership between East High School and Butler Community College. After completion of the program, students will have two cred-

its toward an associate degree at Butler Community College.

The aircraft manufacturing program was developed with the help of the Wichita Manufacturing Association and will provide paid internships and mentoring opportunities for students.

"There is an increased demand for skilled workers," said Joel Hudson, Wichita schools executive director of secondary career and technical education. "The business community came to us and helped us develop the curriculum."

Boston Officials Receive Award

Michael Contompasis, chief operating officer for Boston Public Schools, recently received the Distinguished Service Award at the Council of the Great City Schools' Chief Operating Officers conference in Dallas.

The award, sponsored by Chartwells/Thompson Hospitality, is presented annually to school business officials who have distinguished themselves through their leadership, dedication and professionalism in urban education.

Contompasis has served as COO for Boston schools for the past nine years.

The Council also presented the Meritorius Service Award to Richard Jacobs, director of transportation for Boston Public Schools since 1990. The award recognized Jacob's involvement in the Council's Strategic Support Teams on Transportation, which provides other large urban school districts with technical assistance in developing effective student transportation systems.

Big-City Students, Teachers Get AP Recognition

Several urban school students, teachers and schools were recipients of the 2005-06 Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement, which recognizes students who have excelled in AP courses in science and mathematics as well as teachers and schools for exemplary AP teaching and participation.

Sponsored by the Siemens Foundation in partnership with the College Board, the awards were presented to 78 students across the nation, who have earned the greatest number of grades of 5 on specified AP courses such as biology, calculus, chemistry and computer science. Five is the highest score a person can achieve on the AP exam.

Big-city students in Des Moines, Omaha, North Charleston, Salt Lake City and Miami were recipients of the award along with a \$2,000 college scholarship.

Teachers in Des Moines, Omaha, Nashville and Dallas were among the 50 teachers Siemens honored with a \$1,000 award for their dedication to students and the AP program.

And big-city schools in Anchorage, Boston, Miami, St. Paul, New York, Milwaukee and North Charleston received a \$1,000 grant toward their math and science programs in recognition of their commitment to providing AP classes.

This year marks the first time the Siemens AP program is expanding the program in an effort to recognize students, teachers and schools in all 50 states.

"By expanding the Siemens Awards for the Advanced Placement, we hope to encourage AP participation and success among students, educators, and schools in every state," said Thomas McCausland, Siemens Foundation's chairman.

Inside the Council

Baltimore to Focus On 'Whole Child'

Baltimore City Public Schools recently announced a middle school reform initiative that aims to not only improve the academic environment of students in grades 6-8, but also their physical and psychological well-being.

The reform is targeted toward students at the district's 23 middle schools because less than 50 percent of those students are proficient in reading and less than a quarter of 7th and 8th graders are proficient in math, according to district officials.

"There is real sense of urgency around the issue of transforming our middle schools," said Baltimore Schools CEO Bonnie Copeland in a news statement.

Under the initiative, more K-8 schools will be created to decrease school transition among students. In addition, class sizes in reading and math for students in grades 6-8 will be reduced and academic coaches in reading, mathematics, social studies and science will be available in every middle school. Beginning teachers will also receive mentoring from veteran teachers.

In an effort to help address the diverse needs of the whole child, the district will expand the number of social workers and guidance counselors at each middle school. Extracurricular activities will also be increased, with debate clubs and student government associations being made available for all middle grade students.

A new middle school athletic program will be created and all students in the middle grades will be offered basketball in the winter and track and field in the spring after school, according to the *Baltimore Sun*.



Teacher Oliver Sicat runs in the Boston Marathon to raise money to buy computers for students.

Teacher Runs In Boston Marathon To Aid Students

Boston educator Oliver Sicat of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School recently ran the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon to raise money to purchase 20 laptops for college-bound students.

Not only is Sicat a mathematics teacher at Madison Park, he is the founder of Emagine, an after-school program that prepares students for college. Emagine partners with educators from Boston Public Schools and after-school researchers and practitioners at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The program has worked with a cohort of students since their freshman year of high school.

Now, four years later, 20 Emagine participants will be graduating and headed for college.

Providing the laptops will "eliminate the technology divide and ensure a successful transition to college," said Sicat.

Sicat has received \$7,000 so far and eventually hopes to reach his goal of raising \$20,000. For information on how to donate, visit www.emagine.us

Council Ad Wins Telly Award

The Council of the Great City Schools' latest television public service announcement, "Pop Quiz," has won one of the nation's premier awards honoring outstanding television commercials, the Telly Award.

The "Pop Quiz" PSA won the Telly Award in two TV commercial categories



— not-for-profit and public service — of more than 12,000 entries from ad agencies,

production companies, TV stations, cable companies and corporations worldwide in the 27th Annual Telly Awards competition.

Two Telly Award statuettes, designed by the same company that makes the Oscar and Emmy awards, will be bestowed upon the Council.

"Pop Quiz," one of three Council PSAs airing on television in a number of markets nationwide, recognizes the efforts of urban schools and schoolchildren to succeed.

Currently, the Council's ad drive ranks in the top 16 percent of national TV campaigns monitored by Nielsen Media Research.

Reports Show Millions of Children Left Behind

By Jeff Simering, Director of Legislation

Kudos to the Associated Press and the National Commission on No Child Left Behind for finally garnering national attention to the dirty little secret that millions of children have been left out of the national accountability system under *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). The U.S. Department of Education, congressional education committees, state education departments, school districts, and all national education organizations have long been aware of this loophole in NCLB, but under the guise of statistical reliability, large numbers of states and school districts have exploited the use of large subgroup sizes (N size) in order to exclude the performance of millions of children from school-level accountability provisions.



LEGISLATIVE COLUMN

Since March of 2002, the Council of the Great City Schools has advocated closing the minimum N-size loophole. The organization participated in negotiated rule-making on the issue, and submitted formal regulatory comments, letters to the Secretary of Education, congressional testimony, and met repeatedly with Department staff on the matter to little avail.

This statistical tool has a particularly pernicious effect. It allows states to exempt children from NCLB sanctions if they are not concentrated in large enough numbers to be considered “significant.” States decide on what that number is. The higher the number is raised, the more low-income, minority, limited English proficient, and disabled students are exempted from NCLB accountability. The norm is an N-size of 30 students, but a number of states—with Department permission and possibly encouragement—have raised the minimum group size to 40, 50, 100, and even 200 students. A small num-

ber of states were allowed to set different N-sizes for the limited English proficient and students with disabilities subgroup.

The Council has pointed out repeatedly that high subgroup sizes frequently allow small, often rural schools to escape NCLB sanctions because of their smaller numbers of low-income, minority, limited English proficient, and disabled students. Moreover, homogenous suburban schools that are often overwhelmingly white and more affluent frequently reap the same benefits from the higher N-sizes by excluding the performance of minority and poor students attending their schools. Jane Rhyne, Assistant Superintendent for Exceptional Children Programs in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, testified before the House education committee some months ago that the use of large subgroup minimums could allow nearly half the schools in the nation to avoid NCLB accountability for students with disabilities.

In its May 2006 research report, the National Commission on No Child Left Behind found that the “N size” loophole excluded limited English proficient students and students with disabilities from subgroup accountability to a significant degree. For example, in California only 9 percent of the schools made AYP determinations for students with disabilities, and only 44 percent did so for limited English proficient children. In Pennsylvania, only 11 percent of schools made AYP determinations for students with disabilities, and only 1 percent made such determinations for its limited English proficient students.

Large urban school districts, on the other hand, with their large school campuses and sizable enrollments of poor,

minority, limited English proficient, and students with disabilities will generally include all subgroups in large numbers under NCLB. The result is that urban schools will fail AYP in disproportionate numbers, compared with smaller schools with smaller subgroups. But, as concentrated as these populations are in urban schools, over two-thirds of all poor, minority, disabled and limited English proficient students in the country attend schools outside of the Great City Schools. In other words, many of the students the law was initially designed to help are being exempted from its provisions. The situation is exacerbated by another statistical loophole in the law—confidence intervals—that allows even more kids to be left behind.

After pledging during the 2002 NCLB Negotiated Rulemaking sessions to strictly scrutinize the N-size minimums proposed by the states, the U.S. Department of Education proceeded to approve all the current state manipulations. Last year, however, Secretary Spellings moved to cut off the practice of setting higher subgroup minimums for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities. Nonetheless, the Secretary has yet to step in and prohibit unnecessarily large subgroup minimums, as long as the subgroup sizes are applied uniformly across all subgroups.

The subgroup size issue is now before the Department of Education once more in the December 15, 2005 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for NCLB. The Council officially commented and recommended, once again, that a uniform subgroup N size of no more than 30 be established nationwide, and that the department prohibit “differentiated” subgroup minimums. There is no excuse for not closing this NCLB loophole that continues to leave millions of children behind.

Council, Civil Rights Groups Condemn Nebraska Law

National civil rights groups have joined the Council of the Great City Schools in condemning a Nebraska law enacted in mid-April that would divide the Omaha Public Schools into three separate districts – each serving predominantly African American, white and Hispanic students.

In a statement, the Council and five civil rights groups noted that the action, which was first passed in the Nebraska legislature and signed into law by the governor, “takes our nation back to the days before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision which outlawed racial segregation in public schools.”

Joining the Council in condemning “this abhorrent and appalling action” are the Rev. Jesse Jackson’s RainbowPUSH Coalition, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the National Council of La Raza.

In the joint statement, the organizations and the Council “call upon the Nebraska state legislature to repeal this blatant effort to resegregate the state’s public schools.... As we pull together, we implore the Nebraska legislature and the governor to maintain a unified and culturally diverse school system in Omaha.”

Sacramento Student Uses Blog For Political Activism

Sacramento high school sophomore Andy Nevis, like most teenagers, spends a great deal of time on the computer and even has his own Web journal, known as a blog.

But unlike many students who use their blog to make friends, Andy uses his to spread his conservative political views.

He created the blog, California High School Conservative, in February 2005 as an outlet to share his opinions and ideas with the world, and believes that the relationship between technology and political activism is a natural one.

“Times are changing. It’s becoming more convenient to be involved,” said Andy in an interview with the Sacramento school district’s newspaper, *The Connection*. “My blogging is more effective than the old stand in the streets kind of stuff.”

Not only does he have his own political blog, but it has been highly effective in attracting an audience.

This was demonstrated in the summer of 2005 when the Kennedy High School student used his blog to generate opposition against a controversial painting being displayed in California’s Department of Justice. He collected more than 3,000 signatures against the painting. Subsequently, the state attorney general removed the painting from the building.

“That all started because of my blog,” said Andy in the *Connection*. “I am really proud of what we were able to do.”

Businesses Fund Special Indianapolis Summer School

For the first time in more than 10 years, high school students in Indianapolis will have the opportunity to enroll in an array of summer school classes usually only available during the school year.

Previously, only students in remedial classes could participate in summer school due to a lack of funding to have a bigger program. But with the help of local businesses, Indianapolis Public Schools recently unveiled a new summer school program.

The IPS Academic Summer School will offer courses such as calculus, English and social studies as well as Advanced Placement and dual-credit classes.

The program is open to 350 students in grades 9-12 on a first-come, first-served basis. Students must pay a \$10 book fee and limited scholarships will be available.

Local businesses, such as Clarian Health Partners, will help pay for the program, estimated to cost \$130,797. Free transportation for students is being provided by the city’s public transportation corporation, IndyGo. Students will also receive a free lunch.

“This unprecedented collaboration shows barriers to education can be broken when our schools, business and community leaders join together,” said Indianapolis Schools Superintendent Eugene White in a news statement.

Students in the summer program will be able to complete a one-year course in six weeks.

The last year the Indianapolis school system offered a full summer school session to students was in 1994.

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Hall of Fame...

que's La Cueva High School and has been a teacher for 29 years.

Her achievements include being named the 1995 National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year and receiving a Distinguished Service Award in 2001 from the National Council of Teachers of English.

"It's impressive as to how many former students return to our school and give credit to Pat for her help and expertise in putting them on their current career path," said Jim Zalewski, co-chair of the English Department at La Cueva High.

In June, Carlisle and Graff will travel to Emporia, Kansas, to be inducted into the hall of fame. They will also receive a \$1,000 college scholarship to present to a student in their respective districts seeking a degree in teaching, as well as \$1,000 in educational materials.

Nashville Students To Create Spaceship

Students at seven schools in Nashville will spend their summer designing a spaceship to return to earth after crash landing on Planet Zak, part of a summer camp program developed by the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

The camp is designed to provide elementary and middle school students with experiences that will enhance their creative and critical-thinking skills in a scientific setting.

Students will reassemble their crashed spacecraft from a variety of common objects and design shelter and clothing for their stay on Planet Zak. On the last two days of the camp, they will devise ways to launch their spacecraft in time for the "blast off" countdown.

The National Inventors Hall of Fame held camps last summer in more than 800 schools in 42 states. This is the first time the summer camps will be available in schools in Nashville.

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Uncommon Partnership...

Indianapolis schoolteachers in the fourth-to-sixth-grade elementaries.

"This partnership is not about public schools versus charter schools and which can do the better job," said Superintendent White in a news release. "It's about recognizing effective programs and collaborating to ensure our children get the high quality instruction they deserve."

Mayor Peterson agreed, noting, "This is an example of our city being innovative and creative in trying to find ways to give parents and students more high-quality options for success in school."

Editor's Note:

Howard University journalism student Ashley Wilbon now writes for the Urban Educator as an intern. She's a graduate of St. Louis Public Schools.



Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 702
Washington, D.C. 20004

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