



# urban Educator

The Nation's Voice for Urban Education

Back-to-School Edition

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## Council and Urban Districts Respond to Hurricane Katrina



Hurricane Katrina evacuees from New Orleans register to attend Atlanta public schools.

In the aftermath of what is believed to be the nation's worst natural disaster, the Council of the Great City Schools is responding to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on two fronts.

And many urban school districts – from Atlanta to Houston to San Francisco -- have enrolled thousands of displaced students who fled the storm-ravaged Gulf States in early September.

“We’re hurting for all those who face such devastation from Hurricane Katrina,” said Houston Independent School District Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra in a press release. “HISD is really blessed to have so

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## Urban Schools Open With New Programs



Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent Rosa Blackwell visits students at Dater Montessori School on the first day of school. (Photo by Robert Ohr)

Urban schools kicked off the new year, some in early August, with new programs, especially to advance academic achievement. Districts reporting:

### Anchorage

Anchorage School District begins the first year of implementation of Project APPEAL, an initiative to increase Advanced Placement (AP) access, enrollment, and success for low-income students.

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## Noted Educator, NAACP Leader, Author to Speak

Johnnetta Cole, president of Bennett College for Women and first African-American woman to chair the board of United Way of America, will address urban school leaders Oct. 20 in Atlanta.



Johnnetta Cole

The occasion: the Council of the Great City Schools' 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference, Oct. 19-23, at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel.

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**urban Educator**

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

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**Hurricane Katrina...**

many wonderful, caring employees, and they will step up and do everything they can to help."

In Washington, the Council has been working with leaders of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Senate to muster up assistance for urban districts receiving evacuee students and for rebuilding the New Orleans school system following the Aug. 29 hurricane.

"The New Orleans school system is struggling mightily to keep afloat financially," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on Sept. 8. He stressed that the district is "just about tapped out."

Casserly called on Congress to provide emergency school funding through the Education and Health and Human Services departments, along with aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to better serve the needs of schools.

Interim Superintendent Ora Watson of the New Orleans school district and Alvarez & Marsal, a company that manages the district's financial operation, as well as the Louisiana State Department of Education have asked the Council to launch a rebuilding initiative.

Most of the 128 public schools in New Orleans were flooded – except for eight schools, including two high schools. School officials believe the schools that sustained limited damage can accommodate some 6,500 to 13,000 of the district's approximately 70,000 students in a few months.

In mid-September, the Council is dispatching a team of building engineers, architects and other facility managers from

Council school districts to New Orleans to assess the district's school buildings.

Urban school districts are lending the expertise of their senior facility managers who have experience with such disasters as Hurricane Andrew, the Northridge Earthquake, the San Francisco earthquake and 9/11. The team will help the New Orleans emergency crew put the school system back on its feet.

Subsequently, the Council will dispatch an information technology team to assess the computer and data systems of the New Orleans school system. Then, the Council will send an instructional delivery team to help rebuild the academic structure.

**Districts to the Rescue**

The Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and other school systems in Texas have enrolled several thousands of the estimated 200,000 students displaced by Hurricane Katrina. And Louisiana's Caddo Parish school system in Shreveport has taken in a large number of evacuees from the New Orleans school system.

Relaxing rules to enroll displaced students, other big-city school districts, including Birmingham and Memphis and as far away as Philadelphia and Anchorage, also received hundreds of students. And some districts, especially Clark County in Las Vegas, reached out for displaced teachers to join their school systems.

Many urban school systems launched fundraising and school supply drives to help victims of the hurricane.

"This is a difficult time for the families evacuated to Chicago from Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi," said Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan in a press release. "The last thing we want them to be thinking about is how to get school supplies and uniforms for their kids."



**Inside the Council**

**New Superintendents Named in San Diego, Pittsburgh, Fresno; Cleveland and San Francisco Leaders to Step Down**

Several big-city districts start the 2005-2006 school year with new faces at the helm, while two recognized urban school leaders are stepping down.

San Diego City Schools chose Carl Cohn, a well-respected veteran educator, to lead its 136,000-school system, the second largest school district in California.

For 10 years, Cohn was superintendent of California's Long Beach Unified School District. During his tenure, he received the Harold W. McGraw Jr. Prize in Education, which is given annually to



**Carl Cohn**

individuals who have shown an extraordinary commitment to the improvement of education. Under his leadership as superintendent, the Long Beach school system ended social promotion, increased the number of students enrolled in high-level courses and lowered student failure and dropout rates. Cohn also required students in K-8 to wear uniforms, making Long Beach one of the first urban districts to institute a mandatory uniform policy for those grade levels.

Cohn, who will begin his superintendency in October, is currently a professor at the University of Southern California Rossier School Education. He will succeed Alan Bersin, who is now California's secretary of education.

"Dr. Cohn's proven track record in urban education is exactly what we were looking in an ideal candidate; he is an educator and a collaborative leader with an ability to develop a vision with stakeholders," said San Diego board president Luis Acle in a news statement.

While San Diego chose a veteran educator, Pittsburgh selected a former legislator to lead its schools.

Mark Roosevelt, who served in the Massachusetts Legislature for eight years, was chosen to lead the 33,000-student school system. He succeeds John Thompson, who left the district in June.



**Mark Roosevelt**

According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Roosevelt co-authored Massachusetts' landmark education reform law, which strengthened high school graduation requirements, and developed curriculums for key subjects. For four years, he served as the House chairman of the legislature's Joint Committee on Education.

Roosevelt most recently worked as the managing director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, an education reform group.



**Michael Hanson**

Also selecting a new leader was California's Fresno Unified School District, which named Michael Hanson to lead the 79,383-student district.

He was an associate superintendent in California's Elk Grove Unified School District.

In another development, Minnesota's Saint Paul School District has selected Lou Kanavati to serve as its interim superintendent. Kanavati is an area superintendent for the district who oversees more than 20 schools.

He succeeds Patricia Harvey, who recently left the district to become a se-

nior fellow with the National Center on Education and the Economy/America's Choice, an organization to help schools implement successful standards-based reform.

In addition, Harvey will also become an endowed chair in urban education at the University of Minnesota.

**Leaders Departing**

While several big-city school districts are gaining new superintendents, school districts in Cleveland and San Francisco are losing their leaders.

Barbara Byrd-Bennett recently announced her resignation from the Cleveland school system she has led since 1998, when she was chosen by Cleveland Mayor Michael White to become the district's first chief executive officer.

Under her leadership, graduation rates have risen and test scores have improved.

In 2001, the Council of the Great City Schools awarded her the Richard R. Green Award, the nation's top prize in urban education.



**Arlene Ackerman**

After serving as superintendent since 2000, Arlene Ackerman recently announced her resignation from the San Francisco Unified School District, effective June 30, 2006.

During her tenure, the district was nominated for a 2005 Broad Prize for Urban Education and student achievement increased for all groups of students.

Ackerman is the current chair of the Council of the Great City Schools.

**Inside the Council***Continued from page 1***Urban Schools...**

And in an effort to ease the transition into high school, ninth-grade academies have been created to provide extra academic support for 9th graders.

**Atlanta**

Atlanta Public Schools opens with what it calls the Southeast's first small high school campus, designed to offer students the opportunity to learn in an intimate environment. The New Schools of Carver is one campus consisting of five small high schools offering specialized academic programs in such areas as the arts, technology and health sciences.

**Austin**

Texas' Austin Independent School District is implementing the first phase of its High School Redesign initiative, designed to strengthen educational and career programs for high school students. The school district also kicks off its Character Education Initiative, which will incorporate several positive character traits into the curriculum and school environment.

**Baltimore**

Baltimore City Public School System begins the new school year with 12 new charter schools created to provide smaller innovative learning communities with high academic standards.

**Boston**

Boston Public Schools is implementing a new pilot program to improve family and community engagement. The district has created Family and Community Outreach Coordinator positions at 17 schools, who will be responsible for developing school-based family engagement activities.

**Broward**

As part of a \$68-million "refresh" program to upgrade technology, the Bro-

ward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is providing 40,000 laptop computers for students to use in their classrooms. The laptops will be available in the district's more than 250 schools and will be housed in portable racks that can be moved from room to room, as well as around individual classrooms. All of the computers will have wireless access to the district's technology infrastructure and to the Internet.

**Charlotte**

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is implementing a new initiative called Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports to enhance the overall school climate, increase good behavior and decrease classroom disruptions.

**Chicago**

Chicago Public Schools opens a record 22 new schools this fall in an effort to create new learning options for students and relieve overcrowding.

**Christina**

Delaware's Christina School District opens a high school for students who have not been successful in a traditional high school setting and are in need of an intensive learning environment to earn the necessary credits to graduate. The Sarah Pyle Academy for Academic Intensity will serve 200 students

age 16 or older who have less than five credits toward graduation. Students will attend the school in intensive four-hour blocks and will be required to undergo career development and job training.

**Cincinnati**

Cincinnati Public Schools begins the new school year with three new state-of-the-art schools. And in an effort to

become more family and community friendly, the district is focusing on a new commitment to customer service. District employees are receiving customer-service training, and improved signage has been created in schools to help visitors feel more welcome.

**Cleveland**

The Cleveland Municipal School District opens two new schools -- the first schools the district has opened in 25 years.

**Columbus**

Ohio's Columbus Public Schools has a program that will enable students who have failed an academic course to complete the course again and receive credit. The Credit Recovery Program combines the use of technology with individualized teacher instruction. The district is also implementing a policy on electronic devices that prohibits student cell-phone use in schools.

**Dallas**

To increase the number of students attending post-secondary institutions, the Dallas Independent School District is piloting Closing the Gaps, an initiative at 10 high schools to provide higher education counseling and career guidance support to students and their parents. The district

is also implementing a student uniform dress code policy for students in grades preK-8. Eleven high schools will also require uniforms.

**Dayton**

Dayton Public Schools opens the doors of the new Charity Adams Earley Academy for Girls, which is the first and



Dallas Superintendent Michael Hinojosa greets students at Rosemont Elementary School. (Photo by Joan Burnard)

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**Inside the Council**

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**Urban Schools...**

only public all-girls school in southwestern Ohio, according to district officials. The school will serve approximately 100 students in grades K-2, adding a grade level a year until it becomes a K-12 academy.

**Denver**

Denver Public Schools begins the first phase of 10 elementary school expansions to K-8 schools. Nine elementary schools will be adding sixth grade this year. Three elementary schools are implementing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program, a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning with an international curriculum.

**Detroit**

As a result of a \$24,800 grant from the College Board, Detroit Public Schools is implementing an AP program at Northwestern High School. The school was one of only 10 in the nation to receive an AP Start-up Grant this year.

**District of Columbia**

The District of Columbia Public Schools is reestablishing art and music programs to all elementary, middle and junior high schools.

**Fresno**

California's Fresno Unified School District is opening two new state-of-the-art technology elementary schools that will include digital projectors, integrated sound systems and interactive "SMART" boards.

Teachers will be able to transform material on a laptop to the boards that hang on a wall in the classroom. The "SMART" boards will act as a touch screen for the laptop, enabling teachers and students to figure out math equations, spell words, write sentences and use the Internet.

**Greensboro**

Ten high schools in North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro have partnered with John Hopkins University to develop a program to strengthen reading and ease freshman transition. Also, 10 middle schools will now have onsite access to automated external defibrillators to use in emergency situations

**Houston**

The Houston Independent School District is requiring 7<sup>th</sup> graders to take pre-Advanced Placement English classes. Higher performance standards have also been implemented, which will require schools to meet more academic goals in order to be honored with a top rating.

The district has also, for the first time, made prekindergarten available to every eligible 4-year-old.

**Indianapolis**

Two middle schools in Indianapolis Public Schools are operating on an alternative calendar for the 2005-06 school year. The schools will have a shortened summer break, which district officials believe will allow students to better retain what they have learned over the previous year. And in an effort to improve the overall climate of schools, the district has implemented a new anti-bullying policy and six-step discipline program.

**Jackson**

Mississippi's Jackson Public Schools begins the new school year with the only elementary school in the state to have an IB Primary Year program, according to district officials. The rigorous program requires students to study a foreign language by age 7. In another development, the district has also instituted an ad-

vanced seminar requirement for graduation that includes a community mentor component.

**Long Beach**

This summer, California's Long Beach Unified School District created AP Summer Bridge workshops for students to strengthen the skills they need to take AP courses. As a result, the district expects nearly 6,000 students to take AP courses this fall, an increase of more than 1,000 from the previous year.

**Louisville**

Beginning this fall, Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Ky., is launching a program in 10 elementary schools designed to assist children who have issues with learning related to behavior. An in-school resource teacher will work with small groups of identified children and provide instructional support and behavioral interventions in the classroom.

Also, all middle schools are participating in a new certification program called Creating a Literate

and Safe School Instructional Environment, designed to measure effectiveness in improving literacy achievement.

**Los Angeles**

The nation's second largest school system is opening 32 new schools as a result of the district's school construction and improvement program created in 2000.

**Memphis**

Memphis City Schools is implementing a new mentoring program, CONNECT, that matches student with adult

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Left to right, Los Angeles Unified School board member Marlene Canter, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Chief Facilities Officer Jim McConnell and Superintendent Roy Romer talk with students at Jefferson Elementary.



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### **Urban Schools...**

volunteers to serve as positive role models. More than 225 students from five schools will participate in the program.

#### **Miami**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is developing a new class of students this fall: parents.

The district has created the Parent Academy to help parents take an active role in their children's education. The academy will help parents understand and navigate the district's programs and schools.

#### **Milwaukee**

According to district officials, Milwaukee Public Schools will have the first high school in Wisconsin to house a full-service bank. A bank will be located at South Division High School for students and their parents to use.

#### **New York City**

The nation's largest school district is launching a number of small schools located within existing schools. The schools will have close partnerships with community-based and non-profit organizations. The district is also implementing a plan to end social promotion in the seventh grade.

#### **Omaha**

Omaha Public Schools is beginning the transition to a city-wide school district under its "One City, One School District" plan.

Under the plan, which is mandated by Nebraska law, schools in the Millard and Ralston school districts located within the city of Omaha will be absorbed into the Omaha school system. As a result, the city of Omaha will have only one school district, which district officials believe will ensure all students in the

community have access to resources and programs.

#### **Orlando**

In an effort to recruit businesses to partner with local schools, the Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Fla., is launching the "Business Challenge Kickoff – The Race to Education Excellence." Through this districtwide campaign, school officials hope to recruit at least one business partner for every school. Also, the district has opened nine new schools for the new year.

#### **Philadelphia**

In an effort to increase the number of students participating in advanced high school programs, the School District of Philadelphia is creating 55 High Achievement Academies. Housed in elementary schools, the academies will offer rigorous academic programs to help prepare students to enroll in high level courses when they reach high school.



**Rochester Superintendent Manuel Rivera greets a student at the opening of a new playground at School No. 52.**

#### **Portland**

Oregon's Portland Public Schools begins the new school year with a healthier agenda. The district has removed snack food vending machines from all middle schools, and included more salads and sandwiches on the menu in middle and high schools.

The district is also implementing rigorous graduation requirements, including additional math and science courses, for incoming high school freshman.

#### **Richmond**

Virginia's Richmond Public Schools is launching a new program in partner-

ship with the University of Richmond to prepare more students for AP and honors classes in math and science.

The Mathematics and Science Investigators program targets 8<sup>th</sup> graders who demonstrate academic promise. Students will attend summer classes at the University of Richmond and receive tutoring and attend special after-school sessions during the academic year.

#### **Rochester**

New York's Rochester City School District is piloting a program in four elementary schools called Health-e-Access to allow children to see a doctor or nurse without leaving school. Under the program, video and Internet connections will enable health care workers located off-site to examine children while they remain at school.

In addition, the district is implementing several initiatives to improve secondary schools, such as creat-

ing programs that will offer students the opportunity to earn college credit while also earning a high school diploma.

#### **San Francisco**

Following last year's success of its three high-achieving *Dream Schools*, the San Francisco Unified School District has opened six additional *Dream Schools*. The schools range from preK-through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and include Sanchez Elementary School, an accelerated arts and technology academy.

#### **Toledo**

Ohio's Toledo Public Schools is requiring students in the district's junior high schools to wear school uniforms.

Inside the Council

## Council Weighs In On Case Before Supreme Court

The Council of the Great City Schools has filed an *amicus* legal brief on behalf of a Maryland school system in a special education dispute before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The dispute is between the Montgomery County Schools in suburban Washington, D.C., and a disabled student's parents over who has the burden of proof when a student's special education plan is challenged.

The Council's "friend of the court" brief, joined by other education groups,



counters the plaintiff's claim that private school tuition should be reimbursed because the student's

family is dissatisfied with the special education options offered by the school system.

In *Schaffer v. Weast*, naming the family and the school district's superintendent, the Council's brief argues, "A rule making it possible for parents to prevail without actually carrying the burden of proof would only invite additional litigation designed to shift the costs of private-school education from parents to public schools."

A brief by U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement supports the argument that the complaining party bears the burden of proof – not public school officials, who are presumed to act in good faith.

## U.S. Student Achievement Tied to Urban School Progress

American students have made measurable progress in reading and math achievement, and racial achievement gaps have narrowed significantly since 1999, according to a recent federal report.

The Council of the Great City Schools attributes the student gains, in large part, to the progress that the nation's largest urban public school districts have been making.

In recent years, urban school progress has outpaced national student achievement gains, Council studies show. Big-city school districts serve a disproportionately large share of the nation's African American and Hispanic students, who posted the largest gains on the new national assessment.

"These new scores could not have occurred without the relentless efforts, hard work, and growing progress of the nation's urban schools," says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

The federal study, *The Nation's Report Card – NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress*, shows national student achievement trends in reading and mathematics for 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds since the 1970s, based on the 2004 National Assessment of Educational Progress long-term trend assessment.

The 9-year-olds showed substantial gains in math and reading, with significant achievement gaps closing among white, African-American and Hispanic students of this age group. Racial achievement gaps also narrowed among 13-year-olds in math.

"This is good news for American education and further evidence that the nation's urban public schools are making a dramatic turn-around," stresses Casserly.

## Palm Beach Only Urban School District Earning "A" Grade in Florida; Others Get "B"

The School District of Palm Beach County recently received a grade of "A" from the Florida Department of Education, making it the only big-city school district in Florida to earn the top grade.

Districts received a grade ranging from "A" to "F" based on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, student learning gains and the learning gains of the lowest 25 percent.

Palm Beach was one of only 15 districts in the state, out of a total of 67, to earn an "A" and Schools Superinten-

dent Arthur Johnson was elated at the news. "The "A" grade is a reflection of the hard work and focus of the students and teachers under the leadership of our principals."

Palm Beach was not the only urban district in Florida to receive good grades. Earning a "B" grade were Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, and the School District of Hillsborough County in Tampa.

## Philly District Continues Upward Trend

The School District of Philadelphia recently saw student test scores in reading and math rise once again – the third consecutive year under its reform push.

The 2004-05 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) test results showed an 8.5 percentage point hike in overall math scores. Reading scores rose nearly 2 percentage points above 2003-04 results.

Additionally, data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education show gains of 10 to 16 percentage points in reading and 17 to 21 percentage points in math across racial and economic demographic groups in the three years since the district launched its reform initiative.

“We had such high growth last year that we were bracing ourselves for a big dip, but we didn’t see the dip,” said the district’s chief executive officer, Paul Valvas, who has been at the helm over the last three years of growth.

School Reform Commission Chairman James Nevels added, “The gains are tremendous, but there is still a very long road ahead of us.”

Overall, the 8.5 percentage point increase in math scores in one year means that 37.1 percent of Philadelphia students examined are at the advanced or proficient level, while the 1.8 percentage point increase in reading translates into 35.4 percent at the advanced/proficient level.

The PSSA is administered annually in reading and math to fifth, eighth and eleventh graders in the nation’s eighth largest school system.

## Marcia Page Scholarship Winners Named

Students from Denver and Orlando have won the first Marcia Page Scholarship for Mathematics and Science 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.



Chantelle Marcelle

Chantelle Marcelle, a newly minted graduate of Florida’s Orange County Public Schools, and Margaret Adamma Spearman, now an alumna of the Denver Public Schools, are the first recipients of the Marcia Page Scholarship.

Marcelle is now a freshman at the University of Florida in Gainesville, majoring in computer engineering, and Spearman is at Stanford University, with a major study in biology. Both are 18.



Margaret Spearman

“We received many outstanding applications for the scholarship,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly, noting that students from 35 urban school districts applied. Applicants had to express a desire to pursue a career goal in a science, mathematics, engineering or technology field, and be accepted for college.

The Marcia Page Scholarship winners will have an opportunity to meet the scholarship’s namesake at the Council’s Fall Conference during a breakfast program on Oct. 20 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.

## Nominees Sought for Disney Awards

Do you know a big-city school teacher who is creative and inspires a joy of learning in his or her students?

The 2006 Disney Teacher Awards will be presented to K-12 teachers in the nation who showcase creativity in the classroom and whose innovative teaching methods inspire students while actively engaging them in learning.

Each year, the Walt Disney Company selects winners from more than 50,000

nominees across the nation. Each of the recipients will receive \$10,000 and a five-day trip to Disneyland in California, culminating in a red-carpet awards gala, where one teacher will be named Teacher of the Year.

Nominations can be made through the web site, [www.disneyhand.com](http://www.disneyhand.com), or by phoning toll free, 1-877-282-8322. The deadline to apply is October 15.



**Inside the Council**

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**Noted Educator...**

Some 1,000 urban educators will converge to discuss strategies and programs that work in the nation's big-city schools.

Cole, who made history in 1987 as the first African-American woman to serve as president of Spelman College, will be the opening keynote speaker at the conference's Oct. 20 lunch.

On Oct. 21, award-winning author Jonathan Kozol delivers a breakfast address. Then, at lunch, Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, speaks under the conference banner "Achieving the Dream: Great City Schools for All."



Jonathan Kozol

The pinnacle event of the conference will be a national town hall meeting focusing on high school reform in urban schools. Moderating the 90-minute forum on the afternoon of Oct. 21 will be journalist Claudio Sanchez, education correspondent for National Public Radio.

Hosted by the Atlanta Public Schools, the convention will also feature suspense, when the nation's highest urban school leadership prize, the Richard R. Green Award, will be announced at the Oct. 20 banquet. Entertainment will be provided by J.T. Taylor, the former lead vocalist of Kool and the Gang.



Council of the Great City Schools  
 49th Annual Fall Conference  
**"Achieving the Dream: Great City Schools for All"**  
 October 19-23, 2005  
 Sheraton Atlanta Hotel

Preliminary Conference Highlights

**Wednesday, October 19**

- 7:00 am-5:00pm Conference Registration
- 1:30-3:00pm Task Force Meetings
- 6:30-8:30pm Welcome Reception at the Jimmy Carter Center

**Thursday, October 20**

- 7:30 am-9:00am Breakfast and Welcome
- 9:00-12:15pm Breakout Sessions
- 12:30-2:00pm Lunch and Speaker- Johnnetta Cole
- 2:15-5:45pm Breakout Sessions
- 7:00-10:00pm Richard R. Green Awards Banquet:  
 Urban Educator of the Year  
 Entertainment: J.T. Taylor

**Friday, October 21**

- 7:30-9:00am Breakfast and Speaker- Jonathan Kozol
- 9:00-12:15pm Breakout Sessions
- 12:30-2:00pm Lunch and Speaker- Julian Bond
- 2:30-4:00pm Town Hall Meeting
- 6:30-8:30pm Reception and Tour of the 755 Club at Turner Field



**Saturday, October 22**

- 8:30-12:00pm Board of Directors Meeting
- 12:00-4:00pm Legislative Directors Meeting
- 6:00-10:00pm Closing Celebration- Dinner and Party

**Sunday, October 23**

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

## Pro Football Team Comes to the Aid Of Cleveland Schools

The Cleveland Municipal School District is facing a severe budget crisis that may result in several sports programs being curtailed, or eliminated altogether.

But thanks to the generosity of the Cleveland Browns professional football team, high school students in Cleveland will still be able to play football.

The Cleveland Browns Foundation recently donated \$300,000 to the district's high school football program. According to district officials, the donation is the largest one-time contribution to the schools' athletics program donated by a local professional sports organization.

Without the donation, high school students might not have been able to play football due to the \$30 million budget deficit facing the district for the 2005-2006 school year. And a levy that would have generated approximately \$48.2 million a year for the district was recently rejected by voters.

Cleveland Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett praised the Browns contribution as an extraordinary outreach from a professional sports team to a high school athletics program.

"It was fourth down and 10 yards to go," said Byrd-Bennett in the school district's newspaper *Educating Cleveland's Children*. "But thanks to the Cleveland Browns, we were able to go in for a winning touchdown."

Browns President John Collins said the Browns football team has a respon-

sibility to the community that they take very seriously. "Allowing these students to play football this season was something we felt obligated to do," Collins told the newspaper.



Cleveland CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett receives ceremonial donation from new Browns head coach Romeo Crennel as team president John Collins looks on.

However, the Cleveland Browns are not the only professional sports team in Cleveland that has stepped up to the plate to help the city's schoolchildren.

Last spring, the Cleveland Indians donated \$250,000 to fund the district's baseball and softball season.

## Houston Opens Doors

A few days before Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf States in late August, officials of the Houston Independent School District and members of the community staged an historic door-to-door campaign through the neighborhoods of Houston.

Called "Reach Out to Dropouts," the campaign resulted in 49 dropouts re-enrolling in their schools, and another 657 committed to school officials and volunteers that they would return to school.

After the devastation of the hurricane, the Houston school district swung open its doors to enroll a few thousand New Orleans students who fled the storm-ravaged Crescent City.

## Toledo School System Wins Top NAACP Award

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recently bestowed upon the Toledo Public Schools its top education award.

The Ohio school district received the Daisy Bates Education Advocacy Award in recognition of outstanding service to minority youth, and for bridging the racial achievement gap.

The Council of the Great City Schools won the NAACP's national award in 2002.

The Toledo honor comes at a time when the school system has been on a winning streak:

- It recently merited the state's "continuous improvement" ranking, reportedly making the Toledo district the only large urban school system in Ohio to attain this status for two consecutive years. It also met the Adequate Yearly Progress standard set by the federal *No Child Left Behind* law; and

- Toledo Schools Superintendent Eugene Sanders received the 2005 Jennings Ohio Superintendent Outstanding Performance Award, given by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.



Eugene Sanders

The recognition includes a \$20,000 monetary award for him to use for the betterment of the district.

**Inside the Council**

**Two Columbus Urban Educators Die**

Ohio's Columbus Public Schools recently lost two giants in education, with the recent deaths of school board member Loretta Heard and former member Bill Moss.



Loretta Heard

Heard, who was 71, had been a member of the Columbus school board since 1982 and was serving her sixth-term on the board.

During her tenure, Heard held elected leadership positions three times, serving as president in 1986 and vice president in 1985 and 1991. A strong advocate for parental involvement, she was instrumental in expanding services to parents by approving a pilot full-day kindergarten program.

And her contributions in the education field didn't stop with Columbus. She also made her presence felt nationally, serving as the chair of the Council of the Great City Schools from 1993-1994.



Bill Moss

"The fact that Mrs. Heard was elected to six terms on the board of education speaks volumes as to how her work on the board was recognized and respected by this community," said Columbus Schools Superintendent Gene Harris in a news statement.

District officials are also mourning the death of Bill Moss, a former school board member who served five terms on the Columbus board until 2003. He recently died at age 69.

*continued on page 12*

**Two Milwaukee Schools Profiled in TIME Magazine**

Milwaukee's Gustav A. Fritsche Middle School and Humboldt Park Elementary School received national recognition recently when the two schools were featured in *TIME* magazine.

The schools were profiled in an article examining the recent movement by school districts across the nation to convert big middle schools into smaller, K-8 schools.

According to the article, the Milwaukee school district has expanded the number of K-8 schools from 12 to 48, while the number of middle schools has decreased from 23 to 14.

"We're providing a number of different options," said Milwaukee Schools Superintendent William Andrekopoulos. "But we know that a small learning community is going to make a difference."

Humboldt Park Elementary School serves 585 students in grades K-8 and its small size has helped foster strong ties between younger and older students. At Humboldt, eighth graders serve as reading "buddies" to kindergarteners, and seventh graders have worked with third-graders to write letters to U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

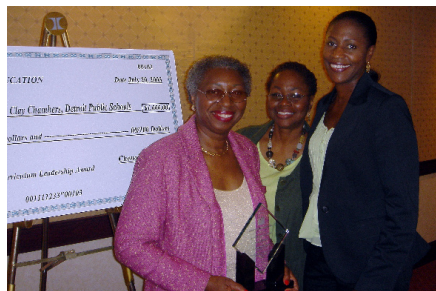
In contrast, Fritsche Middle School serves 1,030 students in grades 6-8. Because of its size, the school is able to offer students elaborate programs in the arts as well as a graphics and electronics lab, an extensive library and many extra-curricular activities.

The article, in *TIME*'s August 8 issue, noted that both of the schools had fine reputations and said that no matter how small or large the school may be, what really counts is good instruction and caring relationships.

**Council Names Winners of Curriculum And Technology Awards**

Juanita Clay-Chambers, the chief academic officer of the Detroit Public Schools, was recently presented with the 2005 Curriculum Leadership Award at the Council of the Great City Schools' Curriculum and Research Leaders Joint Meeting in Boston. The award, sponsored by Pearson Education, is given to a curriculum director, coordinator or specialist who has demonstrated educational excellence.

Also receiving an award from the Council was Robert Nelson, the former director of technology for the Milwaukee Public Schools. Nelson received the 2005 Distinguished Service Award at the Council's Chief Information and Technology Officers Meeting in Chicago.



Juanita Clay-Chambers, left, is congratulated by Council Research Director Sharon Lewis and Chenai Okammor from Pearson Education.

Sponsored by Sun Microsystems, the award annually honors senior school officials who exemplify leadership, commitment and professionalism in urban education.



**Inside the Council**

### Jackson District Parent Recognized In *USA Weekend* Magazine

Eldridge Ellis is a volunteer at Smith Elementary School, the school his three daughters attend in Jackson, Mississippi.

As a volunteer, he has worked to create a writing lab to help students improve their writing skills.

For his efforts, Ellis was recognized in the August 14 issue of *USA WEEKEND* magazine in an article about parents making a difference.

Ellis was just one of five parents selected from more than 200 nominations across the nation to be profiled by the magazine, a weekend supplement in



Eldridge Ellis displays a copy of the *USA WEEKEND* magazine he was profiled in.

a number of local newspapers nationwide.

“I hope that this will inspire other parents to want to get involved in their child’s schools,” said Ellis.

*Continued from page 11*  
**Two Columbus...**

Moss began his service on the school board in 1978 and served once as president and two times as vice president.

“He devoted many years of service and will be long remembered by the people of Columbus for his commitment to the community and its children,” said board president Stephanie Hightower in a press release.

### Wichita District Joins the Council

Wichita Public Schools in Kansas has joined the Council of the Great City Schools, increasing the number of districts to 66 in the coalition.

The Wichita school system serves 49,065 students and is the largest school district in Kansas.

Famous alumni from the district include Barry Sanders, the former star Detroit Lions running back; Vernon Smith, the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize winner in economics; and actress Kirstie Alley.

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