



- Leadership Changes, **p.3**
- Test Pays Dividends, **p. 8**
- Fall Conference, **p.9**
- Students Can Vote, **p.11**

10-Year-Old Student Kicks Off Dallas' School Year



"I believe in me. Do you believe in me?" asked 10-year-old Dalton Sherman in a keynote address to 17,000 campus employees at the recent Dallas Independent School District's back-to-school event at the arena where the Dallas Mavericks play. He moved the audience to tears and a standing ovation. His address, [which subsequently appeared on YouTube](#), has generated DVD requests from as far away as Alberta, Canada, and his parents have been contacted by NBC's "The Tonight Show" for the student's possible appearance.



Urban Schools Begin New Year with Eye on Achievement

Urban schools began the 2008-2009 school year with an array of new initiatives and programs to help improve academic achievement, such as increasing the number of high-level courses, easing the transition to high school and helping students learn technology and computer skills. Here's a sample of what's new in big-city school systems across the nation:

Albuquerque

New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools begins the new school year with 122 new classrooms, including the opening of a new high school, Atrisco Heritage Academy. The school has a partnership with the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association, the Hispanic National Bar Association and

the Mexican American Law Student Association at the University of New Mexico to encourage students to pursue careers in law. Attorneys will work closely with students by assisting with mock trials and serving as guest lecturers. They will also be involved in developing a curriculum for the law academy.

Urban Schools continued on page 4

Seattle Superintendent Recognized As Entrepreneurial Leader



Maria Goodloe-Johnson

Maria Goodloe-Johnson, the superintendent of Seattle Public Schools, has been selected as a 2008 Fellow in the Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Program.

In its second year, the program is designed to recognize and support exceptional entrepreneurial leaders who are prepared to address the crucial challenge of transforming public education.

Sponsored by the Aspen Institute and NewSchools Venture Fund, the program selects approximately 24 outstanding leaders from across the nation. The Fellows bring a diverse set of backgrounds and skills to the program and are leaders in the nonprofit, foundation, charter school and traditional school district sec-

tors and hail from a variety of urban and rural communities.

Participants in the fellowship program will have the opportunity to work together to further develop their own leadership capacity, and to think across traditional boundaries in order to push their collective impact to even greater heights.

“The scale and complexity of transforming public education is enormous, and there is simply no way to accomplish that work without the passion, tenacity and out-of-the-box thinking of strong entrepreneurial leaders,” said Kim Smith, senior advisor of NewSchools Venture Fund.

Goodloe-Johnson has been superintendent of Seattle Public Schools since 2007, where she oversees a district with 46,000 students, 93 schools and an operating budget of \$500 million. She introduced the district’s five-year Strategic Plan, “Excellence for All,” which aims to improve student achievement and district operations.

Cincinnati NAACP Adopts School, Aiming For Model Program

The Cincinnati NAACP is partnering with a local school in what officials hope will serve as a model for NAACP branches across the nation.

The Cincinnati branch of the oldest civil rights organization in the country is “adopting” South Avondale School, a K-8 school in the Cincinnati school district. NAACP officials believe the partnership will help strengthen the organization’s long-standing connections to public education through greater personal involvement in supporting teaching and learning at the schoolhouse level.

Under the partnership, members will tutor students, provide support to teachers and also serve as mentors to children. The NAACP will work in partnership with the Urban League of Greater Cincinnati, the lead agency for South Avondale’s Community Learning Center activities, which serve families and the neighborhood beyond traditional school hours.

Cincinnati NAACP *continued on page 10*



Council officers

Chair

William Isler
Board Member, Pittsburgh

Chair-elect

Carol Johnson
Superintendent, Boston

Secretary-Treasurer

Dilafuz Williams
Board Member, Portland, Ore.

Executive Director

Michael Casserly

Editor

Henry Duvall
hduvall@cgcs.org

Associate Editor

Tonya Harris
tharris@cgcs.org

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

Albuquerque	Chicago	East Baton Rouge	Louisville	Oklahoma City	St. Louis
Anchorage	Christina	Fort Worth	Memphis	Omaha	St. Paul
Atlanta	Cincinnati	Fresno	Miami-Dade	Orange Co.	Salt Lake City
Austin	Clark Co.	Greensboro	Milwaukee	Palm Beach	San Diego
Baltimore	Cleveland	Houston	Minneapolis	Philadelphia	San Francisco
Birmingham	Columbus	Indianapolis	Nashville	Pittsburgh	Seattle
Boston	Dallas	Jackson	Newark	Portland	Shreveport
Broward Co.	Dayton	Jacksonville	New Orleans	Providence	Tampa
Buffalo	Denver	Kansas City	New York City	Richmond	Toledo
Charleston	Des Moines	Long Beach	Norfolk	Rochester	Washington DC
Charlotte	Detroit	Los Angeles	Oakland	Sacramento	Wichita

All news items should be submitted to:
Urban Educator

Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 702 • Washington, DC 20004
(202) 393-2427 • (202) 393-2400 (fax)

Greensboro, Oklahoma City and Jackson Schools Open with New Leaders; Interim Chiefs Named in Cincinnati, Richmond and Dayton

As the 2008-2009 school year begins, students in big-city school systems across the nation will experience new programs at new schools with new teachers. And several urban school districts will experience new superintendents.

Greensboro



Maurice Green

Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, N.C., has selected a Charlotte district administrator to lead its 71,000-student school system.

Maurice Green, deputy superintendent and chief operating officer for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, succeeds Terry

Grier, who left Guilford County to become superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District.

Green has worked in the Charlotte school system since 2001 and is the first African American to lead Guilford County Schools.

Oklahoma City



Karl Springer

Oklahoma City Public Schools also named a new superintendent, with its recent selection of Karl Springer to take the reins of the 41,000-student school district. He replaces interim superintendent Sandra Park.

Springer has 30 years of experience in the education field and previously served as the superintendent of Oklahoma's Mustang Public Schools. In addition, he is a retired U.S. Army colonel.

Jackson



Lonnie Edwards

A veteran educator has been chosen to lead the largest school system in the state of Mississippi. Lonnie Edwards, an education program specialist with the Georgia Department of Education, was

recently selected to take the helm of Jackson Public Schools.

Edwards succeeds Earl Watkins, who recently resigned after serving almost six years as the head of the 31,000-student school system.

Prior to working for the state, Edwards worked in the 100,000-student DeKalb County School System in Georgia, where he served for 33 years in a variety of administrator roles, including assistant superintendent for business affairs and assistant superintendent for parental involvement.

"Dr. Edwards has impressive credentials and a reputation as a highly energetic and enthusiastic education leader in his community," said Jackson Board President Delmer Stamps. "He is well known for thinking outside of the box and for getting things done in innovative ways. We need that."

Interim Leaders

Cincinnati Public Schools recently named veteran administrator Mary Ronan to become the interim superintendent, suc-

Urban Schools Expand Pioneering Efforts To Gauge Business Performance

The nation's major urban public school districts have developed new measures to gauge performance of their financial, technology and human resource operations, expanding pioneering efforts to improve the business side of the house in conjunction with their academic reforms.

The Council of the Great City Schools has developed first-time key performance indicators and benchmarks in the areas of budget and finance, human resources and information technology, while establishing trend lines in the critical areas of school transportation, food services, maintenance and operations, procurement, and safety and security.

Launched for the first time last year, *Managing for Results in America's Great*

City Schools: A Report of the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project was recently published in a second edition as an expanded resource to track and document best business practices.

"The project is intended to help urban school systems measure the effectiveness and efficiency of their business operations by comparing data to analyze how they can maximize performance in managing their resources," says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

The multi-year study presents key performance indicators, modeled after those used in the private sector, to measure urban school performance on a range of operational and business functions. The study

Business Performance continued on page 11

New Leaders continued on page 12

Urban Schools continued from page 1



Anchorage Schools Superintendent Carol Comeau talks with fourth-graders at Lake Otis Elementary School on the first day of school.

Anchorage

Alaska's Anchorage School District is participating in Picturing America, a national initiative to teach American history and culture by bringing reproductions of American art directly to classrooms and libraries. The school system is also launching a districtwide paper recycling program.

Atlanta

In an effort to strengthen student achievement in math and science, Atlanta Public Schools has implemented intensive professional development for all district math and science teachers. More than 2,000 teachers participated in intensive training workshops to learn effective teaching strategies for standards-based mathematics instruction.

Baltimore

Baltimore City Public Schools is opening six "Transformation Schools" in the fall as a way to offer high quality programs to middle and high school students. The schools will be combined middle-high schools, starting with grades 6 and 9 and eventually serving grades 6 through 12. Each school will have a singular college and/or career focus as well as a specific theme and a unique curriculum and culture.

Boston

Boston Public Schools is providing 4,300 new dual platform (Mac and PC) laptop computers to every principal and classroom teacher. And in an effort to increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses, the district sponsored AP Summer Institutes to train educators to teach Advanced Placement courses.

Broward County

Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is launching what officials say is the first school district anti-bullying policy in the state of Florida. The policy prohibits bullying by a student or a district employee and requires teachers to utilize a variety of prevention and intervention activities. The initiative will be used by the Florida Department of Education as a model for the state's other school districts.

Buffalo

Buffalo Public Schools has installed 850 interactive smart boards at 16 schools. The boards provide immediate Internet accessibility and enable teachers to share instructional information that can be presented on a computer desktop. The boards also allow immediate feedback on a student's knowledge of a lesson. Over a three-year period, the district plans to install boards in every classroom, as part of its \$1 billion school construction program.

Charlotte

North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is opening seven new schools this year in an effort to relieve overcrowding. The new schools will serve more than 3,000 new students.

Chicago

The nation's third largest school system is opening six new "Turnaround Schools" for the 2008-2009 school year. The low-performing schools are being reopened with a new administration, faculty, staff and curriculum.

Christina

In an effort to boost student achievement and enhance school safety, the Christina School District in Delaware has implemented a uniform dress code pilot program at two middle schools and four elementary schools.

Cincinnati

Cincinnati Public Schools is implementing several new initiatives for the fall, including introducing new standards-based K-8 report cards, providing new high school math and social studies textbooks and increasing the number of high school Advanced Placement courses. The district is also launching a Collaborative Culture Task Force consisting of staff, parents and community members, which will identify barriers to collaborating with the school district and make recommendations to solve them.

Cleveland

Cleveland Metropolitan School District is opening a new school, the Design Lab Early College High School, which will be housed at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Students at the high school will have the opportunity to work with the institute's engineering program, which offers foundational coursework in industrial design, media arts and other related programs.

Dallas

A high school redesign initiative to improve student achievement is being

Urban Schools continued on page 5

Urban Schools *continued from page 4*

launched this year in the Dallas Independent School District. Six high schools have been turned into smaller learning communities and offer students academic pathways to choose from, such as health science, communications, or information technology. The schools will follow a more rigorous curriculum and students will be required to participate in dual credit or Advanced Placement courses.

Des Moines

High school students in Des Moines Public Schools will have the opportunity to earn a free college degree, as a result of a partnership between the school district and the Des Moines Area Community College. Six high schools will offer free college courses to help students complete an associate degree. In addition, the district will offer its first International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Central Academy and is opening an IB elementary school.

Denver

Denver Public Schools has developed a new initiative created to improve the recruitment, development and retention of high-performing teachers. The Janus Education Alliance will create a year-long residency program that enables new teachers to work with veteran teachers and receive real-life training in the classroom.

Detroit

High school students in Detroit Public Schools are receiving high-level computer and IT training, due to a partnership among the school system, Eastern Michigan University and the city of Detroit. Approximately 100 students from 14 high schools are participating in the Detroit I-Test Youth Project, where they will receive training and hands-on experience in IT/

GIS (geographic information systems) and technology over a two-year period.

Fort Worth

Texas' Fort Worth Independent School District has launched the "Make a Difference - Again" campaign to recruit retired and former teachers back to the school system. The district is also starting a pilot program at 15 schools in which teachers are given monetary rewards for increasing student achievement. The PEAK (Public Educators Accelerating Kids) program is an effort by district officials to attract and retain high-quality teachers and encourage collaboration, cooperation and professional growth among educators.



Buffalo Schools Superintendent James Williams greets a student boarding the bus to Public School #66 for opening day. Photo credit: www.buffaloschools.org

Fresno

All high school and middle school counselors in California's Fresno Unified School District are receiving training to utilize a new tool to help students pursue a career. Career Cruising is an online career exploration and awareness tool that features an interest and skills assessment, college and scholarship information and resume development.

Greensboro

All students in North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro will now have their own e-mail address, as a result of a partnership with Microsoft. Students will be able to access their e-mail ac-

counts wherever they have Internet access and all e-mail accounts will be filtered for inappropriate pictures and language. And as a result of an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the district is opening an aviation academy for high school students to prepare them for careers in aviation.

Houston

A collaboration among the Houston Independent School District, the Houston Ministers Against Crime and the Harris County District Attorney's Office has resulted in the establishment of a Teen Court that will provide juvenile-justice services to students in five schools. The district is also opening three engineering and geosciences academies to expose students to careers in the petroleum industry.

Indianapolis

Indianapolis Public Schools is participating in the Kick-Off Program, a national initiative to help incoming freshmen adjust to the high school environment. Nine high schools will implement the nationally recognized program, which will involve upper-class students serving as mentors to freshmen students. The district has also launched Sidener Academy, a grade 2-5 school for high-performing students.

Jacksonville

Kindergarten students in Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Fla., will now have the opportunity to learn how to speak, read and write in both English and Spanish as a result of a Dual Language Program. Four kindergarten classes at two schools will offer the program that teaches academic subjects in both English and Spanish. And the district, in collaboration with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, is implementing the "Project Safe Students in Schools," an early intervention program. The goal of the program is to provide a safe

Urban Schools *continued on page 6*

Urban Schools *continued from page 5*

and secure learning environment for teachers and students.

Los Angeles

The nation's second largest school district is expanding its only dual-language immersion program that offers instruction for elementary students in Mandarin Chinese. The program at City Terrace Elementary has been so successful that another class has been added.

Louisville

Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Ky., is opening its first single-gender schools—one for females and one for males. The school system is also launching a new school cultural initiative at 28 elementary and 24 middle schools. The Care for Kids Initiative helps students develop social responsibility and positive relationships.

Miami-Dade

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is opening its first all-boys high school. The Young Men's Preparatory Academy will serve approximately 85 students in grades 9 and 10 and offer honor and advanced placement classes. The district is also opening 11 schools.

Minneapolis

As part of the Minneapolis Public Schools' renewed focus on improving secondary education, two high schools will be "fresh started," a process to overhaul schools to improve student achievement. The overhaul includes adding more advanced courses, strengthening school leadership and focusing on quality instruction.

Newark

In an effort to enhance school safety and increase student achievement, New Jersey's

Newark Public Schools is requiring students in the district's elementary and middle schools to wear school uniforms.

New York City

The nation's largest school system is implementing the *Campaign for Middle School Success*, a \$35 million multi-year strategic plan to improve the academic performance of middle school students. The district is also opening 18 new schools, the largest number of schools the school system has opened in a single academic year.



Charlotte Schools Superintendent Peter Gorman visits students on the first day of school in the district.

Oakland

California's Oakland Unified School District is launching the Inside/Outside Advocate Program, a mentorship initiative to foster the academic and personal development of students inside and outside of school.

Omaha

In an effort to increase socioeconomic diversity and financial equity of schools in the Omaha metro area, the Nebraska Legislature created the Learning Community. Elections to select members to serve on the newly created Learning Community Coordinating Council will occur in November. The Council will work to equalize socioeconomic diversity and financial equity in the 11 Learning

Community school districts, which include the Omaha Public Schools.

Orange County

Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Fla., will strengthen school safety, implement drug intervention programs and provide mental services to students and their families, as a result of a nearly \$9-million federal grant the district received. The "Partners Advocating Student Success" (PASS) is a four-year grant designed to build healthier students, safer schools and stronger communities.

Palm Beach

Florida's School District of Palm Beach County is opening the Pine Jog Elementary School—the first school in the district designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver level certification. In addition, the school district is implementing green cleaning at all of its 185 schools and has created the Green School Program, which recognizes schools for instilling green principles such as energy and water conservation and developing environmental alliances with their community and business partners.

Philadelphia

The School District of Philadelphia has opened the district's first Re-Engagement Center to help students who have dropped out of school to re-enroll in a high school diploma or GED program. The Center provides youth between the ages of 16 and 21, who are disconnected from schools, information about academic programs and resources such as childcare and employment. During the re-enrollment process, staff monitors their progress and provides them with support and resources as needed.

Urban Schools *continued on page 7*

Urban Schools continued from page 6

Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Public Schools has partnered with the University of Pittsburgh to open the University Prep School for grades 6-12. District officials hope the school will become a national center for excellence in public education and a model for school district/university partnerships.

Portland

In an effort to ease the transition for students entering the sixth grade, Oregon's Portland Public Schools created the Sixth Grade Summer Academy, a five-week program to help at-risk students catch up with, and even surpass, their on-pace peers. The students worked in small classes (10 or fewer students), each with a dedicated teacher and teacher assistant.

Richmond

Beginning this fall, high school students in Virginia's Richmond Public Schools will participate in a federal-funded study on how best to teach Algebra 1. The Johns Hopkins Algebra I Study is a one-year study designed for ninth-graders who have not previously taken an Algebra I course. The study will evaluate two ways to teach algebra and students from four high schools will participate.

Rochester

New York's Rochester City School District is implementing the I'M READY program to provide continued instruction and behavioral support for students in grades 7-12 who have been suspended from school for more than five days. The goal of the program is to address students' social and emotional needs while helping them succeed academically.

Salt Lake City

To help increase the number of students interested in a career in science, the Salt



St. Paul Schools Superintendent Meria Carstarphen visits Sheridan Elementary School to kick off the 2008-2009 school year.

Lake City School District has created the Living Classroom Project to bring science to life in district classrooms. Funds from a grant are being used to build 12 greenhouses in K-8 schools and will supplement what students learn in textbooks and classroom discussion with hands-on experience.

San Diego

The San Diego Unified School District is offering several new magnet school options for students, including the Mandarin Chinese language program at Barnard Elementary. The program offers students the opportunity to experience the Mandarin Chinese language through art, music, drama and physical education. And the new Crown Point Junior Music Academy is the first public school in San Diego County to feature the world-renowned Suzuki violin music program.

San Francisco

San Francisco Unified School District begins the 2008-2009 school year with 14 new physical education teachers and 14 new visual and performing art teachers at elementary schools throughout the district. Also, the district has opened its first Montessori Kindergarten, which, according to district officials, is one of only a handful of certified Montessori Kindergartens in the nation's public schools. The Montessori method enables children to choose their

learning activities under the guidance of a trained teacher.

Saint Paul

Saint Paul Public Schools in Minnesota is opening the doors to the district's first Hmong magnet program, with a curriculum that will focus on Hmong culture and language. The district also created *Learning Standards* booklets for families to better understand the expectations for students in tested subject areas (literacy, math, and science) in each grade, and to offer suggestions for how families can support learning at home.

Seattle

Seattle Public Schools has adopted the *Strategic Plan - Excellence for All*, a five-year plan to support high-quality teaching and learning, increase professional development opportunities, attract and retain educators, improve central office functions and use public resources more efficiently and better support students, teachers and schools.

Tampa

According to district officials, Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Fla., is the first school district in the nation to expand the EXCELerator College Board program to all high schools and middle schools. The academic program, partially funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, encourages students to take honors and Advanced Placement classes.

Wichita

Wichita Public Schools in Kansas begins the school year for the first time without busing students to desegregate schools. Last spring, the district eliminated the 35-year-old desegregation plan and families of children who were previously bused had the option to attend their neighborhood school, to receive priority placement in a magnet school or to continue to attend their previous school.

Stepping Up to National Test Pays Dividends for Urban Schools

In 2000, the Council of the Great City Schools approached the National Assessment Governing Board with the idea of urban districts volunteering to step up to a rigorous national test -- the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Urban districts wanted to make it clear that they are committed to high academic standards, to compare data among each other, and to evaluate reforms in a way that the current 50-state assessment system does not allow.

With congressional appropriations secured, a partnership between the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, and the Council of the Great City Schools launched the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA).

Student achievement on the urban NAEP has been considered encouraging. "We are proud of the fact that the nation's large central city schools have seen steady academic progress over the last several years," Council Executive Director Michael Casserly recently told the governing board.

"Some of this progress is because we are teaching our children better. Some of it can be attributable to the fact that we are using NAEP better to inform us about what works and what doesn't," he explained.

How are urban districts using NAEP data to improve academic achievement?

Casserly gave examples from big-city school systems participating in TUDA.

In Atlanta, the school district used NAEP results to re-define and increase its goals for academic achievement.

In Boston, the district used NAEP fourth-grade reading results to refocus its literacy initiatives to improve instruction in the second and third grades.

In San Diego, NAEP results were used in the development of curriculum guides and training for teachers.

And in the nation's capital, the District of Columbia school system used the knowledge from TUDA results, comparing itself with other urban districts, to adopt the Massachusetts standards and tests because of their alignment with NAEP.

Casserly told the governing board that he is more optimistic now than he has ever been in the more than 30 years he has been working in urban education. "Optimistic not because we are seeing substantial gains, but because we are figuring out why we are getting them and how to get more," he stressed, noting that there is still further analysis needed.



Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall, right, with radio and television newsman Juan Williams following a panel discussion at a journalists convention.

Urban Schools Making Progress, Atlanta Leader Tells Journalists Convention

CHICAGO – The nation's urban school districts are showing progress, Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall told a national journalists' convention recently in the Windy City.

They are "seeing gains in academic performance and Atlanta is leading the pack," she stressed proudly.

Despite having 91 percent minority students and 76 percent of them living below the poverty line, Atlanta Public Schools "has posted academic gains every year, with no slippage – even as the

state of Georgia has raised standards," she maintained.

Because "we wanted to show the gains are real," she pointed out at the 2008 Unity Conference of the nation's minority journalists that the Atlanta school district volunteered for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, (NAEP), a national test considered more rigorous than most state assessments.

The superintendent spoke during a panel discussion moderated by Juan Williams of National Public Radio and Fox News at the Unity conference.

Council of the Great City Schools

52ND ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

“Pioneering the Educational Frontier”

October 22-October 26, 2008

Hilton Americas-Houston

Houston, TX

Wednesday, October 22

7:00 am-5:00 pm	Conference registration
1:30-5:00 pm	Task Force meetings
6:30-8:30 pm	Welcome reception at the Federal Reserve Bank

Thursday, October 23

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: Alvin Poussaint, Psychiatrist
2:15-5:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
7:00-10:00 pm	Richard R. Green Awards Banquet: Urban Educator of the Year Awarded Entertainment: Houston Dance Band



Alvin Poussaint

Friday, October 24

7:30 am-9:00 am	Breakfast and Speaker: Erin Gruwell, Teacher
9:00 am-12:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
12:30-2:00 pm	Lunch and Speaker: Pedro Noguera, Professor
2:30-4:00 pm	Town Hall Meeting- Moderated by Dan Rather
6:30-8:30 pm	Reception at the Downtown Aquarium



Dan Rather

Saturday, October 25

8:30 am- 12:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 pm-4:00 pm	Legislative Directors Meeting
6:30-9:00 pm	Dinner at Space Center Houston

Sunday, October 26

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

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Reaches Out

In Venezuela, students in some of the country’s most impoverished areas participate in a music program that has not only taught them how to play instruments but has changed their lives for the better.

Now elementary students from the Baltimore City Public School System will be given that same opportunity in a new after-school program sponsored by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in partnership with several local community organizations.

OrchKids is a program that will provide music education, instruments and mentorship to approximately 25 students who attend Harriet Tubman Elementary School. The program is inspired by Venezuela’s *El Sistema* music program that for 30 years has successfully used music to protect the social welfare of its young people, and was recently featured in a segment on the CBS television show “60 Minutes.”

Students in the *OrchKids* program will participate in the after-school initiative three days a week, receiving music instruction and participating in enrichment activities designed to teach students about their communities and help them develop social and leadership skills. Parental involvement will also be encouraged through family-oriented social activities, including opportunities for families to attend Baltimore Symphony concerts.

Community partners will also have an active role in the success of the program and will plan activities that include trips to local institutions, community improvement projects and visits from local leaders.

The first class of 25 students in *OrchKids* is expected to continue in the program through the fifth grade and each year a new class of first graders will enter the program. It is hoped that as children become musically proficient, they will be encouraged to mentor their younger counterparts.

“I believe passionately that music has the power to change lives, and the BSO should

Baltimore Symphony *continued on page 10*

Council Names Winners Of Curriculum And Research Awards

Two big-city senior school officials from Newark and St. Paul were recently presented with the 2008 Curriculum Leadership Award at the Council of the Great City Schools' Curriculum and Research Directors Meeting in Chicago.

Gayle Griffin, assistant superintendent for New Jersey's Newark Public Schools, and Valeria Silva, chief academic officer for Minnesota's St. Paul Public Schools, received the award, which is presented to an individual who has demonstrated educational excellence in curriculum development and implementation. The award is sponsored by Pearson Education.

Also receiving an award from the Council was Karen Bachofer, executive director of standards, assessment and accountability for the San Diego Unified School District. Bachofer received the 2008 Council of the Great City Schools/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Research and Assessment Leadership Award. The award is given to a research director who has improved the quality of research and assessment in his or her respective school district.



Gayle Griffin, left and Valeria Silva, right, are congratulated by Chenai Okamkor from Pearson Education.



Karen Bachofer, right, is congratulated by Franklin Smith from Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt.

Intel Recognizes NYC School For Science Distinction

Townsend Harris High School in New York City is one of six schools nationwide to win the 2008 Intel Schools of Distinction Award, sponsored by the Intel Corporation to recognize schools that implement innovative math and science programs.

One elementary, one middle and one high school was chosen as winners in each of the two categories.

Harris High School received the award for its science program. The school will receive a \$10,000 cash grant as well as an award package that includes curriculum materials and hardware and software valued at more than \$160,000.

Cincinnati NAACP continued from page 2

"Public education has been one of our cornerstones," said Christopher Smitherman, president of the Cincinnati NAACP. "Seventy percent of students in Cincinnati Public Schools are African American, and we believe it's important to roll up our sleeves and move closer to what's going on in our schools in a supportive role."

Cincinnati NAACP officials hope their partnership with South Avondale School will spur other branches across the nation to adopt schools in their respective cities.

Baltimore Symphony continued from page 9

lead the movement," said BSO Music Director Marin Alsop. "By providing a strong foundation and developing the whole individual, we can position these students for lifelong success—success not limited to music, but in all areas of their lives."

Council Releases Reports On Four Urban Districts

The Council of the Great City Schools has released four new reports produced by strategic support teams under the Council's "Cities Building Cities" program, which provides technical assistance to member school districts. They are:

- *Improving Special Education in New York City's District 75;*
- *Review of the School Safety and Security of the Cleveland Municipal School District;*

■ *Milwaukee Alternative Education Report;*

■ *Raising the Achievement of English Language Learners in the Seattle Public Schools*

The reports can be accessed on the Council's web site at www.cgcs.org.

The "Cities Building Cities" program was created in 1998 to assist Council school districts in improving their operations and instruction.

Students Have a Voice in Presidential Election

Students of all ages – from kindergarten through college – have an opportunity to participate in this year’s historic 2008



presidential election by casting their votes through the National Student/Parent Mock Election on Oct. 30 – five days before the rest of the nation selects the next president of the United States.

ident of the United States.

The national voter-education program for students and their parents gives young Americans the chance to make their voices heard in the electoral process.

Every U.S. student, parent and educator is invited to participate free of charge at www.nationalmockelection.org. Students can register now at the Mock Election web address to cast presidential ballots on Oct. 30.

“The 2008 presidential election may well be one of the most important elections in American history,” says Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools.

The Council encourages its 66 member school districts to get students and their parents involved in the voting process in a partnership with the nation’s oldest and largest voter education project.

“In the classrooms of today, are our future presidents, members of Congress, governors and judges – but most importantly, these young people are the voters of tomorrow,” says National Student/Parent Mock Election President Gloria Kirshner.

Google will host the Mock Election Night headquarters at its offices in Washington, D.C., where student volunteers will tabulate the final results of the mock ballots cast by elementary through college students across the nation and in Ameri-

can schools abroad. Results of the National Student/Parent Mock Election will be posted on www.nationalmockelection.org on Oct. 30.

In the 2004 presidential election, more than 4 million votes were cast with Web voting available to American students and parents worldwide through the Mock Election.

Minneapolis District Creates Camp-Like Summer School

Summer school for many students is considered work – certainly not fun.

But in Minneapolis this summer, the school system added a fun factor that made summer school more engaging.

With help from outside organizations, the Minneapolis Public Schools offered summer school to some 9,000 students that seemed more like summer camp.

“Reading and math {are} still the focus,” said Mary Barrie, the district’s director of alternative and charter school programs, in the city’s *Star Tribune* newspaper. “That’s what we’re in business for, but you have to find ways to keep kids engaged.”

The school system did something different this summer: it mixed incentives with academics.

Dubbed “Camp MPS,” summer school featured fun activities with the help of outside partners, including the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

To make room for the incentives, the school district expanded the summer school day by some two hours.

The Minneapolis school district’s summer school coordinator, Jan Braaten, indicated in the *Star Tribune* that the camp-like program has attracted attention from the U.S. Department of Education.

Business Performance continued from page 3

also presents comparable city-by-city data on those indicators that will enable districts to benchmark themselves against high-performing school systems and identify best practices in each of the business areas.

Managing for Results was developed during the Council’s annual meetings of its chief operating, financial, human resource and information officers over the past five years, aimed at improving operational decisions and strengthening business practices in America’s big-city school systems.

Among new results of the multi-year study, the findings from 66 big-city school districts show that:

- The final general fund expenditures of the average big-city school district varied only 2.8 percent from their original projections;
- The percentage of big-city school districts with no new “material weaknesses” or audit problems increased from 79 percent in their 2005 audits to 82 percent in 2006;
- The average length of time needed to complete the procurement process and receive goods dropped slightly from 36 days in FY05 to 35 days in FY07; and
- The median cost of transporting students in FY07 was \$1,120 a child, up from \$988 two years ago, or 13.3 percent.

The Council expects big-city school boards and superintendents will be able to use the 103 indicators and the data gathered on them in the new report “to assess their own business operations, measure progress on operational reforms, and demonstrate greater transparency in district operations to the public,” Casserly emphasizes.

Managing for Results can be accessed on the Council’s web site at www.cgcs.org.

Bridge-to-Employment Program Deemed A Success in Wilmington, Del.

Only one in eleven eighth-graders from the Southbridge and Eastside neighborhoods in Wilmington, Del., is likely to graduate from high school. Yet a new com-

New Leaders *continued from page 3*

ceeding Rosa Blackwell, who retired from the district. Ronan is the district's director of schools, where she supervises principals.

Virginia's Richmond Public Schools also selected an interim director, Yvonne Brandon, who served as the school system's deputy superintendent. Brandon replaces Deborah Jewell-Sherman, who resigned from the district to join the faculty at Harvard University.

And Ohio's Dayton Public Schools recently chose Kurt Stanic to become the interim superintendent, succeeding Percy Mack, who left the district to become the superintendent of the Richland One School District in Columbia, S.C. Stanic has been superintendent of several school systems in Ohio.

munity partnership between the Christina School District and a local company is leading to an increase in the number of graduates from these neighborhoods.

The school district has partnered with Noramco, Inc., a subsidiary company of Johnson & Johnson, to create the Bridge-To-Employment program that helps students increase their academic achievement. Under the program, students receive after-school support, mentoring and advice on entering a career in the health care fields. The program also encourages parental and family involvement.

And it is working, as evidenced by the results. Thirteen out of the 20 students that participated in Bridge-To-Employment as high school freshmen in 2005 will be seniors this fall. That means that 65 percent of the students enrolled in the program are on their way to achieving a high school diploma.

As a result of its success, the program recently received a grant of \$10,000 to continue helping students achieve success.

Great City Grads



Xavier Becerra

Congressman

1976 graduate

C.K. McClatchy High School

Sacramento Unified School District



Council of the Great City Schools
 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Suite 702
 Washington DC 20004

PRESORT
 First Class
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Washington, D.C.
 Permit No.251