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## New Leaders Named in New Orleans, Seattle; Portland Chief to Step Down

Paul Vallas once led Chicago Public Schools, the nation's third largest school district with 426,812 students and 634 schools, and currently heads the School District of Philadelphia, the nation's eighth largest school system with 185,807 students and 270 schools.



Paul Vallas

Yet, his new job as superintendent of a district with only 22 schools and fewer than 10,000 students may be his most challenging one of all, because it is in a city still recovering from a devastating hurricane.

Vallas was recently picked to head the state-run Recovery School District in New Orleans, which in addition to operating 22 schools, also oversees 17 charter schools. He succeeds Robin Jarvis, who is resigning after a year.

One of the biggest challenges facing Vallas in his new position will be trying to accommodate students who are expected to enroll in the district this fall as families who left New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina return to the city.

According to the New Orleans *Times Picayune*, most of the approximately 13,000 new students expected in New Orleans will seek to enter schools in the Recovery District, yet the system has classroom space for only about 7,000 new students.

The district is also facing a shortage of approximately 600 teachers, and on a state-wide exam given in March, students posted low scores in math and reading.

At a press conference announcing his appointment, Vallas said he was proud to work with the community to tackle the challenges that face the district and said he understood the im-

**New Leaders** continued on page 3

## Urban Schools Develop Indicators to Gauge, Improve Performance in Business Operations

In an effort to strengthen business operations, the nation's major urban public school systems have developed pioneering new indicators to gauge performance on a series of key operational areas to accompany their academic reforms.

The Council of the Great City Schools has developed 50 key performance indicators in five critical areas of operation in the nation's big-city school districts: transportation, food services, maintenance and operations, procurement, and safety and security.

After embarking on a first-of-its-kind benchmarking effort to improve operational performance in urban schools, the Council recently released *Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools: A Report of the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project*.

The multi-year study presents 50 indicators, modeled after those used in other public and private sectors, to measure urban school performance on a range of operational and business functions. The study also presents comparable city-by-city data on those indicators that will enable districts to benchmark themselves against high-performing school systems and identify best practices in each of the business areas.

"These indicators are meant to complement the reforms that we're pursuing on

**Business Operations** continued on page 4

## Council Weighs in On Supreme Court Case

The Council of the Great City Schools and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education have filed a legal brief in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court involv-



ing private tuition reimbursement for special education. The case focuses on the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Story is on page 7.



## President Honors Student for Volunteerism

President Bush presents Florida sophomore Daniel Middaugh with the President's Volunteer Service Award in a recent visit to MacDill Air Force Base. A junior ROTC cadet in the Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Middaugh received the award for his more than 600 hours of community service work. He is one of 575 American volunteers to be recognized by the president since 2002.

## Urban School Board Members Sought for Richard Green Award

In recognizing outstanding leadership in urban education, the Council of the Great City Schools and ARAMARK Education are seeking nominations for the 2007 Richard R. Green Award.

This year's award program is open to all past and current school board members of Council member school districts. Next year's award will spotlight an outstanding superintendent.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Richard R. Green Award is a tribute to the late chancellor of the New York City school system and superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools in the 1980s.

The winner of the award, which will be announced at the Council's Fall Conference in Nashville, will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship to present to a student.

Deadline for nominations is July 6. To nominate a school board member, access the Council's web site at [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org) for an application.



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

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**New Leaders** *continued from page 1*

portance of engaging the community early and often.

“No school district in the country has been able to accomplish what the RSD did last year in opening schools,” said Vallas. “Clearly, many challenges are still ahead, including the need for additional facilities, recruitment, finances and, most importantly, building a strong internal team...”

Vallas, who has been working as a consultant with the district for several weeks, is scheduled to become superintendent around July 1.

He has led the school system in Philadelphia since 2002, and under his leadership the number of students scoring advanced or proficient on the state test has increased by 14.1 percentage points in reading and 22.3 percentage points in math.

**Pacific Northwest Changes**

Two big-city school districts in the Pacific Northwest will experience changes at the helm when the 2007-2008 school year begins.

Seattle Public Schools recently selected veteran educator Maria Goodloe-Johnson to take the reins of the 45,800-student school system. She succeeds Raj Manhas, who will resign from the school district in August after serving as the superintendent since 2003.



Maria Goodloe-Johnson

Goodloe-Johnson, the superintendent of South Carolina’s Charleston County School District, was the first woman and the first African American to lead the 43,000-student school district when appointed in 2003.

In a news release, Seattle board members praised Goodloe-Johnson for her leadership skills and her ability to turn around a budget deficit and redirect the Charleston district’s resources to align with academic priorities.

“This mirrors the work that we have started here in Seattle, and I am confident that Dr. Goodloe-Johnson will sustain and enhance those efforts,” said Board President Cheryl Chow.

In Portland, Ore., Vicki Phillips recently announced her resignation from the school district she has led since 2004.



Vicki Phillips

Phillips is resigning to become the director of education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where she will oversee more than \$3.4 billion in education grants the foundation gives to improve academic achievement for the nation’s schoolchildren.

As the head of Portland Public Schools, Phillips has worked with the school board to raise graduation requirements, create K-8 schools and expand full-day kindergarten.

“Our work is not done, and it pains me to leave,” said Phillips in a press statement. “But I feel confident that the school board’s strong and steady leadership, backed by talented employees and a supportive community, will keep Portland Public Schools on track to be a model urban school district for the entire nation.”

Phillips will lead the school district until July 1. Before arriving in Portland, she was secretary of education for the state of Pennsylvania.

**Contract Extended**

Pat Forgione is one of the nation’s longest serving urban superintendents, having led Texas’ Austin Independent School District since 1999. That record will continue because the district recently gave him a one-year



Pat Forgione

contract extension, which will extend his term to 2011.

Under his tenure, scores on the state test have improved and students have performed at or near the top of the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Trial Urban District Assessment program.

“The Board is pleased with the hard work and commitment that Dr. Forgione and his administration are giving the academic progress of all Austin students...” said board president Mark Williams in a news statement.

**Rochester Selects Interim**

New York’s Rochester City School District recently chose William Cala, president of a non-profit organization working to fight AIDS and poverty in Kenya, to become the interim superintendent.

Cala, a former superintendent, succeeds Manuel Rivera, who left the district to become an education adviser to the governor of New York.

**Appeals Court Rules Against Mayoral Takeover of L.A. Schools**

A law designed to give Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa partial authority of the nation’s second largest school district was found unconstitutional by a California appeals court.

The law would have given Villaraigosa shared authority of the Los Angeles Unified School District with a regional council of mayors and the school board.

The unanimous decision by the three-judge panel from the Second Appellate District Court of Appeals struck down the law, which was scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1.

The law was passed in the state legislature last summer, and 10 days before it was to go into effect, a judge overturned it, ruling that it violated provisions of the state constitution.

## Memphis District Creates 'College Bound' Mantra

"Every Child. Every Day. College Bound."

That's Memphis City Schools' new mantra, the brainchild of Superintendent Carol Johnson.

"The phrase 'Every Child. Every Day. College Bound.' means more to me than just another catchy slogan or marketing campaign," says Johnson. "My life's work has been centered on this most fundamental belief – that every child regardless of race, gender, family income, IQ scores, eth-



nicity, handicapping condition or learning disability should have the opportunity to achieve to his or her fullest potential...."

Recently, the Memphis school board approved the district's first-ever brand, launching a community awareness campaign to inform the citizenry of the new mantra and the superintendent's belief in

equity and access to quality education for all 117,000 students of Memphis City Schools.

The new mantra has reportedly generated citywide discussion and debate about Memphis public school students and their potential for post-secondary success.

One of many comments published or broadcast in the local media noted, "Establishing vision and high expectations should be the top priority for any leader. I found it extremely disturbing that some people would have an issue with setting high expectations for every student."

"Increasingly in this time of rapid technological change and high poverty, it is an absolute necessity for our students to pursue some form of post-secondary education if they expect to attain a decent standard of living," stresses Superintendent Johnson in a news release.

"By clearly articulating our vision – Every Child. Every Day. College Bound – we hope to send a message to our students, and their families, our staff and the entire community that our journey is educational excellence – not just for some, but for all."

Success of Memphis school district students will be highlighted during the community awareness campaign through various channels, including billboards, public transportation, print ads, radio interviews, as well as a television public service announcement called "I Believe."

The campaign is funded by both private and in-kind support from media, business sponsors and others who support public education.

The superintendent's "College Bound" brand was developed by Memphis City Schools under the leadership of Rita Cooper, who heads the district's communications and marketing department.

She will give a presentation about the brand at the Council of the Great City Schools' Seventh Annual Public Relations Executives Meeting, July 13-15, in Phoenix.

### Business Operations *continued from page 1*

the instructional side of the house, and spur our improvement on every front," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly in *Education Week*.

While the "business side" of urban education has always placed a strong emphasis on data, he pointed out, comparable indicators have never been available in public education in a way that would allow one school district to peg its performance to another.

"To be accountable, we must be able to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations," Casserly stressed. "Good comparative data give school districts the ability to analyze how well they manage their resources."

*Managing for Results* was developed during the Council's annual meetings of its chief operating and chief financial officers, who launched the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project in 2003.

The project aims to help the nation's urban public schools measure their performance, improve their operational decisions, and strengthen their practices.

Among the initial results of the multi-year study, the findings from the 66 big-city school districts showed:

- The median cost of transporting students is \$988 a child;
- The average student-participation rate in food services is 59.6 percent;
- The average school custodian services 23,501 square feet;
- The average time to complete the procurement process and receive goods is 35 days; and
- The percent of school buildings with alarm systems is 23.5 percent.

The Council expects big-city school boards and superintendents will be able to use these indicators and the data gathered on them "to assess their own business operations, measure progress on operational reforms, and demonstrate greater transparency in district operations to the public," Casserly emphasized.

Later in the study, the project will develop indicators and benchmarks in the areas of budget and finance, human resources, and information technology. Trends will also be tracked, and best practices in high-performing districts will be documented.

*Managing for Results* can be accessed on the Council's web site at [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org).

## Long Beach District Again Selected For Broad Prize

California's Long Beach Unified School District has been named among the five finalists for the 2007 Broad Prize for Urban Education, marking the first time a former winning district has become a competing finalist since the first prize was awarded in 2002.

The Long Beach district won the 2003 Broad Prize, and was not eligible to compete again for three years until now. If it takes the top prize this year, it would be the first school system in the nation to win the award twice.

"Long Beach again inspires the nation by believing in its children," said Schools Superintendent Christopher Steinhauser in the district's newsletter.

It won't be easy for Long Beach to win the annual million-dollar prize awarded to urban school districts that have made the greatest improvements in academic achievement.

This is the third consecutive year that the New York City school system has been named a finalist. And it's the second year in a row that Florida's Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Connecticut's Bridgeport Public Schools have been finalists.

Northside Independent School District in northwest San Antonio, Texas, is the fifth finalist in the 2007 competition among the 100 urban school systems nationwide eligible for the award – with selection based on an extensive national review of data.

Expected to be announced in mid-September, the winner of the Broad Prize will receive \$500,000 in college scholarships for students, while each of the four other finalist districts will receive \$125,000 in scholarships.

Boston Public Schools won the 2006 award after being a finalist for five consecutive years.

## Orlando Business Journal Honors Students With Special Publication

Florida's *Orlando Business Journal* is wrapping up its first year of a new publication called *First Honors*, which "honors" high school and technical school students in Orange County Public Schools and in neighboring Seminole County who have displayed positive impacts on their schools and communities.

Produced monthly during the school year, *First Honors* – "An Orlando Business Journal special publication that recognizes the achievements of tomorrow's leaders" -- is sponsored by Darden Restaurants.

"The publication is unique in that the project is not about grades as it is about the students' extracurricular efforts and future career plans," says Dylan Thomas, community relations director of Orange County Public Schools in Orlando.

In addition to recognizing students, the publication focuses on academic programs and student-related issues, as well as spotlights articles written by students on a variety of topics.

Students featured in the publication are selected by teachers, principals and guidance counselors.

*First Honors* students attend a banquet in their honor, where a \$2,500 scholarship is awarded to one student from each county. The banquet gives the students an opportunity to interact with members of the Central Florida business community -- potential employers.



### Pizza Firm Founder Opens School Eatery in Louisville

Students at Central High School Magnet Career Academy in Louisville, Ky., learn how to make dough from John Schnatter, the founder of Louisville-based Papa John's International. A mobile Papa John's restaurant recently opened on the campus of Central, where students in the Banking/Finance/Business Management/Entrepreneurship Magnet program are operating the pizzeria and gaining experience in all aspects of managing a business.



Jim Shelton, program director for education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, announces the Gates \$10.5 million investment in Atlanta Public Schools' high school transformation initiative at a press conference. Seated from the left are Atlanta School Board Chair Kathleen Pattillo, Atlanta Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and Gerry House, president and CEO of the Institute for Student Achievement. (Photo by Scott King)

## Atlanta Expands High School Initiative

In 2005, Atlanta Public Schools converted one of its low-performing high schools into five small schools housed on one campus with a college prep focus as part of a high school transformation initiative.

Two years later, the conversion is showing results, with students posting gains in academic performance and attendance.

The district is now working to accelerate and expand its high school transformation initiative and over the next five years plans to convert all of its large, traditional high schools into small schools.

The first two schools that will be redesigned under this initiative plan to open in the fall of 2007. The schools will be comprised of four small theme-based schools that focus on providing students with a personalized and academically rigorous learning environment.

"We have a unique opportunity in Atlanta to create a culture of high expectations and high achievement for our students,"

said Atlanta Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall in a news statement.

The district's newly created Office of High School Redesign will work in close partnership with the Institute for Student Achievement (ISA), an organization that partners with school districts to transform low-performing high schools into small learning communities.

"We know that with rigorous and challenging coursework, along with the supportive relationships with teachers and adults needed to meet high standards, all students can achieve at high levels," said ISA CEO Gerry House, a former superintendent of Memphis public schools, and a past winner of the Council of the Great City Schools' Richard R. Green Award.

The Atlanta superintendent won the nation's top urban education award last year.

Atlanta's high school transformation initiative is being funded with a \$10.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## Pittsburgh Unveils New Reform Plan For High Schools

Pittsburgh Public Schools faces many of the same challenges other big-city school districts have in improving high school schools—low graduation rates, high dropout rates, poor test scores—but the district recently unveiled a plan to combat these problems.

*Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, is a multi-year plan organized around five principles: safe and welcoming schools, relationships, rigor, student support and relevance.

The first year of the plan will focus on ensuring schools are physically and emotionally safe places that support learning by implementing professional development for teachers and administrators at all district high schools. In addition, staff will receive training in the areas of cultural competency, trust and team-building, student engagement and customer service. And new attendance/truancy officers will be created, which will increase the opportunities for school social workers to assist students and their families.

The plan also calls for improving academic achievement for all students and ensuring that by the 2008—2009 school year the number of students who take Advanced Placement (AP) exams will double. This includes increasing the number of African American students, who are underrepresented in AP programs, hoping enrollment in AP courses will quadruple.

To help the district meet these goals, all high schools will be required to offer AP courses and all schools must identify 15 to 25 students to participate in the AP program.

Moreover, school staff will meet with African-American families to promote greater participation in AP programs. AP students will receive mentors, and all students in the AP program would take the

**Pittsburgh Reform** continued on page 7

## Council Weighs in On High Court Case Involving Private Tuition Reimbursement for Special Ed

The Council of the Great City Schools and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education argue on behalf of the New York City Board of Education that a student seeking special education and related services whose parents unilaterally place their child in a private school without first pursuing public education cannot seek tuition reimbursement under federal law.

That's the central argument regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in a brief for *amici curiae* filed May 14 with the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the case -- *Board of Education of the City School District of The City of New York v. Tom F., on behalf of Gilbert F., a minor child* -- the "friend of court" brief claims that under IDEA the high court must find that the law does not permit tuition reimbursement.

**Pittsburgh Reform** continued from page 6

exam, with the district supplementing the cost.

Other initiatives under the plan include holding a transition program for eighth graders entering high school, implementing a new mandatory civics course for 9<sup>th</sup> graders, changing the suspension policy to keep students in a school setting, developing strategies to increase parent involvement, and encouraging all students to attend post-secondary institutions.

"Too many students opt-out, drop-out, or zone-out of our high schools," said Pittsburgh Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. "We must improve our high schools so that students graduate and are prepared for education beyond high school."

*Excel.9-12* was created by the district's High School Reform Task Force composed of educators from secondary and higher education, foundations and businesses, parents and the community.

Specifically, the brief states, "Students to whom a free appropriate public education has not been made available, and who have been unilaterally placed in private school by their parents, are permitted to seek tuition reimbursement if, *but only if*, they have 'previously received special education and related services under the authority of a public agency.'"

## Clark County School Board Recognized For Music Education

Students in Las Vegas' Clark County School District begin learning the fundamentals of music at an early age and receive instruction from certified, qualified music educators on a weekly basis.

As a result, the district's board of trustees was recently honored as the 2007 recipient of the third annual School Board Award for Distinguished Support of Music Education. Sponsored by the National School Board Association and the VH1 Save the Music Foundation, the award is presented to only one school board each year.

Clark County's board of trustees were recognized for including music as a core part of students' curriculum and ensuring students have access to the benefits of music education. Each school in the 303,000-student district is provided with certified music teachers, funding for repairs, text books, supplies and professional development.

The board of trustees was instrumental in creating the school district's well-known Mariachi Program, which serves more than 2,500 students. In addition, school board trustees support bringing world-class conductors, clinicians and consultants to the district.

## San Diego Student Becomes Epidemiology Scholar

Sarah Silverstein, a student at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego, Calif., did a research project to determine if the amount of stress college students experience negatively affects their performance.



Sarah Silverstein

For her efforts, Silverstein was recently awarded a \$20,000 college scholarship in the Young Epidemiology Scholars (YES) Competition.

Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and administered by the College Board, the competition is designed to spur students' interest in epidemiology, which explores patterns of disease, illness and injury within populations, with the goal of developing methods for prevention, control and treatment to improve health.

The YES Competition awards up to 120 college scholarships each year to high school juniors and seniors who conduct outstanding research projects that apply epidemiological methods of analysis to a health-related issue.

Silverstein was among 60 high school students selected out of more than 700 entrants nationwide to compete in the finals held last month in the nation's capital. Silverstein was one of two third-place winners to receive a \$20,000 college scholarship.

An aspiring dentist, Silverstein's award-winning project found extremely high levels of stress in first-year dental students, based on a study of nearly 300 first-year students at four dental schools.

The graduating senior will attend Nova Southeastern University in the fall, where she will be enrolled in the program for dentistry and will major in biology.

## San Francisco District, Mayor Form Partnership

The city of San Francisco and the San Francisco Unified School District have teamed up to form a partnership to improve student academic performance and boost community involvement.

The "Partnership for Achievement" agreement calls for collaboration between the city and school district in six strategic areas: building community support and civic engagement; supporting teachers and principals; promoting adequate school funding; increasing opportunities; preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and strengthening schools as community institutions.

According to city and district officials, the partnership represents for the first time the city and the school system formally joining together to serve the students and families of San Francisco.

Under the partnership, several programs and policies are being developed. To help support teachers and principals, a teacher housing subsidy and a student loan forgiveness program will be implemented in the fall and a leadership initiative is being designed to recruit and retain preK-12 administrators.

In an effort to strengthen schools as community institutions, the district and the city are exploring potential school sites to establish a parent university and a job center for youths. Officials are also identifying school playgrounds that can be opened to community use.

And to prepare students to compete in a global workforce, programs will be implemented such as the development of career pathways in competitive workforce areas.

"This agreement formalizes and strengthens a commitment shared by all of us – to assure that all of our students have the opportunities and support to achieve their greatest potential," said San Francisco Schools Superintendent Gwen Chan in a news statement.

## Four Urban Schools Win Excellence Awards

At Thomas A. Edison Elementary School in Long Beach, Calif., 99 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch, yet the school has made strides in academic achievement, with approximately 84 percent of students proficient in math, up from 37 percent three years ago.



Joseph F. Johnson, executive director of the National Center for Urban School Transformation, and educators from Thomas Edison Elementary School in Long Beach, Calif., hold the banner they received after winning a 2007 Excellence in Education Award.

Edison's strong academic growth is the reason it was among the seven recipients of the 2007 Excellence in Education Award, recently presented by the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) at San Diego State University.

In addition to Edison, other big-city schools chosen for the award were Charles L. Gideons Elementary in Atlanta, Pillow Elementary School in Austin, Texas, and Columbus Alternative High School in Columbus, Ohio.

In order to be eligible for the award, schools had to serve a city with a population of at least 50,000 and at least 50 percent of the school's students must qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, the federal standard for measuring poverty.

Schools were also required to have high attendance rates and must have met adequate yearly progress performance goals for all student subgroups for the previous two academic years.

Eighteen schools were selected as finalists and received on-site visits with the winning schools demonstrating the greatest evidence of rigorous content, engaging instruction and positive relationships among students, teachers, parents and administrators.

## New Housing Policy Adopted For Council Fall Conference

The Council of the Great City Schools has adopted a new housing policy for the headquarters hotel of its 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 31-Nov. 4, in Nashville, Tenn.

The conference will be held at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel. Rather than calling the hotel to make reservations, conferees who want to stay at the hotel must make reservations using the Council's housing form.

The housing form is available on the Council's web site at: [www.cgcs.org/conferences/fall.aspx](http://www.cgcs.org/conferences/fall.aspx).

Once the form is completed, conferees should fax the form to the hotel at (615) 525-4103.



**Council Of The Great City Schools  
October 31st - November 4th, 2007**

Interactive Classrooms continued on page 9





Jennifer Johnson, a first-grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary School in Des Moines, Iowa, recently received the 2006 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

## Tampa School Takes Solar Power to New Heights

Solar energy has taken on new meaning at a magnet school for math, science, engineering and technology in Tampa, Fla., where students can now get hands-on experience in converting sunlight into electricity while learning the value of renewable energy.

Middleton High School has become the site of the largest solar power system of any public school in Florida.

With an array of 60 solar panels to capture the sunlight, the Tampa school was selected to host the 10,500-watt photovoltaic array project in conjunction with Tampa Electric, Hillsborough County Public Schools and the Florida Solar Energy Center's SunSmart Schools Program.

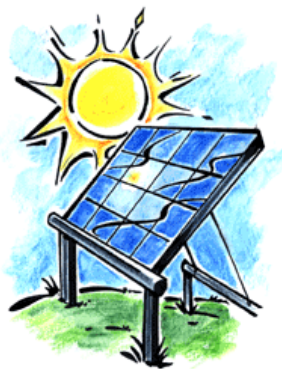
At a recent dedication of the project, Middleton Principal Jim Gatlin said in the *Tampa Tribune*, "We've reached the status of the avant garde."

To Hillsborough County Schools Superintendent MaryEllen Elia, the school's new solar power system "really is the foundation for the kinds of activities that really need to grow...to hook students into the kind of programs we need in the future."

Solar power at the school has a battery backup system for overnight use. And in the event of a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, it also provides supplemental power for the Red Cross shelter located at the school.

Thirteen elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities in Florida applied and were selected for the SunSmart Schools Program in 2006. The Middleton photovoltaic project, which took three months to build, was the largest chosen.

The \$170,000 project was funded by the Tampa Electric Renewable Energy Program, along with the Florida Solar Energy Center's SunSmart Schools Program.



## Big-City Teachers Named the Best In Science, Math

Several urban math and science teachers were among the 93 recipients of the 2006 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), the nation's highest commendation for mathematics and science teachers.

The National Science Foundation administers the awards program on behalf of the White House and selects outstanding preK-12 mathematics and science teachers in each state and the four U.S. jurisdictions.

Urban teachers from Anchorage, Jacksonville, Chicago, Des Moines, Louisville, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Memphis and North Hollywood, Calif., were among this year's recipients. The Christina School District in Newark, Del., and the District of Columbia Public Schools in Washington, D.C., had two teachers receive an award.

The PAEMST was established in 1983 by Congress and alternates each year between teachers of grades K-6 and teachers of grades 7-12. Recipients receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

## Los Angeles Official Receives Award

Michael Eugene, business manager for the Los Angeles Unified School District, recently received the Distinguished Service Award at the Council of the Great City Schools' Chief Operating Officers conference in Atlanta.

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.

Eugene has served as business manager for Los Angeles schools for the past five years.

## NCLB Reauthorization Gaining Momentum

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

The education committees of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress have begun moving aggressively to reauthorize the *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB). Although partisan control of the Congress has shifted, bipartisan commitment to extend the Act in both the House and Senate has not wavered.

Both House and Senate committees have sought input on the reauthorization through a variety of forums. The “Big Four”—Chairman Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman George Miller (D-CA), Ranking Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), and Ranking Member Buck McKeon (R-CA)—joined the NCLB Commission in launching its reauthorization recommendations, and then convened an unusual bicameral hearing to receive recommendations from the Council of the Great City Schools, the two national teacher unions, the NCLB Commission, state superintendents, business groups, and the civil rights community. Michael Casserly testified for the Council.

Since the initial bicameral hearing, the House and Senate committees have convened a number of additional Washington-based and field hearings, roundtable meetings, informal discussion groups, and listening sessions. The Great City Schools have participated in most of these NCLB forums with Joel Klein, Chancellor of the New York City Public Schools, focusing on teacher quality issues; Monica Roberts, Director of Federal and State Programs of the Boston Public Schools, testifying on supplemental educational services; Valeria Silva, Chief Academic Officer of the St. Paul Public Schools, discussing English language learners; Jane Rhyne, Assistant Superintendent for Exceptional Children of the Charlotte-Meck-



lenberg Public Schools, emphasizing students with disabilities; and Yvonne Brandon, Associate Superintendent for Instruction of the Richmond Public Schools, describing school improvement strategies. Superintendent Deborah Jewell-Sherman of the Richmond Public Schools also testified on NCLB funding issues before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The House committee has also held an unusual hearing just for members of Congress to present their views, including various coalitions and caucuses of the House of Representatives—the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Republican Study Committee, the Tuesday Group, and others.

There is a general expectation now that House and Senate committees will begin marking up the NCLB overhaul sometime this summer. But, even with this strong start, the committees have formidable hurdles to overcome in order to fix the operational flaws that bedevil the law and maintain focus on student performance. Lawmakers continue to struggle with ways to amend the law’s accountability framework, assess students with disabilities and English language learners, differentiate sanctions among schools needing varying levels of reform, balance instruction and punishment, and account for academic growth. Politically charged issues—like teacher effectiveness, choice and supplemental services, the Title I formula, the assignment of highly qualified teachers to high-poverty schools, and flexibility in the use of funds—all remain to be resolved.

It is unclear how far Congress will get in amending *No Child Left Behind* this year. But no one is quibbling about the need to do so.

## Las Vegas, Miami Teachers Named to Hall of Fame

A high school computer science teacher in Las Vegas, Nev., and a high school television/moviemaking teacher in Miami are among five veteran educators named to be inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame.



John Snyder

John Snyder, a teacher at Advanced Technologies Academy in Las Vegas, and Joseph Underwood, a teacher at Miami Senior High School, join 78 other educators from 33 states and the District of Columbia who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kan., since the inaugural ceremony in 1992.

The five chosen teachers have been invited to Emporia in mid-June for a series of induction events.

The Hall of Fame recognizes the accomplishments of public or non-public school teachers with a minimum 20 years of experience in teaching grades pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>.

“Joe is a serious and dedicated educator, whose love of educating children goes far beyond the classroom doors,” said Agustin Barrera, chair of the Miami-Dade school board.

## Guilford County District in North Carolina Setting Standards for Building 'Green' Schools

Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., has launched a "green" school movement, setting standards to build energy-efficient and environmentally sound schools.

The school district believes it's the first in the state to develop its own set of detailed green design specifications, known as the G3-Guilford Green Guide. It is encouraging architects to build holistic, innovative and green schools that tie into the curriculum.

As an example of "going green," the school district opened Northern Guilford Middle School in January, an award-winning facility featuring a comprehensive green design, including a day-lighting system and indirect lighting with photocells.

The building's shell also has an under-floor air distribution system and solar heating. It also features a holistic water cycle approach that catches rainwater for toilet flushing that takes it through underground irrigation and to an aquifer.

All of the sustainable design components create learning opportunities for Guilford County students.

"It is important to build energy-efficient



Northern Guilford Middle School in Greensboro, N.C., features a comprehensive green design.

schools in order to reduce our dependency on non-renewable energy sources and the ever-increasing costs associated with those sources," said Joe Hill, the school system's facilities consultant.

Northern Middle School and Reedy Fork Elementary have received the Energy Star rating from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. And last summer, the district received a Sustainable Energy Leadership Award for making an outstanding contribution in helping North Carolina achieve its energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability goals. Guilford County Schools was the only school system in the state to receive the award.

## Council Launches New Web Site

In 1995, the Council of the Great City Schools was one of the first education organizations in the nation to launch a web site. Subsequently, it was redesigned in 2001.

Six years later, the Council introduces a new web site, redesigned to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

The new design at [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org) contains new features, such as drop down menus, a listing of urban school statistics and a section devoted to the Council's research department.

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## Jacksonville, Nashville, Los Angeles Schools Win 'Grammy' Awards

Three big-city school districts recently were honored by the GRAMMY Foundation as one of its 22 GRAMMY Signature Schools for 2007.

Created in 1998, the GRAMMY Signature Schools program honors exceptional public high school music programs across the nation.



Douglas Anderson School of the Arts in Jacksonville, Fla., was one of three schools designated as "Grammy Signature Schools Gold" recipients and given an award of \$5,000 to benefit its music program.

Also receiving a \$5,000 award was Hunters Lane High School in Nashville, Tenn., which was selected as a recipient of the GRAMMY Signature Schools Gibson Grant to benefit its guitar/piano program.

And Hamilton High School in Los Angeles was designated a "Grammy Signature Schools" recipient and received a \$1,000 award.

## Great City Grads



**John King**

**CNN's Chief National Correspondent**

**1981 graduate**

**Boston Latin School**

**Boston Public Schools**

## Jackson Counselor of the Year Recognized by Tom Brokaw

Noted television journalist Tom Brokaw last month sent a high school counselor in



**Nancy Sylvester**

Jackson, Miss., orchids, according to school officials.

He wanted to congratulate her for being presented the Schillig Society High School Counselor of the Year Award at Mississippi State University.

Why would Brokaw send flowers?

Nancy Sylvester, a counselor at Lanier High School in Jackson, was featured in the Tom Brokaw documentary titled "Separate But Unequal" on the TV program "Dateline" last July for the role she played in helping at-risk students break the cycle of poverty.

Sylvester was nominated for the recent award by Jackson Schools Superintendent Earl Watkins. "A counselor in Jackson Public Schools since 1978, Mrs. Sylvester

has been a pacemaker for the heartbeat of the school community," he said in a news release.

"She understands children – and more than that, she cares about them," he added, noting that she has "touched the lives of literally thousands of children."

What motivates the school counselor? "My philosophy of counseling is only four words long," Sylvester stressed. "Every student, every day."

**Web Site** continued from page 11

The 2007 web site also contains many of the Council's publications, which can be easily downloaded. And through the web site, visitors can now view the Council's award-winning public service announcements--"Thank You," "Tested" and "Pop Quiz."

In addition, a new feature has been added to the web site called Job Listings, a list of job openings available in Council member districts across the nation.



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