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**LEGISLATIVE**

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**SPECIAL EDITION**  
**Back to School**



Orange County Schools Superintendent Ronald Blocker talks with students on the first day of school at Jones High School in Orlando, Fla. He commended the school for improving its academic performance.

## First Council Research Fellowships Announced

Building a bridge between seasoned researchers and urban school officials, the Council of the Great City Schools has selected three senior education researchers to pursue rigorous, policy-relevant research projects in collaboration with big-city school districts in the Council's newly created Senior Urban Education Research Fellowship program.



Kenji Hakuta

The three senior researchers to be funded for projects in the first round of fellowships are:

- Dr. Kenji Hakuta, Stanford University. *Technology-Supported Tools to Enhance Science Instruction and Learning for English Language Learners in Middle Schools: A Collaborative Project with the San Francisco Unified School District;*

Research Fellowships continued on page 3

## New Programs, Schools Highlight The Year's Start

Dress codes, single gender schools, Arabic language programs, small learning communities—these are just some of the new initiatives and programs urban school districts across the nation are implementing in the 2007-2008 school year.

### Albuquerque

New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools is using a state grant to fund a free breakfast program at 16 elementary schools this fall.

### Anchorage

Alaska's Anchorage School District is launching its *Ready, Set, Learn* program to help 1st grade students succeed academically. Under the program, first-graders at 30 elementary schools begin classes four days later than other students to provide teachers the opportunity to meet individually with their new students and parents.

### Atlanta

Atlanta Public Schools begins the new school year with 10 new schools, including the all-girls Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy, named for the late civil rights leader. And according to district officials, the school system is the first in the nation to have all of its high

Year's Start continued on page 4

## Marcia Page Scholarship Awarded to Grads From Philly and Palm Beach Co.

Two 2007 high school graduates from Philadelphia and Florida's Palm Beach County recently won the highly competitive Marcia Page Scholarship for Mathematics, Engineering and Technology Excellence, sponsored by the Council of the Great City Schools and Texas Instruments.

The \$5,000 scholarship is awarded to two African-American female students who completed their senior year of high school this past spring in a district that is a member of the Council.

Parhys Napier, graduating from Palm Beach County's Suncoast High School, ranked No.5 in *Newsweek* magazine's recent "America's Best High Schools" edition, is pursuing a mechanical engineering degree this fall at MIT.

Candice Wilson, who graduated from Philadelphia's High School of Engineering and Science, is a freshman this year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., majoring in chemical engineering.

"We received 54 outstanding applications for the scholarship from 31 Council member districts," says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

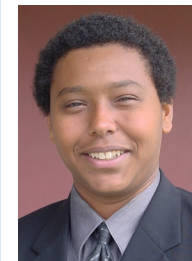
The 2007 Marcia Page Scholarship winners will have an opportunity to meet the scholarship's namesake at the Council's 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Fall Conference in Nashville, Tenn., during a breakfast program on Nov. 1 sponsored by Texas Instruments.

Page, vice president of public affairs at the company and loaned executive to the Foundation for Community Empowerment in Dallas, will serve as a mentor to the two scholarship recipients as they pursue their careers.

In its third year, the Marcia Page scholarship has been awarded in the past to high school graduates in Chicago, Nashville, Denver and Orlando, Fla.

## U.S. House Speaker Selects Seattle Student As Page

A student from Seattle Public Schools was recently selected by U.S. Speaker of the



Philmon Haile

House Nancy Pelosi to serve in the prestigious congressional page program in Washington, D.C.

Philmon Haile, a 16-year-old junior at Seattle's Garfield High School, will work as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives during the fall term.

He maintains a high grade point average and is involved in several community and extra-curricular activities.

Haile is a native of Eritrea in Africa, and after his father fought for independence and was wounded in battle, his family escaped to Sudan and then came to the United States.

"I'm very interested in politics, so I know this will be a wonderful and rewarding experience," said Haile. "This program is a great way I can give back to my country for what it has given to me and my family."



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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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# Broward Co., Charleston Name New Leaders; Memphis Appoints Interim; Albuquerque, Cincinnati School Chiefs to Step Down

Three big-city school districts begin the 2007-2008 school year with new leaders at the helm, while two veteran leaders recently announced their retirement.

Florida's Broward County Public Schools did not have to look far for its new superintendent. The nation's sixth largest school district selected interim superintendent James Notter to take the reins of the 270,935-student school system. Notter, who has been the interim superintendent since 2006, succeeds Franklin Till.

Notter joined the Broward School System in 1986 and has served as the district's deputy superintendent and chief of staff.

Charleston County School District in South Carolina also promoted from within when choosing a new superintendent to lead its 43,000-student school system. Nancy McGinley was named the new leader and succeeds Maria Goodloe-Johnson, who left the district to lead Seattle Public Schools.

In 2004, McGinley was named the district's chief academic officer, where she was responsible for all academic programs and initiatives, curriculum and instruction, school discipline and drop-out prevention, and testing and accountability.

Before coming to Charleston, she served as executive director of an education organization in Philadelphia.

## Interim Leader Named

Memphis City Schools recently named Dan Ward, a Memphis native and graduate of the school district, to serve as interim superintendent. A retired educator and decorated member of the U.S. Air Force, Ward succeeds Carol Johnson, who left the district to take the helm of Boston Public Schools.

## Veteran Leaders Step Down

Elizabeth Everitt, the superintendent of New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools, recently announced her retirement from the district. Everitt, who has served as the leader of the 89,000-student school system since 2003, will step down at the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

Everitt began her career with the district 26 years ago and under her leadership, rigorous academic standards have been implemented and literacy programs have been developed.

Also stepping down is Rosa Blackwell, who has led the Cincinnati Public Schools since 2005. A graduate of the district, Blackwell joined the school system in 1972 as a teacher and has held several positions, including supervisor of curriculum and instruction, deputy superintendent and interim superintendent.

During her tenure, graduation rates have improved and the district has created a five-year strategic plan. She will leave the school system at the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

## Research Fellowships continued from page 1



Robert Meyer

- Dr. Robert Meyer, University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Accountability and Performance in Secondary Education in the Milwaukee Public Schools;* and



Catherine Snow

- Dr. Catherine Snow, Harvard University. *Collaborating with the Boston Public Schools to Develop and Evaluate Word Generation.*

Two of the projects are interventions aimed at improving instruction at the secondary education level. Snow's project in Boston will be a rigorous efficacy trial of a school-wide intervention designed to teach academic language through classroom discussion, debate, and persuasive writing. Hakuta's project in San Francisco will attempt to improve instruction in middle school science by providing new technology-based tools

that give teachers the capacity to analyze the academic language in the curriculum and to adapt instructional support to match the language proficiency of students.

With the third project in Milwaukee, Meyer proposes to develop an early-warning system, based on estimates of a value-added model of student outcomes, to identify students at risk of dropping out of school or performing below proficiency on state assessments.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the Council more than \$2.5 million last September to establish the fellowship program, which aims to facilitate significant, on-going partnerships between the research community and urban school districts and to produce a set of high quality studies that yield reliable guidance regarding the challenges and decisions urban school districts face in the reform of secondary education.

This is the first of three rounds of fellowship awards, to be awarded annually to three researchers with at least 7-10 years of experience and an established track record of working with urban school districts. Information and a request for proposals for the second round of fellowship awards will be available on the Council website ([www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)) this fall.

**Year's Start** *continued from page 1*

schools participate in the *Play It Smart* program, sponsored by the National Football Foundation. The program provides one-on-one academic coaching and tutoring to football players.

**Austin**

Texas' Austin Independent School District is opening the doors to a new all-girls school: the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, named for a former governor of Texas. The college preparatory school for students in grades 6-12 provides academic, leadership and wellness education, and incorporates the latest research on the most effective teaching strategies for young women.

**Boston**

In an effort to provide its students with key language skills, Boston Public Schools is expanding the popular Arabic language program offered at the district's Charlestown High School. The school, one of fewer than 20 public schools in the nation to offer Arabic language instruction, according to district officials, is adding two sections of second-year Arabic.

**Broward County**

To improve students' kindergarten readiness, Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is teaming with Nova Southeastern University to provide mentors to teachers at 63 local community child care centers. The centers are located in neighborhoods near 21 of the school district's underperforming elementary schools. The mentors, who have extensive early childhood education, will work directly with the teachers in implementing appropriate early childhood practices and activities.

**Charleston**

Charleston County School District in South Carolina is providing all of its teach-

ers with curriculum guides to help reduce the time they spend planning lessons and preparing paperwork and increase the time they spend with students. The curriculum guides list the standards for each subject and suggest ways for teachers to individualize instruction for students.

**Charlotte**

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is launching allergen-specific lunch menus to help families plan for children with special nutritional needs because of allergies. The color-coded menus highlight foods that contain some of the most common food allergens. The menus also list the number of carbohydrates each food item contains to help students manage their diet.



Broward Schools Superintendent James Notter welcomes students Pricilla Lewis and Rona Silber back to school at Stirling Elementary.

**Chicago**

Chicago Public Schools is using a \$4.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to combat youth violence over two years. The Youth Engaged in School grant will support and expand existing programs that aim to reduce the drop-out rate, as well as the number of youth in grades 8-12 who are involved in gangs.

**Cincinnati**

Cincinnati Public Schools is partnering with Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory and the city's mass transit department to combat truancy in the district's schools. All 390 Metro buses will post signs that feature

Cincinnati Schools Superintendent Rosa Blackwell and Mayor Mallory urging students to attend school.

**Clark County**

Officials in Las Vegas' Clark County School District are expecting 12,000 more students to enroll in the 2007-2008 school year. To accommodate the growth, the district is opening six new elementary schools, one replacement school, two new middle schools, one replacement middle school and a new career and technical academy high school.

**Cleveland**

Cleveland Metropolitan School District is joining the ranks of other urban school systems by opening five new single gender academies—three for boys and two for girls. And in an effort to provide a safe learning environment and create unity in schools, the school system is requiring students in grades K-8 to wear uniforms.

**Columbus**

In an effort to increase graduation rates in Ohio's Columbus Public Schools, the district is teaming with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio to create a mentoring program for 1,000 eighth-graders. Project Mentor pairs a child with a mentor who will provide assistance in academics and social development once a week.

**Dallas**

Six more middle schools in the Dallas Independent School District are adding sixth grade as part of the district's transition plan to get sixth-graders to attend middle schools in their neighborhoods to relieve overcrowding and provide them with more academic and extracurricular options.

**Year's Start** *continued on page 5*

**Year's Start** *continued from page 4*

**Dayton**

As part of its construction program to build new neighborhood schools, Dayton Public Schools is opening eight new neighborhood schools this year.

**Denver**

Denver Public Schools is implementing the EXCELEerator schools program in four high schools this fall. Sponsored by the College Board, the program provides college-level courses and college preparation programs. The district will also unveil a proposal to close underpopulated schools.

**Des Moines**

Des Moines Public Schools is launching Infinite Campus, a web-based information system designed to improve how grading, attendance, scheduling and other information is gathered and reported. In addition to teachers using Infinite Campus, parents will also be able to use the web-based system to access information about their children's education.

The district is also celebrating its centennial anniversary with several events taking place during the 2007-2008 school year.

**Detroit**

In an effort to improve safety, Detroit Public Schools' police department is opening mini-stations in five high schools. The mini-stations are staffed by full-time police officers who will work closely with students, parents, administrators and teachers.

**East Baton Rouge**

Louisiana's East Baton Rouge Parish School System begins the new school year with two new small schools. The East Baton Rouge Parish Laboratory Academy offers at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> graders a college preparatory curriculum and the CAN! Academies of East Baton Rouge offers students technical skills training.



Cleveland Schools CEO Eugene Sanders greets students at Franklin D. Roosevelt School.

**Fort Worth**

Texas' Fort Worth Independent School District is implementing a new math curriculum for students in grades 6-8 that provides students with an investigative approach to learning mathematics. Connected Mathematics Project 2 is designed to train students to be problem solvers and use everyday situations to learn math concepts.

**Greensboro**

Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., is opening a new school for newly arrived immigrants. The Newcomers School provides students in grades 5-12 with instruction in English language, math, science, social studies and computer skills, and teachers work with students to ease the transition to their new culture and environment.

**Houston**

In 2002, voters in Houston approved an \$808 million school construction bond issue, which is now resulting in the Houston Independent School District opening eight new elementary schools this fall.

The district is also spending \$7.3 million to upgrade its school band, choral, theatre, dance and other arts programs and is opening its first film school.

**Indianapolis**

Indianapolis Public Schools begins the 2007-2008 school year with the only elementary school in Indiana to have an International Baccalaureate Primary Program, according to district officials. Children in the rigorous program conduct research and are encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward learning.

**Jackson**

Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools embarks on an initiative to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in mathematics, science and special education as a result of a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The district will collaborate with local colleges and create a mentoring program for new teachers.

**Kansas City**

The Kansas City Missouri School District is opening the African Centered Education Collegium Campus for students in grades preK-9. The college preparatory school utilizes a culturally relevant approach to help students develop personal life skills, social responsibility and leadership skills. The school also offers students advanced dual credit high school classes through a partnership with local colleges.

**Long Beach**

As a result of a collaboration between the city of Long Beach and Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, California's Long Beach Unified School District is opening the Jordan Architecture, Construction and Engineering Academy. The school will serve approximately 60 students in tenth grade and provide them with opportunities to participate in internships and take courses at local colleges.

**Year's Start** *continued on page 6*

**Year's Start** *continued from page 5*

## Los Angeles

Los Angeles Unified School District has created an Innovation Division for Educational Achievement, which will enable teachers, administrators and parents to submit collaborative proposals to implement innovative educational programs at their schools. The nation's second largest district is also establishing an office of parent and civic engagement to strengthen parent and community involvement.

## Louisville

As a result of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling regarding the student assignment plan used by Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Ky., race will not be used by the district as a factor in placing students who are new to the school system, students who have moved or students making transfer applications.

The district is also implementing a new web-based student information system to manage student data through a centralized database.

## Memphis

This fall, Memphis City Schools is implementing ParentLink, a new phone system that will be used to send messages to families about important school and district information. And in an effort to boost college readiness, the district is requiring 10<sup>th</sup> graders to take the PLAN pre-ACT test, a guidance resource that helps students measure their academic development and explore career-training options.

## Miami

All eighth grade students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools will participate in a program encouraging them to attend college. The students will spend two days visiting local college campuses where they will learn about the college curriculum and experience college activities. The pro-

gram is a partnership between the district and 13 local colleges and universities.

## Milwaukee

As part of its plan to offer more educational choices, Milwaukee Public Schools begins the new school year with 18 schools operating on a year-round schedule.

## Nashville

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools is implementing a dress code for all students in the new school year. And five district middle schools and one high school are the first schools in Tennessee, according to school system officials, to offer the International Baccalaureate Organization's Middle Years Program, a challenging course of study for students ages 11-16.



Charleston Schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley visits 1st grade students at Fraser Elementary School.

## Newark

New Jersey's Newark Public Schools is embarking on a plan for all of its schools to be designated as asthma-friendly. In order to receive this label, school staff must receive training in helping students manage their asthma. Newark has 32 asthma-friendly schools and is the first urban school system to have a large portion of its schools receive this designation, according to district officials.

## New York City

The nation's largest school district is launching its ArtsCount initiative to provide students with a more rigorous arts education. Under the initiative, new measures will be established to hold schools accountable for providing students with quality arts instruction.

The school system is also opening a new school, the Khalil Gibran International Academy, for students in grades 6-12 who want to learn Arabic.

## Omaha

Omaha Public Schools begins the new school year with completed renovations on four elementary schools as a result of a \$254 million bond issue voters passed in 1999. And for the first time in the history of the school district, all of its 83 schools have either central air conditioning or window units.

## Orange County

This fall, Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Fla., is offering the Middle Years International Baccalaureate Program in middle schools across the district. The district is also opening six new schools and has instituted a policy that prohibits students from using the Internet to bully, harass or abuse students or staff members.

## Palm Beach

In an effort to decrease textbook losses, Florida's School District of Palm Beach County is implementing a new textbook management software program in all district schools to track textbooks that are checked out to staff and students. The school system is also implementing a program to monitor remotely its emergency generators in all of the district's hurricane shelters.

**Year's Start** *continued on page 7*

**Year's Start** continued from page 6

### **Pittsburgh**

Pittsburgh Public Schools has created an integrated marketing and communications Welcome Back-to-School program, including a handbook of materials for parents with school-specific and district-wide information. The district also unveiled the "Pittsburgh Pledge" to reflect the district's and city's commitment to help students succeed.

### **Richmond**

Richmond Public Schools is launching a program that will train volunteer and partnership coordinators for 20 schools. The coordinators will be responsible for promoting, recruiting and training for all volunteer/partnership activities.

### **Rochester**

New York's Rochester City School District is launching the Rochester New Frontier Project, a Mandarin Chinese language program funded under the U.S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program. The program serves approximately 75 fourth- and fifth-graders, and is designed to not only enhance awareness and understanding of Chinese culture but also reinforce academic skills.

### **Sacramento**

California's Sacramento Unified School District is opening a new science and engineering high school for approximately 200 students in grades 7-9. The school combines junior high and high school students on a single campus in an attempt to ease the transition between middle school and high school.

### **San Diego**

For the first time in nearly four decades, San Diego Unified School District opens five new schools on the same day. In addition, seven elementary schools are becoming K-8 schools, bringing the number of K-8 schools in the district to 10.

### **San Francisco**

The San Francisco Unified School District is increasing the number of schools in the district that will have access to more coordinated health services. Sixteen high schools and two middle schools will have programs that are part of the Wellness Initiative, and will receive free services such as behavioral health counseling.

### **Seattle**

Seattle Public Schools is adding reading libraries to every K-2 classroom in the district. The district is also launching two new elementary math programs called Everyday Math, developed through National Science Foundation funding, and Singapore Math, a program used in Singapore.

### **Tampa**

Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Fla., is implementing several new measures to conserve energy, including creating energy patrols and energy clubs at every school. The district has also launched a Spanish television language program for parents and students to provide information about the school system.

### **Wichita**

Kansas' Wichita Public Schools plan to desegregate schools through cross-busing, in place since 1971, will undergo a thorough review, beginning this fall. As part of the review, the district will reconvene its Facilities Master Plan Committee, engaging schools and the community in an effort to identify school needs and establish district-wide priorities.

## **Urban Schools Show Academic Gains To Launch New Year**

Many of the nation's big-city school districts begin the new 2007-08 school year on a platform of progress to build on, with some reporting strong academic gains to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards under the federal *No Child Left Behind* law. A sample of district news reports indicate:

### **A Grade of 'A'**

Marked improvements in language arts and math during the 2006-07 school year led Alaska's **Anchorage School District** to heighten gains it has made since the district began calculating AYP in 2003.

Anchorage public schools met 98 percent of the targets defined by *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). "That is an 'A' in any teacher's grade book," said Superintendent Carol Comeau.

### **Reform Is Working**

All 62 elementary schools in **Atlanta Public Schools** made adequate yearly progress under NCLB. In total, 83.5 percent of all Atlanta public schools – kindergarten through high school – made AYP, an increase of 8 percent over last year.

"Our reform efforts are working and we are setting the pace for school improvement in Georgia, K-8," said Superintendent Beverly Hall. Five Atlanta schools outperformed their counterparts around the state in the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test, Georgia's benchmark measure of success under the federal law.

**Academic Gains** continued on page 8

**Academic Gains** continued from page 7

## A Time to Cheer

**Birmingham City School System** officials held their figurative breath in August while waiting for the state of Alabama to release adequate yearly progress data. A cheer went up when the announcement was made that the district had made 100 percent of its AYP goals for the second consecutive year, bringing it out of “in need of improvement” status.

The news was good at individual schools as well, with 53 of the district’s 65 schools making 100 percent of AYP. Ten of the 12 that did not reach all of their goals missed in only one area.

“We would be exhilarated any year to have such good results, but it is especially gratifying this year,” said Superintendent Stan Mims, noting that in the spring the district underwent a reduction in force and closed two schools.

## Report Card Gains

For the third straight year, **Cincinnati Public Schools** has earned the Continuous Improvement rating on the Ohio Report Card, reflecting steady overall gains in student academic achievement.

Highlights of the 2006-07 Report Card show the Cincinnati school system earning eight state indicators, more than ever before; meeting federal AYP goals in mathematics; and continued academic progress among the district’s high schools.

“The Report Card gains show that ...we are giving our teachers and students the tools they need to succeed,” said Superintendent Rosa Blackwell.

## Record-Breaking Growth

Recent results of the 2006-07 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reveal that the **School District of Philadelphia** set a record fifth consecutive year of growth in math and reading scores for all district students whose scores are used to measure AYP under *No Child Left Behind*.

Math scores rose 3 percentage points over last year, or 25.4 percentage points since 2002, while reading scores rose 2.5 percentage points, or 16.7 percentage points since '02.

“I am so tremendously proud of our students,” said James Nevels, chair of the School Reform Commission.

## A Challenging Year

Despite the challenge of closing 22 schools and implementing new academic initiatives, the **Pittsburgh Public Schools** showed a second year of test-score gains.

“These PSSA results are much better than expected,” said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. “We are especially pleased to see the increase in proficiency for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading since this is an important marker in children’s lives and a major goal in *Excellence for All*,” the district’s academic plan to increase student achievement. Third-grade reading proficiency rose to nearly 60 percent from 52 percent in the past year.

## Continuing Upward Trend

The **San Francisco Unified School District** improved on the California Standards Test (CST) for the sixth consecutive year in 2007, continuing an upward trend.

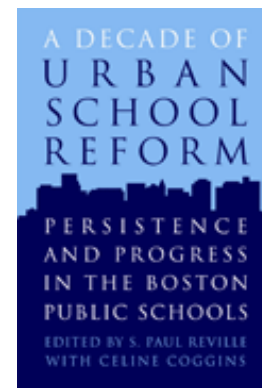
More than two-thirds of the STAR schools, identified as under-performing schools in previous years, either met or exceeded their school-wide adequate yearly progress targets on the CST in English language arts and/or math.

The district wants to accelerate the progress of African American, Latino and English language learner students, who are making test-score gains, but at a lower rate of overall district academic improvement, constituting what is considered an achievement gap.

“It’s not a question of whether different ethnicities can learn – they *can* learn,” said Superintendent Carolos Garcia. “The problem is, we’re not teaching things in the way in which they are able to learn,” he stressed.

## New Book Highlights Boston District As Reform Model

In 2006, Boston Public Schools won the million-dollar Broad Prize for Urban Education for being the big-city school district that made the greatest strides in improving academic performance while also reducing the achievement gaps between students of different racial groups.



The district’s success in boosting academic achievement has been chronicled in a new book called *A Decade of Urban School Reform: Persistence and Progress in the Boston Public Schools*.

Published by Harvard University’s Rennie Center for Education Policy, the book examines improvements the school district has made in the last 10 years under the leadership of Superintendent Thomas Payzant, who retired last year.

The book also addresses such topics as governance, leadership development, instruction, data collection, students with disabilities and community engagement and provides an up-close and detailed look of how a big-city school system has managed the complex task of system-wide reform.

“The Boston story reminds us that there are no quick fixes or silver bullets in the battle for dramatically improved urban school districts and instead proves that steady focus on instructional improvement and strong commitment to system-wide reform can produce results,” said Paul Reville, president of the Rennie Center.

The book is available at <http://www.hepg.org/hepg/Book/67>.



## Council of the Great City Schools

### 51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

#### “Singing Student Success”

**October 31-November 4, 2007**

Renaissance Nashville Hotel

Nashville, TN

#### Wednesday, October 31

7:00 am-5:00 pm	Conference registration
1:30-5:00 pm	Task Force meetings
6:00-8:30 pm	Welcome reception at The Parthenon- Nashville’s Art Museum

#### Thursday, November 1

7:30 am-9:00 am	Breakfast and Welcome
9:00 am-12:15 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:30-2:30 pm	Lunch and Speaker: Professor Michael Eric Dyson
2:15-5:45 pm	Breakout Sessions
7:00-10:00 pm	Richard R. Green Awards Banquet: Urban Educator of the Year Awarded Entertainment: Nashville R&B/Dance Band



Michael Eric Dyson

#### Friday, November 2

7:30 am-9:00 am	Breakfast and Speaker: Economist Julianne Malveaux
9:00 am-12:15 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:30-2:00 pm	Lunch and Speaker: TBA
2:30-4:00 pm	Town Hall Meeting
6:00-8:45 pm	Reception at Country Music Hall of Fame



Julianne Malveaux

#### Saturday, November 3

8:30 am- 12:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 pm-4:00 pm	Legislative Directors Meeting
6:00-9:30 pm	Dinner and Dance at Renaissance Nashville Hotel

#### Sunday, November 4

8:30 am- 11:30 am	Breakfast and Closing Session
11:30 am	Adjourn

## School District In Tampa Recognized

Florida’s Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa recently received honors from the Tampa Bay Partnership, a regional economic development group, which recognized the school system as No. 1 in graduation rates among the top 25 metropolitan areas in the nation.



MaryEllen Elia

A “Bigger, Bolder, Better Special Achievement” Award was presented to Superintendent MaryEllen Elia. “Education quality and success is critical to our economy,” said Judy Genshaft, partnership chair and president of the University of South Florida.

The partnership compiled data from *Education Week* newspaper’s recent “Diploma Counts” research, which showed that the Hillsborough County school system has a 75.1 percent graduation rate.

In another development, Lisa Yost, an elementary school principal in the Hillsborough County Public Schools, was recently selected as Florida’s 2007 National Distinguished Principal.

The honor marked the 24<sup>th</sup> year that the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the U.S. Department of Education have presented the prestigious award.

## Jackson Nutritionist Named to Post

Mary Hill, executive director of Child Nutrition Services for Mississippi’s Jackson Public Schools, was recently named president of the School Nutrition Association at the group’s national conference in Chicago, which drew more than 6,000 school nutrition and food service professionals. Hill is a 1974 graduate of the Jackson school system.

## The Give and Take from the Federal Government

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

The good news from congressional appropriators, who had already boosted funding for key elementary and secondary education programs, is that they further increased the dollars for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by over \$300 million, as the FY08 appropriations bill moved through the House Committee and was passed on the House floor. The House and Senate versions of the bill now have a \$1.5 billion to \$1.9 billion increase, respectively, for the Title I program and approximately a \$500 million boost to IDEA (HR 3043; S 1710).



agencies, or geographic regions.” The anticipated administrative and transportation claiming regulation would cut over \$600 million in Medicaid reimbursements in FY08 (\$3.5 billion over 5 years), and the “rehab” regulation would cut \$180 million in Medicaid reimbursements in FY08 (\$2.2 billion over 5 years).

To address this problem, Congressman John Dingell (D–Mich.), Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, has included a one-year moratorium on CMS’s administrative action as part of the pending extension of the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Unfortunately, the Senate has not taken similar action.

But as Congress adjourned for the August recess, the Administration’s Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that it would attempt to limit the amount of Medicaid reimbursements available to schools by about \$600 million annually.

With the Children’s Health Insurance Program set to expire on September 30, now is the time to make sure that your Senate delegation knows how essential the Dingell moratorium language is for your school districts. And, it is important to underscore for your Senate delegation how important the proposed increases in education funding will be to your schools, since the Senate education appropriations bill (S. 1710) is still awaiting final passage and is facing a veto threat.

The draft of a long-rumored regulation from CMS to terminate school reimbursements for Medicaid-related administrative activities—such as medical care plans, referrals, and coordination of services—as well as certain types of transportation costs is awaiting official publication in September.

The overwhelming majority of school-based Medicaid reimbursements help school systems provide services to students with disabilities. So, it is ironic that the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittees are trying to increase federal funding for these children as the CMS is trying to cut them. This ongoing financial “give and take” by the federal government continues to feed local cynicism about Washington and how it does its business.

Another set of proposed regulations issued on August 13 would restrict reimbursements for rehabilitative services and could prohibit reimbursements for some currently eligible services under IDEA. This “rehab” regulation would have broad implications beyond just school-based programs, but CMS claims they are unable to determine the fiscal impact on “consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local government

## Urban Students Selected as Presidential Scholars

Fourteen big-city school students were recently selected by the U.S. Department of Education as 2007 Presidential Scholars.

They were among 141 high school seniors from across the nation who were chosen as Presidential Scholars for exhibiting superior academic achievement, artistic excellence and leadership in their schools and their communities.

Urban students in Anchorage, Las Ve-

gas, Dallas, Tampa, Louisville, Miami, New Orleans, Palm Beach, Pittsburgh, Seattle and Portland, Ore., were selected as scholars.

Three students from Dallas’ Booker T. Washington School of the Performing and Visual Arts were selected for demonstrating excellence in the arts.

The Presidential Scholar program was created in 1964 to honor academic achieve-

ment and was expanded in 1979 to honor students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, literacy and performing arts.

The Presidential Scholars include one female and one male from each state. This year’s scholars recently traveled to Washington, D.C., along with their most inspiring teacher, to be honored at a ceremony for their accomplishments.

## St. Paul Creates Initiative to Close Achievement Gap

Closing the achievement gap between students of different ethnicities is a problem all urban school districts face, and Minnesota's Saint Paul Public Schools is turning to the community to find a solution.

The school district is embarking on a community-wide initiative to close the achievement gap that exists between African and African American students and white students within the district's schools.

The Transitions Initiative is a six-month collaboration among key stakeholders in the community, including Saint Paul Superintendent Meria Carstarphen, Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and several African American community leaders.

Under the Initiative, the group will engage the community in the planning process and will assess strengths, weaknesses and gaps in education and support of African and African American students in the Saint Paul district.

**"We will close the achievement gap only if we come together as a community."**

—Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman

The Initiative will also identify which students will be best served by the program and create a five-year plan with goals, strategies and partnerships to engage not only students, but also their families.

"We will close the achievement gap only if we come together as a community," said Mayor Coleman in a news statement. "...To devote anything less than our very best effort to this work is to give up on the future."

The Transitions Initiative is sponsored by several local foundations.



## Yellow School Bus Goes 'Green' in Charlotte

Maurice Green, chief operating officer for North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, right, listens as Carol Stamper, Charlotte executive director of transportation, discusses the new plug-in hybrid electric school bus the Charlotte school system will use for the 2007-2008 school year. According to district officials, Charlotte is one of the first school systems in the nation to operate the new hybrid school bus that has the potential to double fuel efficiency and reduce emissions by up to 90 percent. Charlotte officials also believe the hybrid school bus will help the school district reduce its transportation costs.

## Student Research Program Gets Funding Boost in Jackson



Research program director Robin Rockhold, right, works with Murrah High School seniors.

Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools recently received a \$695,000 grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to ensure continuation of a program that gives its students an opportunity to work with medical researchers.

The grant will extend the Base Pair program another five years. Base Pair is

a science mentoring program that pairs high school students at Jackson's Murrah High School with medical scientists at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMC).

Participating students spend a semester preparing for lab work at their home school and then another semester conducting scientific research with a mentor at UMC.

The grant, which was made to UMC, is part of a \$22.5 million HHMI initiative to close the gap between research institutions and their local communities by supporting educational programs intended to stimulate an interest in science.

**Student Research** continued on page 12

# Broward District Honored

Florida's Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale recently received an Energy Leadership Award from the U.S. Energy Association. Rob Jindracek, the district's manager of the Energy Conservation & Utility Management Department, accepted the public service award, which recognizes an advocate of energy efficiency in government.

### Student Research *continued from page 11*

Base Pair has expanded its influence beyond the medical center with an initiative called Student Oriented Academic Research (SOAR), which provides a two-year academic curriculum where all research activities are conducted at five Jackson high schools.

"The announcement of this new grant is a testament to the solid record of student achievement that has been produced by Base Pair and SOAR," said Jackson Schools Superintendent Earl Watkins.

## Editor's Note

Would you prefer receiving the *Urban Educator* via e-mail? In an effort to reduce mailing costs, the Council of the Great City Schools is offering to e-mail the award-winning newsletter to you. If you're interested in receiving it electronically, please access the Council web site at [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org) and click on *Urban Educator*.



### Urban Schools Open to New Initiatives

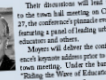
The nation's top-city school systems kicked off the 2006-07 school year focusing on inspiring student achievement, at residential, health and safety among an array of new initiatives. Many districts opened new schools. In an Urban Educator special, up of which are here's what districts are doing.

**Anchorage**  
In an effort to help students develop healthy eating habits, Anchorage School District began the new school year with a ban on soda and junk food sales in schools.  
Under the ban, soda and candy in vending machines and school stores that are high in fat content and sugar will be replaced with low-calorie alternatives such as water and juice.



### Urban Education's Future is Topic of Town Hall Meeting

Award-winning journalist and commentator Bill Moyers will moderate a national town hall meeting on "The Future of Urban Education" at the Council of the Great City Schools conference in New York City. The event will be moderated by the author of the book "The Future of Urban Education" and moderated by the author of the book "The Future of Urban Education".



They discussed the future of urban education and the role of the federal government in education. The discussion was moderated by Bill Moyers and featured a panel of leading urban education and policy experts. The discussion was moderated by Bill Moyers and featured a panel of leading urban education and policy experts.

The discussion will lead up to the town hall meeting on Oct. 27, the conference's grand finale. The discussion will lead up to the town hall meeting on Oct. 27, the conference's grand finale. The discussion will lead up to the town hall meeting on Oct. 27, the conference's grand finale.

## Great City Grads



**Nancy Wilson**  
Grammy Award Winning Singer  
1954 graduate  
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Columbus Public Schools



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