



- New Leader in Santa Ana, **p.3**
- L.A. Grad Rate Rises, **p.8**
- LEGISLATIVE**
- Proposed Regulations, **p.10**



Incoming Houston Schools Superintendent Richard Carranza shares a laugh with students at Law Elementary School on the first day of school. Photo credit: Dave Einsel/Houston Independent School District

Big-City Schools Start New Year With Renewed Focus

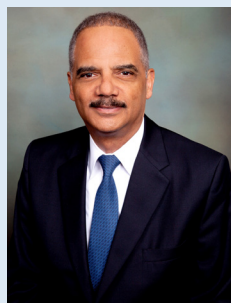
Ending suspensions and finding alternative methods to keep students in the classroom as well as offering students high-tech computer courses are just two priorities for big-city school districts kicking off the 2016-2017 school year. Here's a roundup of other initiatives urban school systems across the nation are offering:

Albuquerque

New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools is opening a Ninth Grade Academy at Rio Grande High School. The \$25 million ninth-grade academy building fea-

Big-City Schools continued on page 4

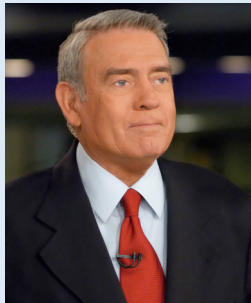
Fall Conference to Feature Former Attorney General and Noted Journalist



Eric Holder

Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder will address urban educators at the Council of the Great City Schools' 60th Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 19-23, in Miami.

A product of New York City public schools, Holder was appointed the 82nd attorney general of the United States by President Obama, serving from 2009 to 2015. He was the first African American



Dan Rather

to hold the highest Justice Department post and the third-longest-serving attorney general in the nation's history.

In conjunction with the five-day conference, hosted by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Council will hold a national town hall meeting on "Urban Education and the Presidential Campaign," moderated by award-winning broadcast journal-

ist Dan Rather.

The former CBS News anchor and *60 Minutes* correspondent has more than 50 years of reporting some of the biggest stories of our time. He has covered every presidential campaign since 1952.



Fall Conference continued on page 9

400 D.C. Students Return to School From Abroad

"What did you do this summer?"

That's a universal question asked by many students around the nation when they return to school after summer break.

Well, for 400 eighth- and 11th-graders in the District of Columbia Public Schools, they began the new school year after visiting countries from Costa Rica to Senegal to China – at no cost in the DCPS Study Aboard program.

In a visit to Costa Rica, one 13-year-old came away with an impression that stood out for him after meeting Costa Rican students at their elementary school. "They didn't really have very much. Just the basics," said Anis Hassan in the *Washington Post*. "But I noticed how they didn't complain at all. I told myself I need to stop complaining."

D.C. Public Schools launched a new program this summer to give 400 students an opportunity to study abroad in 18 week-long, all-expenses-paid trips, which also included Ecuador, Belgium, the Dominican Republic and Peru, as well as the cities of Madrid, Paris and Barcelona. It aims to give students studying world language immersion, cultural and service-learning opportunities.

Outgoing D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson recalled her own study-abroad experience when she visited Spain while in high school, and Venezuela when she was in college. "Those experiences completely changed my life," Henderson told the *Post*. "I know what the power of language and study abroad can do for regular little neighborhood kids like me."

The \$2 million DCPS program, funded by private dollars raised through the D.C.

Public Education Fund, is believed to be the first fully funded study-abroad program of this scale in a public school district.

"If our children can master standardized tests but they can't operate in the world, then we haven't done them a service in terms of their education," Henderson emphasized. "So this is as important as anything they do in a classroom."



Eleventh-graders show D.C. flag at the Great Wall of China.



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Find the Council on:



Houston, Guilford Co., Santa Ana and Dayton Name New Superintendents; D.C., San Francisco and St. Paul Appoint Interims Chiefs



Richard Carranza

Several big-city school districts are beginning the 2016-2017 school year with new leaders at the helm.

Houston Independent School District recently selected Richard Carranza to take the reins of the nation's seventh largest school system with more than 215,000 students.

Carranza is a veteran educator, who recently served as superintendent of the 58,000-student San Francisco Unified School District, which he led for four years. He has held positions as a bilingual classroom teacher, a campus principal, and a senior-level administrator in school districts in Las Vegas and Tucson, Arizona.

Carranza, who also recently served as the chair of the Board of Directors for the Council of the Great City Schools, succeeds Ken Huewitt, the district's interim superintendent.

Also selecting a new leader is Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., tapping veteran educator Sharon Contreras to lead the 72,000-student school system.



Sharon Contreras

Contreras had served as superintendent of the 21,000-student Syracuse City School District in New York since 2011, and under her leadership, graduation rates increased as well as student access to challenging academic courses.



Stefanie Phillips

She will succeed co-interim superintendents Nora Carr and Terrance Young.

New Leaders

California's Santa Ana Unified School District has named Stefanie Phillips to

lead its 53,000-student school system.

Phillips served three years as the district's deputy superintendent of business & operations and chief business official and succeeds retiring superintendent Rick Miller.

Ohio's Dayton Public Schools has named Rhonda Corr as its superintendent, succeeding Lori Ward.



Rhonda Corr

Before coming to Dayton, Corr was chief of schools for Chicago Public Schools, where she was in charge of nearly 30,000 students in 36 schools. She has also held positions in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

Interim Chiefs Named

In Washington, D.C., John Davis, the chief of schools for the District of Columbia Public Schools, is the new interim chancellor of the 49,000-student school district. Davis succeeds Kaya Henderson, who is leaving the district in October after five years at the helm.

San Francisco Unified School District has named Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh as interim superintendent. And Minnesota's St. Paul Public Schools has named John Thein, a former superintendent of a neighboring school district, as its interim leader. He succeeds Valeria Silva.

Contract Extended in Buffalo



Kriner Cash

Kriner Cash, the superintendent of New York's Buffalo's Public Schools, was recently given a one-year contract extension that will keep him with the district through August 2020. Cash has been at the helm of the 34,000-student school sys-

Jackson Schools Leader Named Top Superintendent

Superintendent Cedrick Gray of Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools has been named Superintendent of the Year by the National Association of School Superintendents.

"Leadership is incredibly important as we see public education evolving nationwide," said NASS Executive Director David Brown in a news release. "Schools serve as the focal point of thousands of communities nationwide and we need educators that have put programs in place to put students first."

With the mantra "Building Stronger Schools Together," Superintendent Gray has steered the Jackson Public Schools to

new heights – despite a high level of poverty in the district.

He's credited with an innovative approach to instruction that has led to an increasing number of high-performance and successful schools in the district with five designated in the top 10 percent in the state.

"Since being appointed the superintendent by the Jackson Public Schools Board of Trustees in 2012, Dr. Gray has been acclaimed as an innovator, motivator, risk taker, outside-of-the-box thinker, and true educational visionary," said Board President Beneta Burt.

Jackson Schools continued on page 12

New Superintendents continued on page 12

Big-City Schools *continued from page 1*

tures 48 classrooms, three computer labs and space for teacher offices and student common areas.

Atlanta

Atlanta Public Schools begins the 2016-2017 school year as a charter system, a school district that operates under a performance-based contract between the local school board and the Georgia Board of Education. The school district will gain freedom from certain state laws and regulations in exchange for increased accountability for student achievement. Schools will create a local governance team to work with principals to make decisions on issues such as personnel and curriculum.

Austin

In an effort to help students and staff become more centered, Texas' Austin Independent School District has hired a social and emotional learning mindfulness specialist. The position will include visiting classrooms to model mindfulness as well as creating new curriculum for teachers. The district is also launching a new Arabic language and culture program at three schools.

Baltimore

Baltimore City Public Schools is implementing P-TECH, (Pathways in Technology Early College High School), a program for students in two high schools that offer early college and career technology education and real-world experience to prepare students for jobs in the health and technology industries. Students who complete the program will graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree.

Birmingham

Beginning this fall, Alabama's Birmingham City Schools is implementing a new reading initiative for grades K-12 designed to strengthen student reading by putting new textbooks in every class, identifying struggling readers and providing them with intervention support and offering professional development for teachers and volunteers.



Austin Schools Superintendent Paul Cruz takes on the role of crossing guard at Casis Elementary on the first day of school.

Boston

Boston Public Schools is teaming with the Boston Red Sox baseball team in a campaign to help students who have been chronically absent from or late to school. High school and middle school students will have the opportunity to receive morning wake-up calls, featuring the voice of Boston Red Sox baseball player David Ortiz. The calls will be made available in several languages.

Broward

Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is increasing the number of computer science courses in its elementary and middle schools and recently became a Professional Learning Partner with Code.org. Through this partnership, teachers will receive professional development in computer science and all district high school students will be able to take the new Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles course.

Buffalo

Buffalo Public Schools is opening Bennett High, the first of the district's five "New Innovative High Schools" to begin this year to provide students with expanded opportunities for career development. Bennett

will offer students college credits, industry certification, advanced placement courses and real-world experience in high-tech computer science and software engineering. The school has partnered with local universities that will assist in developing curriculum.

Charlotte

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is expanding its North Star Reading Partners initiative, which began last year with district employees, to include the community. The district is seeking volunteers to make a commitment to help a child with reading for one hour once a week.

Cincinnati

Cincinnati Public Schools unveiled a new initiative to make neighborhood schools as strong as magnet schools called The Vision 2020 Plan. Seven schools will have new programs, such as an arts and culture program and an environmental science program.



Cincinnati Schools Superintendent Mary Ronan tries on a pair of 3-D glasses at Hays-Porter High Technology School.

Clark County

Nevada's Clark County School District expanded its full-day kindergarten program to all elementary campuses. And three schools are piloting a "reinvent" school model that partners public and private organizations, such as the University of Nevada Las Vegas and the Wynn Las Vegas and Encore resorts, with schools to offer students more support both within

Big-City Schools *continued on page 5*

Big-City Schools *continued from page 4*

and outside the classroom.

Cleveland

Cleveland Metropolitan School District is using a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to open two new small high schools—one with a science and health theme and the other with a focus on global studies. And beginning this fall, the district high school football and soccer teams will play on synthetic-turf fields that the Cleveland Browns professional football team will pay for and install.

Columbus

Ohio's Columbus City Schools will require all 7th-graders to have the opportunity to take career-oriented computer engineering courses to learn computer code and how to design their own computer games for use on tablets and cell phones. The school system is also expanding its mentoring efforts to provide all freshmen and seniors an opportunity to connect with college counselors and adult-volunteer mentors.

Dallas

Dallas Independent School District is opening eight new collegiate academies that will enable students to earn an associate degree tuition-free while in high school. The academies will accept 100 ninth-grade students a year and offer career pathways ranging from health sciences to culinary arts. Each collegiate academy will have a higher education partner and is designed to serve students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education.

Detroit

The Detroit Public Schools Community District is launching this fall, replacing Detroit Public Schools. The new district will be governed by an elected local school board, while state officials oversee its finances. And the new district is implementing several academic programs, including seven tuition-free Montessori classrooms



North Carolina's Guilford County Schools Superintendent Sharon Contreras greets the Ibekwe triplets, who are first-graders at Southwest Elementary School.

and a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), program at 17 schools created by Barrington Irving, the youngest person and only African American to fly solo around the world.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Public Schools is opening the Ron Brown College Preparatory High School, the only all-male public school in Washington, D.C. And in an effort to provide struggling students with more support, the district opened 11 schools on an extended-year schedule.

Duval County

Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Fla., is opening 14 new schools and programs, including a military leadership magnet academy for grades 9-12, two gifted and talented magnet schools, an Autism Lab school, and a high school magnet school for video gaming and cybersecurity.

El Paso

Texas' El Paso Independent School District is launching a new magnet program in STEAM, (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics), at Franklin High School that will focus on nursing, medical law and media production.

Fort Worth

Texas' Fort Worth Independent School District has created the Fort Worth ISD Mobile App, which provides important news and student information, school and

district updates, and is available in 70 different languages. The district is also opening two new schools.

Greensboro

North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro has implemented a digital tool for parents through its parent academy. Family Engagement On-Demand will enable parents to access videos designed to help parents get involved in their child's learning. The videos for students in Pre-K through 12 cover topics such as preparing your child for the next grade.

Hawaii

The Hawaii State Department of Education is entering Phase 11 of its community outreach initiative to review its Joint Strategic Plan developed with the board of education. Community meetings will be held throughout the state to get feedback and make sure the district is on the right track in improving student achievement.

Hillsborough County

Students in Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Fla., can now access educational resources and links in an online portal called the Student Connection. The student-based portal offers resources and links customized to each student's grade level.

Houston

As part of a \$1.89 billion bond program, Houston Independent School District is opening six new school buildings, including two elementary schools, two high schools, a Pre-K through 8 school and an early childhood center. The school system is also expanding its Literacy By 3 program, aimed at ensuring every student is reading on grade level by age 3, to include middle school students.

Indianapolis

Indianapolis Public Schools is opening four new Innovation Network Schools, in-

Big-City Schools *continued on page 6*

Big-City Schools *continued from page 5*

cluding the Global Prep Academy featuring a dual-language program in English and Spanish. And as a result of students at Sidener Academy asking district officials to reduce their ecological footprint, all lunchrooms will now include new recyclable cardboard lunch trays.

Jackson

Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools is launching Schools of Promise, a new initiative that will provide seven schools that are on the brink of making substantial progress with extra resources and support over a three-year period. The district is also opening new academies at three middle schools, including a military science academy.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Ky., is launching the district's first-ever dedicated customer service helpline. And in an initiative to strengthen parental involvement, the school system is providing computer workstations at more than 80 Title I schools for parents to access their student's grades and parent portal, as well as develop resumes and apply for jobs.

Miami

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is offering students 61 new choice/magnet programs, such as sports medicine and sports management and computer coding. The district is also piloting the Restorative Justice Practices Pilot Program at two schools to improve student conduct and provide an alternative solution for addressing disciplinary problems. And recognizing the importance of recess, the district is piloting a 20-minute daily recess in 11 schools.

Milwaukee

Milwaukee Public Schools is implementing a full Italian immersion program at Victory School, where students will become bilingual in English and Italian through Italian-language instruction in all subject areas. The school system is also implementing ProStart, a two-year culinary



Indianapolis Schools Superintendent Lewis Ferebee, left, gives a high five to a student at Elder W. Diggs Elementary School 42. The greeting was part of a High Five Rally at 16 schools welcoming students on the first day of school.

arts program in four high schools featuring real-world culinary arts and food-service opportunities.

Minneapolis

Minneapolis Public Schools has transformed one of its schools into what district officials believe is the state's first "Green Campus." Edison High School features a stormwater system that will store up to 110,000 gallons of captured rainwater, which will be used to irrigate the new athletic field. The school also includes a solar canopy that will generate enough energy to offset 40 percent of the school's electricity needs.

Newark

New Jersey's Newark Public Schools unveiled its three-year strategic plan for the 2016-2017 school year, focusing on 18 targeted strategies, including strengthening academics and student supports and engaging the community.

New York City

The nation's largest school system is eliminating suspensions in K-2 grades. The district is also embarking on new programs aimed at increasing access and boosting diversity at its eight specialized high schools, such as getting more black and Latino stu-

dents to register for the specialized admission test and offering test preparation and free tutoring through middle school after-school programs.

Oakland

In an effort to provide students with college and career preparation, California's Oakland Unified School District is opening Future Centers at four middle schools and three high schools. The district is also piloting a new math tutoring model in several middle schools for students who are not at grade level. And for the first time in history, every student will be covered by the district's student health insurance policy.

Orange County

Orange County Schools in Orlando, Fla., is providing all students, teachers and administrators at its 19 high schools with a laptop, as part of its LaunchED digital learning program. In addition, students at six middle schools and seven elementary schools will also receive devices. The LaunchED program began in 2013 as a pilot program of 8,000 devices and has grown to more than 70,000 devices being distributed this school year.



Students at Orlando's Timber Creek High School receive laptops as part of Orange County Schools' digital learning program.

Palm Beach

Florida's School District of Palm Beach County is extending the school day by 30 minutes at 17 elementary schools to provide additional instructional time in the English Language Arts curriculum.

Big-City Schools *continued on page 7*

Big-City Schools *continued from page 6*

Philadelphia

The School District of Philadelphia is embarking on a \$1-million initiative to equip 43 schools with hydration stations as part of the district's first-ever sustainability GreenFutures plan. The district also has approved a policy in which kindergarten students will no longer be disciplined with a suspension and early childhood teachers will receive training in conflict resolution and de-escalation.

Pinellas County

Pinellas County Schools in St. Petersburg, Fla., is implementing an attendance awareness campaign to help track student attendance. Each school website will feature a new icon that will enable parents to click and send an email informing the school that their student will be absent. The school district is also using 58 new propane-powered buses that will offer significant savings on fuel and maintenance costs.

Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Public Schools has changed the code of student conduct, which now includes three levels of misconduct instead of two, creating a separate level for the most serious offenses. Greater emphasis will also be placed on using restorative justice, a disciplinary approach that enables students to make good while staying in school. And principals may no longer use informal suspensions, such as sending a child home early.

Richmond

Virginia's Richmond Public Schools is launching the first phase of its migration of a new comprehensive talent management system that will support the district's efforts to improve its human resources. The system will enable the school district to utilize flexible and configurable tools to manage recruiting, applicant tracking and hiring, and teacher and staff evaluation.

Sacramento

California's Sacramento City Unified School District is adjusting bell schedules



Pittsburgh Schools Superintendent Anthony Hamlet talks with students on the first day of school at Linden K-5 school.

for its students to offer teachers more time for weekly planning sessions. Students will stay in school a little longer than last year to allow teachers to get together and collaboratively discuss and plan their work.

San Diego

San Diego Unified School District is launching its new Pre-K for All initiative that will allow additional families to access high-quality, affordable Pre-K for the first time. The district is also expanding its restorative justice program, which was piloted at three schools in 2014, to all schools this year.

San Francisco

Hoping to attract more teacher applicants, the San Francisco Unified School District is offering signing bonuses this school year. Credentialed special education teachers, school psychologists, behavior analysts and speech and language pathologists hired by the district will be paid a \$4,000 bonus.

Santa Ana

California's Santa Ana Unified School District is implementing the SanArts Conservatory at Santa Ana High School, where students can develop a concentration in visual and performing arts.

Seattle

Seattle Public Schools is opening five school buildings, as a result of Seattle voters approving a capital levy in 2013. The district is also teaming up with the Pacific

Northwest Ballet to create the Discovery Dance program, which provides free standards-based dance education to schools that offer little or no dance instruction.

St. Louis

St. Louis Public Schools is eliminating out-of-school suspension for children in Pre-K through second grade. Using funds from Proposition 1, the district will provide a full-time social worker or counselor at every school. In addition, every classroom teacher will receive a new laptop computer and all Pre-Kindergarten students will receive mini iPads for use in their classrooms.

St. Paul

Minnesota's Saint Paul Public Schools has selected six schools as restorative practices pilot sites to enhance their school climate. Each pilot school will receive up to \$150,000 to implement their restorative practices plan.

Toledo

In an effort to enhance school safety and maintain a productive learning environment, Ohio's Toledo Public Schools has implemented a new high school dress code for students.

Tulsa

Oklahoma's Tulsa Public Schools is partnering with the Metro Tulsa Transit Authority to implement the #TPSRides program, enabling students in grades 9-12 to ride city buses for free on weekdays. The district is also launching Keep Our Kids in School Week, a new initiative designed to support student success and increase the district's graduation rate, focusing on students entering the 9th and 12th grades.

Wichita

Kansas' Wichita Public Schools celebrated the completion of construction projects at four schools, including the re-opening of Southeast High School, the only school in the district to have a two-story storm shelter.

Milwaukee Superintendent Elected Chair-Elect Of Council Board of Directors



Darienne Driver

Superintendent Darienne Driver of the Milwaukee Public Schools has been elected to serve as chair-elect of the Council of the Great City Schools' Board of Directors, effective Oct. 1.

She will succeed Chancellor Kaya Henderson of the District of Columbia Public Schools, who plans to step down from her Washington post at the end of September.

Superintendent Driver will join Felton Williams, school board president of Cali-

fornia's Long Beach Unified School District, who became the current chair of the Council's policymaking board July 1 for a one-year term after being elevated from chair-elect.

The national coalition represents 70 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. The Council's 140-member board is composed of the superintendent and a school board member from each of the districts.

The Council's 2016-17 leadership team also includes Lawrence Feldman, school board member of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. He serves as secretary-treasurer.

Des Moines and Dayton School Districts Hold Summer Refugee Camps

In the early 1970s, Vinh Nguyen came to Iowa in the exodus of refugees known as "boat people" who fled from Southeast Asia. As the bilingual outreach program supervisor for Des Moines Public Schools, he is now helping refugees in the district's new Summer Refugee Jumpstart.

The program welcomed nearly 120 students and their families from places such as Syria, Eritrea and Nepal for a two-week introduction to American culture. Lessons ranged from the art of giving high-fives, to learning the proper way to introduce themselves and completing applications for library cards.

"Even after all these years, I still remember what they are feeling," said Nguyen in an interview with Des Moines' district newsletter. "They are happy to be here, but they are also scared and they need our help."

All of the participants in the program were there because of Nguyen's efforts. He worked with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants to locate and invite

the families to take part. The program was funded by a federal School Impact Grant.

The Des Moines school district serves a growing population of refugee students, and during the 2015-2016 school year nearly 1,600 students were designated as refugees, representing three dozen different nations.

Ohio's Dayton Public Schools also provided a helping hand this summer to students who have newly immigrated to the United States.

At the district's Belmont High School, a summer program called "Welcome Belmont" pairs U.S.-born Belmont students with an equal number of newly immigrated students. The program is an effort to help the newcomers, who are often English language learners, assimilate culturally, socially and academically in their new school as well as in the Dayton community.

Created as a pilot in 2015 with just 20 students, the program has become so successful that it has expanded to more than 60 students this school year.

Summer Camps continued on page 12

L.A. Graduation Rate Steadily Climbing

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest public school system, recently reported that its Class of 2016 reached an estimated graduation rate of 75 percent – a jump from 72.2 percent the previous year.

The preliminary rate accounts for 2016 Los Angeles district graduates earning diplomas in four years, announced Superintendent Michelle King during her State of the District address in August. She pointed out that the graduation rate has steadily increased, rising more than 10 percentage points since 2011.

"This is exceeding expectations of those who said our students couldn't do it," she stressed in her address. "Today, we say, our students can and will thrive to meet the standards of the 21st century."

Explaining the graduation-rate climb, Los Angeles school board member Monica Garcia said in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, "The rigor went up and so did graduation [rates], and that is amazing – especially for urban America, especially for kids of color and kids of poverty, where so many people doubted that they could and whether or not the system could. We know we can, and we have to continue to push," she emphasized.

Pittsburgh Board Member Donates Kidney to Student

As a school board member for Pittsburgh Public Schools, Moira Kaleida is used to providing help to students and their families. But she recently provided her help in a new way, becoming a kidney donor to Laith Dougherty, a 7-year-old student in the district.

Kaleida decided to donate her kidney to Laith after reading a plea from his mother

Board Member continued on page 9

Council of the Great City Schools

60TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

"Reinvigorating, Reimagining, Reinventing Urban Education"

Hosted by Miami-Dade Public Schools

October 19- 23, 2016

InterContinental Hotel

Miami, FL

Wednesday, October 19

7:00 am-5:00 pm	Conference registration
1:00 pm-5:00 pm	Task Force Meetings
6:30 pm-8:30 pm	Welcome reception at AmericanAirlines Arena

Thursday, October 20

7:30 am-9:00 am	Breakfast and Welcome
9:00 am-12:15 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:30 pm-2:00 pm	Lunch and Speaker: TBD
2:15 pm-5:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
7:00 pm-9:00 pm	27th Annual Green-Garner Awards Banquet: Urban Educator of the Year Announced

Friday, October 21

7:30 am-9:00 am	Breakfast and Speaker: Donna Brazile
9:00 am-12:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:30 pm-2:00 pm	Lunch and Speaker: Eric Holder
2:30 pm-4:00 pm	National Town Hall Meeting: Dan Rather
6:30 pm-8:30 pm	Reception at the Biscayne Lady Yacht

Saturday, October 22

8:00 am-9:00 am	Breakfast
8:30 am-12:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 pm-2:30 pm	Legislative Directors Meeting
6:30 pm-9:00 pm	Farewell Event at the InterContinental Hotel

Sunday, October 23

8:00 am- 10:30 am	Breakfast and Closing Session
10:30 am	Adjourn

Fall Conference continued from page 1



Donna Brazile

With the 2016 presidential election looming ahead, another guest speaker at the conference, which will bring together more than 1,000 urban-school leaders, will

be Donna Brazile, who became interim chair of the Democratic National Committee this past July. She had been a political analyst and TV commentator on CNN and ABC.

Board Member continued from page 8

on Facebook seeking a kidney for her son, who was forced to go on dialysis after his kidneys failed. Kaleida decided to get tested and found out she was a perfect match, even though she was an adult.

In an interview with the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Kaleida called her decision a no-brainer. "It really doesn't affect my everyday life beyond the couple of weeks of recovery. But for him, it's something that changes his life drastically."

The transplant was a success and Laith is recovering well.



Moir Kaleida visits **Laith Dougherty** in the hospital after his transplant surgery.

Controversial Proposed Regulations Complicate ESSA Implementation Plans

By Jeff Simering, *Director of Legislation*

Immediately following the Labor Day holiday, the U.S. Education Department issued its controversial and long-delayed proposed regulations on “supplement not supplant” (SNS) under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). At every turn, state and local school officials have warned of the consequences that could result from this federal regulatory initiative. And any number of observers have questioned the federal government’s administrative authority to direct school districts on how they spend their own state and local education funds. Unfortunately, the Education Department’s response has been a patchwork of options and exceptions that do not change the underlying directive on how school districts should distribute their non-federal funds.

One of Washington’s long-standing practices involves trying to accomplish in federal regulations what could not be won during the legislative process. Virtually every Administration—Democratic and Republican—is guilty of trying to re-interpret congressional action to fit their own policy priorities. The Bush Administration did it with its regulations requiring that 20 percent of Title I funds be set aside for choice and supplemental tutoring services. In the current situation, the Obama Administration wants to impose a major change to Title I’s SNS rules akin to recurring proposals to alter the Title I “comparability” provision that Congress has repeatedly rejected.

In sum, the newly proposed regulations offer four basic methods—along with assorted exceptions—by which school systems can become comparable in their state and local spending:

1. A weighted student allocation formula for schools geared to disadvantaged students;
2. A school-level formula for state and local funds in which Title I schools receive allocations based on meeting or exceeding the “districtwide” average salary expenditure for each category of school employee, as well as for non-personnel expenditures;
3. A state-determined methodology that is approved through a Federal peer review process and is as rigorous as methods 1 and 2 above; or
4. A school-level formula for state and local funds in which the Title I schools receive per pupil expenditure allocations of personnel and non-personnel funds that equal or exceed the average of all non-Title I schools (with a 5 percent variance allowed).

The proposed rules are designed purposefully to prohibit the current full-time equivalent (FTE) or teacher-to-student ratios



used by school districts for school-level personnel allocations. The only positive aspect of the proposed regulation is that implementation would not occur until school year 2018-19 at the earliest and school year 2019-20 at the latest.

The Education Department’s assumption that school districts will magically produce an additional \$2.2 billion in state and local funds for Title I schools to come into compliance with the regulation is flawed in theory and practice, but that is what the Department’s August 31 press statement asserted as part of its justification for the proposal. The Great City Schools concur that schools with concentrations of low-income, English learners, and students with disabilities need additional resources and attention. But the Department’s four proposed compliance methodologies are not likely to accomplish it.

In addition, the Department acknowledges its inability to cost-out all of the proposed options and exceptions to its regulation. And the Department’s newest cost estimate of \$2.2 billion is considerably less than the \$6 to \$8 billion estimates ascribed to its earlier proposals. The unlikely prospect of additional state and local funding in amounts that are anywhere close to either the high or low estimates suggests that other compliance strategies will have to be created by school districts. Transferring older teachers with their higher salaries to schools receiving federal funds would be one strategy; establishing hiring restrictions to equalize teacher salary differentials from school to school would be another; as would be reducing the number of schools receiving Title I grants—all proposals by Washington-based lawyers. Unfortunately, these and other strategies would not address the instructional needs of students or create greater equity, but all would comply with the draft regulation, avoid a school district’s losing millions of dollars in annual Title I funds, and would likely occur.

On the day after Labor Day, the Education Department ironically proposed a SNS regulation that takes aim at the nation’s seniority-based teacher salary system—a key priority of organized labor—and could result in mandatory transfers of thousands of teachers without a clear academic benefit for students. These pending federal rules are seriously flawed legally, conceptually, and operationally, and are universally opposed by the national school organizations. But it is not too late for the Education Department to change course, or for Congress to intervene.

Former Gang Member Now Houston Educator

When the Houston Independent School District's new superintendent recently toured schools, he met a former gang member – but not just any ex-gang associate.

Incoming superintendent Richard Carranza met Tristan Love, who departed the gang life and went on to become an assistant school principal.

At age 26, he is reported to be one of Houston's youngest assistant principals ever, assuming his post at Sam Houston Math, Science & Technology Center High School.

"Ten years ago, I wouldn't even think I would be alive right now," he said in a recent inspirational story aired on KTRK-TV, Houston's ABC13. "You're talking about 2006. I'm glad I made it to 21. I'm 26...."

When he was the new kid in the neighborhood at age 12, he told *Eyewitness News*, "You join a gang so you can protect your family; you can protect what you have."

After getting into a fight with an opposing gang member that turned into a brawl at the end of his freshman year at Hous-



Assistant Principal Tristan Love, right, talks with a student.

ton's Lamar High School, Love was not allowed to return. Not wanting his mother to know, he ran away from home and roamed the streets.

Later, two of his close friends were killed; he moved in with his father and went to a different school; his house was burned down and believed gang-related; and he joined a program that prevented him from dropping out of school.

"I can't say that I was out of the streets," he said in the Channel 13 story. "I can say that my 11th grade year I was very serious about my education."

Subsequently, he realized, quite by accident, that he has a natural talent for debating. After graduating high school, he went on to historically black Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, home of the Great Debaters and the focus of the 2007 movie starring Denzel Washington.

He graduated from Wiley, then went on to teach biology at Sam Houston High. In his fourth year at the school, he has now become an assistant principal at age 26.

With his past, Love is able to connect with students, just being real with them.

"He was on me every day," said 2016 Sam Houston graduate Carlton Prejean in the *Eyewitness News* story. "...He used to be like you gotta do something. Not going to college is not an option for you."

The young man is entering his freshman year at Love's alma mater.



Houston Schools Superintendent Richard Carranza, right, meets Assistant Principal Tristan Love while touring schools.

Council Historic Moments



Sargent Shriver

Many people know Sargent Shriver, brother-in-law of President John F. Kennedy, as the guiding light in developing the Peace Corps.

But little is known nationally that Mr. Shriver had been president of the Chicago Board of Education, who co-founded what is known today as the Council of the Great City Schools.

He delivered a keynote address at a meeting of big-city school leaders in 1956, emphasizing the importance of improving vocational education while also calling for the elimination of the dichotomy between regular and vocational education.

The meeting was a success and led to the early development of a coalition of urban school leaders, which has grown from a networking and study group into a national education policy and research organization in Washington, D.C.--today's Council of the Great City Schools.





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Atlanta Educator Honored



Stephanie Johnson

When Stephanie Johnson became the principal of Maynard Holbrook Jackson High School in Atlanta four years ago, the school was ranked 377 of Georgia's 399 high schools.

She did extensive outreach to local businesses and the community. In addition, Johnson added 14 Advanced Placement courses, a fully authorized International Baccalaureate program and created, with support from

Georgia Tech, an early-college engineering program.

Her results paid off, with student scores on standardized tests increasing among all demographic categories and increased student engagement.

Because of her success, Johnson has been selected as one of three finalists for the 2017 National Principal of the Year.

Sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the award honors exceptional principals. The winner will be announced in October.

Summer Camps *continued from page 8*

"We have lots to learn from each other," said Karl Penn, an adviser for the program, in an interview with the *Dayton Daily News*. "Just because you're not from America does not mean you don't have knowledge or you don't have insight."

During the summer, the two groups of students met with each other and partici-

pated in trust exercises and games, while building relationships.

"Welcome Belmont" was recently recognized in a White House report highlighting successful programs in welcoming and integrating newcomers to America.

New Superintendents *continued from page 3*

tem since 2015.

According to the *Buffalo News*, school board president Barbara Seals Nevergold told Cash at a recent meeting, "Once you came to the district, you hit the ground running, so to speak, and really have moved this district many, many light years from where it was."

Jackson Schools *continued from page 3*



Cedrick Gray

"I must say that as mayor of the City of Jackson, my most valued partner in making our city great is Dr. Cedrick Gray and the Jackson Public School District," said Jackson Mayor Tony Yarber.

Superintendent Gray also serves on the Council of the Great City Schools' Executive Committee, where he can share his abilities with other big-city district leaders to improve the nation's urban schools.