

## IN THIS ISSUE



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## Policy Institute CEO, Education Official Address Council

Neera Tanden grew up in subsidized housing in Bedford, Mass., a Boston suburb with top-rated schools. Tanden, CEO of the Center for American Progress, recalled in a recent speech, that in third grade she was reading below average so her teacher Ms. Price spent a lot of time with her to improve her reading skills.

"I had a resource in Ms. Price and the Bedford schools that made it possible for me to get on grade-level," Tanden told big-city leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., for the Council of the Great City Schools' Annual Legislative/Policy Conference. "And I honestly think, if it wasn't for the investment in public education that Bedford made, I would not be where I am today."

For Tanden, who received free and reduced-price lunch as a student and was the daughter of a single mom from India, the



Neera Tanden, CEO of the Center for American Progress, praises public schools.

## Council Releases New Report On English Language Learners

English language learners are increasing their share of the overall enrollment in many large urban school districts, according to a new report by the Council of the Great City Schools.

*English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools* presents the results of a two year-long study to gather data on the fastest-growing demographic group in the nation's schools. It updates most of the data presented in the Council's first-ever study on English language learner (ELL) programs that was released in 2013 and incorporates new data from the Council's Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The new report is based on an extensive survey of Council member-districts in 2017 and examines data on ELL enrollment, languages spoken, student achievement, staffing and professional development.

### English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools

Demographics, Achievement, and Staffing



Research conducted by  
The Council of the Great City Schools



There are approximately five million ELLs enrolled in the nation's K-12 public schools and approximately 25 percent of

**New Report** continued on page 4

## Amicus Brief Filed in 2020 Census Case

The Council of the Great City Schools recently filed an *amicus curiae* brief with the Supreme Court of the United States urging the nation's highest Court to reject an appeal by the U.S. Commerce Department to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census because it would have a negative impact on the millions of students and families the Council serves.

Earlier this year, federal district courts ruled that adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census would low-

er self-response rates among non-citizens and Hispanics, resulting in the misallocation of millions of dollars in federal funding, including funds supporting federal education programs intended to help schools serving the nation's most vulnerable students.

The Council's 74 member-districts have significant non-citizen and Hispanic populations in their school communities. The population count derived from the

**Amicus Brief** continued on page 5

## Charlotte Launches Guns Can't Social Media Campaign

As part of a strategy to keep guns out of schools, North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools recently launched a social media campaign.

The aim of the Guns Can't campaign is to involve students and the community in creating inspirational posters to be shared on social platforms, boosting awareness of efforts to keep schools gun-free.

"This campaign has three clear goals," said Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent Clayton Wilcox. "We want to help keep weapons out of our schools, lift up our young people's talents and abilities, and invite the participation of everyone in keeping schools safe."

The Guns Can't campaign launched with a series of posters contrasting what guns can't do with what students can do, such as "Guns Can't THINK But I Can" and "Guns Can't SING But I Can." The campaign will be open for participation via social media and includes a generator feature that allows individuals in the community to create their own posters.

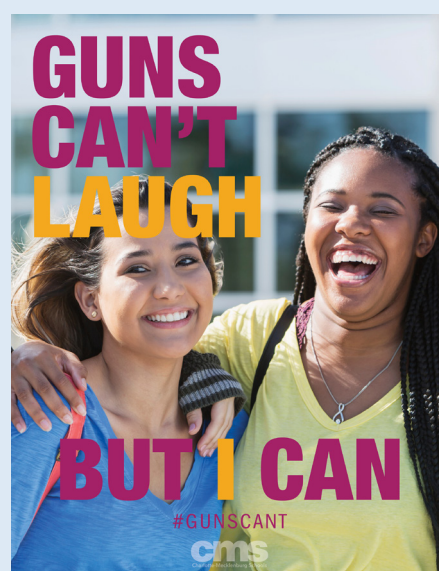
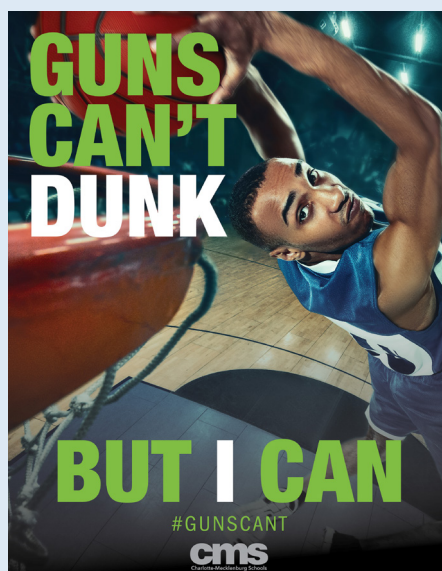
In October, a 16-year-old student was shot and killed in a hallway at the district's

Butler High School by another student.

"Guns Can't is based on a simple idea – gun violence in schools stands in the way of students who can make the most of their talents, skills and abilities in safe schools," said Tracy Russ, the district's chief communications officer. "We invite everyone to participate in Guns Can't and join us in working to keep schools safe,

welcoming environments for teaching and learning."

The new social media campaign is one of several safety and security measures that is part of a districtwide initiative called the CMS Circle of Safety, which identifies what schools, students, families and the community can do to keep schools safe.



The posters are part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' social media campaign raising awareness of the dangers of guns.



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A newsletter published by the Council of the Great City Schools, representing 74 of the nation's largest urban public school districts.

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## Minneapolis and Kansas City Leaders Receive Contract Extensions; Puerto Rico's Education Secretary Steps Down



Ed Graff

Ed Graff became the superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools in 2016 and under his leadership, two referendums were approved, the district's finances improved and an elementary literacy curriculum was implemented districtwide.

As a result, the district's board of education recently gave Graff a three-year contract extension.

"We've seen a lot of progress over the last three years under Superintendent's Graff's leadership," said Board Chair Nelson Inz in a press release. "We look forward to continuing the important and necessary work happening [in the district] under his stewardship."

Also receiving a three-year contract extension was Mark Bedell, the superintendent of Missouri's Kansas City Public Schools. Bedell was named superintendent in 2016 and during his tenure, the school district recently scored at full accreditation level on the Missouri academic performance report that measures how well school districts are doing at meeting state standards.



Mark Bedell

"The Kansas City Public Schools has experienced significant academic growth and attracted new interest and support from the Kansas City community since Bedell joined the school district," said School Board President Melissa Robinson in a press statement.

### Leader Steps Down

Julia Keleher, the secretary of education for Puerto Rico's school system, recently stepped down after serving in the position since January 2017.

Keleher led the school district when Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in September 2017, resulting in schools suffering severe storm damage and flooding. At her request, a facilities team from the Council of the Great City Schools traveled to the island to assess damaged schools building and conduct repairs to reopen schools. In March 2018, they made a second visit to Puerto Rico aimed at helping the island build facility capacity, and organize, manage and fund school buildings.

Eligio Hernández Pérez, who was the deputy secretary of Puerto Rico's Department of Education, was recently selected as interim secretary.

## Seattle School District Approves Strategic Plan Focused on Ensuring Racial Equity



Denise Juneau

After taking the reins of the Seattle Public Schools in July 2018, Denise Juneau embarked on a "Listening and Learning Tour," where she attended more than 20 community meetings and seven town halls.

The community discussions helped shape the foundation for the 52,931-student school system's five-year strategic plan, which was unanimously approved by the district's school board recently.

The new plan will focus on achieving educational justice and racial equity for students from certain ethnicities who have

not historically experienced equitable educational opportunities, such as African and African American; Asian Pacific Islander and Pacific Islander; Hispanic; and Native American students.

The district will ensure these students are provided with welcoming learning environments, curriculum that incorporates their life experiences and culture, and instruction delivered by high-quality, culturally responsive teachers.

The plan will specifically focus on African American males, which the district believes will ultimately benefit every student.

In an effort to ensure racial equity and address the needs of students of color, the plan will focus on five priorities:

**Racial Equity** continued on page 9

## Buffalo Superintendent Honored For Making A Difference

Kriner Cash, the superintendent of New York's Buffalo Public Schools, was recently recognized by the *Buffalo News* as one of the city's most outstanding citizens in 2018.



Kriner Cash

Appointed as superintendent in 2015, he is credited for moving the 34,000-student school system in the right direction.

Under Cash's leadership, the number of schools in good standing in the district have more than doubled since 2015, while

**Buffalo Superintendent** continued on page 4



**New Report** *continued from page 1*

these students attend school in one of the Council's 74 school districts. ELLs are also among the fastest growing groups in big-city school districts, comprising 17 percent of the total urban school enrollment. In addition, Council member districts often enroll a large majority of the ELLs in their given state. For example, Clark County School District in Las Vegas enrolls more than 70 percent of Nevada's ELLs, while Providence Public Schools enrolls half of the ELLs in Rhode Island. For 17 other states, Council member districts were responsible for educating more than one-quarter of all ELLs in their respective states.

### **More Languages Spoken**

ELLs are increasing not only in number, but also in diversity. The number of languages that appear in the lists of the top five most frequently spoken across the Council membership has increased from 38 languages in 2013 to 50 in 2017. And approximately, 92.4 percent of all ELLs in Council districts speak Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, or Vietnamese.

State teacher credentialing requirements have not kept up pace with the growing number of ELLs, according to the new report. Half of reporting districts indicated that their respective state had no requirements for general education and for special education teachers of ELLs and 29 percent reported having no state requirements for content-area teachers of ELLs, despite that ELLs spend the majority of the school day with general education teachers.

The report also includes new data on the number of ELLs who remain in English learner programs for a long period of time. The majority of Council districts (35), had more than 10 percent of their ELLs in language acquisition programs for six years or more.

Because state assessments vary, the report used data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and found gaps in reading and mathematics between ELLs and non-ELLs. However, the report provides a more nuanced analysis of ELL achievement gaps--English learn-

ers on free and reduced-price lunch scored at lower levels--while former ELLs often performed above students who had never been English learners.

Using data from the Council's Academic KPI Project to compare ELLs and non-ELLs, the report showed that ELLs were more likely to have failed one or more courses in Grade 9 but were just as likely as non-ELLs to complete Algebra I by ninth grade.

According to the report, big-city school districts are using a variety of efforts to recruit qualified teachers of English learners, including partnering with higher education institutions and "grow-your-own" programs. However, the most commonly used strategy to fill ELL teacher vacancies was the use of alternative certification programs.

The study also surveyed districts on how they allocated their Title III funds and on the professional development provided to staff, with more urban school districts offering professional development to principals, from 22 districts in 2009-2010 to 39 districts in 2015-2016.

"This report is one of the most comprehensive data-collection efforts on English language learners and goes even further than our 2013 report to provide an in-depth look into how the nation's urban school districts are educating ELLs," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly. "We applaud big-city school districts for offering more innovative programs to improve the achievement of ELLs."

### **Buffalo Superintendent** *continued from page 3*

the number of schools facing state intervention has significantly decreased.

In recognition of his efforts, Cash was a finalist for the Council of the Great City Schools' Green-Garner Award, presented last fall to the nation's top urban superintendent.

In an interview with the *News*, Cash credited the school system's success to the hard work being performed persistently by the district's employees.

"In a large organization like this with so many challenges, we have to be at our peak performance at all time," said Cash.

## **Males of Color Program Launched in Richmond**

Virginia's Richmond Public Schools recently launched Brothers United, a city-wide initiative developed to offer mentoring opportunities to young men of color through relationship building and leveraging partnerships within the Richmond community.

The initiative aims to reduce the large disparities in reading proficiencies in African American and Hispanic youth, along with decreasing the number of those who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system.

"Brothers United is committed to ensuring every young man of color meets their full potential," said Shadae Harris, the

district's chief engagement officer, in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

Students will meet with their mentors for 30 minutes each week, and once a month they will participate in different experiences



together, including visits to Virginia State University, a historically black university. Each mentor will commit to a two-year agreement.

George Mason Elementary is the first school to have the program, however Harris said the district hopes to expand the program to four more elementary schools this year, giving male students of color experiences and relationships they wouldn't otherwise have.

"It takes a village and Brothers United is about uplifting our young men and providing them with opportunities to grow and learn from leaders throughout the Richmond community," said Richmond Schools Superintendent Jason Kamras. "We are thankful for everyone who has sponsored a student experience and volunteered their time and expertise to be a positive role model in the life of our students."

**Amicus Brief** continued from page 1

2020 census will be used to allocate billions of dollars in federal funding, a substantial amount that supports K-12 schools.

Districts represented by the Council educate a significant number of students from economically disadvantaged families and students with disabilities, who benefit from the two biggest federal education programs, both of which rely on census data: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Council analyzed data from six member school districts and found that they could lose millions of dollars, every year for the next decade, in funding for federal education programs if the citizenship question is included in the 2020 census.

A conservative undercount of 2 percent of non-citizen and Hispanic individuals would result in a reduction of \$3,990,081 a year in Title I funds for the Los Angeles Unified School District; \$942,727 for Chicago Public Schools; and \$753,030 for the Dallas Independent School District.

Decreases of this magnitude in federal education funding would have a significant negative impact on the educational opportunities available to students represented by Council districts. In the Los Angeles school system, the loss of Title I funds would require the district to eliminate as many as 200 teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, and psychologists.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools currently serves 331 Title I schools with more than 235,312 students. The anticipated undercount would require the school district to reduce federal Title I funds to schools, resulting in the loss of classroom teachers and instructional coaches.

"Adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census would have a detrimental effect on ensuring the nation's big-city school systems fulfill their mission of providing educational opportunity to all students, including students with disabilities and from low-income families," said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

In late April, the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case of *New York v. United States Department of Commerce*.

## Urban Educators Learn the Importance Of Counting Young Children for the Census

The Count All Kids Committee is a group of national children's organizations working with the U.S. Census Bureau to help them improve their plans to reach out to families with young children.

At the Council of the Great City Schools' recent Annual/Legislative Policy Conference urban educators heard from Deborah Stein, network director for the Partnership for America's Children, which is one of the organizations that is part of the Count All Kids Committee.

Data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau is used to guide how an estimated \$880 billion a year in federal tax dollars for public services such as schools, is distributed to local communities across the nation.

As a result, it is critical for urban school districts to help the communities they serve be counted in the 2020 census.

The 2010 census missed more than 10 percent of all children under age 5 in the country, the single biggest age group missed. The second most undercounted group was children ages 5-9.

Stein told conferees that improving the counting of young kids leads not only to more funding for national programs such as Title I and Head Start, but also matters because school demographers use census data to determine the building of schools.

"This is an exciting opportunity for you, because if you count more kids in your communities your funding goes up," said Stein. "It's a practical thing you can do to improve your funding that doesn't depend on outside funding decisions."

She urged big-city school leaders to join Complete Count Committees established by their state and local governments to motivate residents to respond to the 2020 census. This will be the first census people can complete online, so Stein also encouraged conferees to provide internet access at schools for parents and guardians.

The Count All Kids website, [www.countallkids.org](http://www.countallkids.org), will provide free materials educators can download and distribute in the upcoming months.



Council Director of Legislation Jeff Simering looks on as children's advocate Deborah Stein discusses the importance of the census counting young children.

## Newark Launches Teachers Academy

New Jersey's Newark Public Schools is creating a pipeline to educate, train and prepare future teachers with the launch of a new Teacher Education Academy.

The academy is a partnership among the Newark school system, Montclair State University and the American Federation of Teachers. In addition to preparing students for a career in teaching, the academy is designed to create a more diverse teaching workforce in the district's schools.

Montclair State University will help design the curriculum and provide adjunct professors to teach students. Internships will also be offered to participating students.

The program will accept any student in the district interested in becoming a teacher. Upon completion, graduates of the teaching academy will receive a substitute certificate and college credits.

According to the *Star-Ledger*, students who graduate from the academy as well as college, and pass the state's certifications to be a teacher, will be offered a \$50,000 teaching contract with the Newark school system. The academy is scheduled to open in 2020.

**Education Official** continued from page 1

central question for America is whether the nation is going to invest in every school and provide every student with the same opportunity to succeed.

“The beauty of my story,” said Tanden, “is that everyone attacks nameless education bureaucrats and government officials, but those nameless, faceless people implemented a series of policies that allowed me to be where I am today.”

Now president of the Center for American Progress, a public policy research and advocacy organization in Washington, D.C., Tanden praised urban educators for working to ensure students with few opportunities in their lives receive a high-quality education.

“The measure of this country is whether we are going to help or hurt you in your job,” she said.

Because it is a place where students come together from all different walks of life, Tanden believes that public education is the ideal venue to teach students about civic values and virtues.

In fact, she said public education with its broad diversity could help resolve the country’s current environment of tribalism with its attacks on people who are different.

“How do we answer the question, what kind of country are we supposed to be when we have leaders who are spending time dividing people against one another?” she asked conferees.

According to Tanden, public education is not only a vehicle for increasing civic engagement, but is the key driver of economic opportunity and upward mobility.

“Places with good public schools have more economic mobility,” said Tanden, “and places with poor public schools have less economic mobility.”

She criticized the Trump Administration for its latest budget, which she said cuts \$8.5 billion from the U.S. Department of Education, eliminating vital programs.

“As we face an increase in global competition for talent; as we face deepening divisions in a country between different groups based on race and religion, this is the time we should be dramatically expanding and investing in education, not cutting it back,”



**Assistant Secretary of Education Frank Brogan discusses the *Every Student Succeeds Act*.**

Tanden stressed.

A former policy director for the Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama presidential campaigns, Tanden believes that the 2020 presidential election offers a real opportunity to make education the centerpiece of the conversation.

“Public education is one of those issues in the minds of voters but not in the national debate,” said Tanden. “There is a real opportunity to develop an agenda that takes our schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the candidate who does that will do well.”

She observed that for the first time in her life, the nation is having debates in politics about who America is for, and she urged everyone to focus on how public schools can be places where the country comes together.

“Schools can be the place where we fight against these divisions, where we see people who are different from ourselves and where we invest in the experience of children who are so different from us,” said Tanden.

### **Offering Local Control**

Also addressing the conference was Frank Brogan, assistant secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education for the U.S. Department of Education.

He called 2019 a watershed moment for American education because the department is working with states and school districts to fully implement the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the bipartisan federal K-12 law passed in 2015.

“With ESSA, Congress made it clear that the Department of Education does

not control how states, districts, schools and educators ensure that every student succeeds,” Brogan told urban educators. “You have that responsibility.”

ESSA required states to develop their own accountability plans detailing measures to track student progress and performance, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

“We are looking at how every student is doing and want to know how every student is fairing,” stressed Brogan. “That word every, when Congress passed ESSA and the president signed, meant every student.”

According to Brogan, ESSA invites every state to determine the type and level of support the state will provide to struggling schools and how to allocate resources to ensure that every school improves.

“We know that our students will achieve at high levels if states allow for innovation at the local level,” said Brogan.

ESSA enables states to request waivers from various provisions under the law. Brogan said the department has received a significant number of such requests and has begun the process of tackling waivers and new testing pilots.

“I want to try and get everybody to yes on testing pilots and waivers,” said Brogan, “...but the one thing we can never do is be accused of violating the law.”

A former principal, he also discussed school violence and called on educators to find meaningful ways to implement high-quality social and emotional learning in the wake of the shooting deaths of students and staff at Florida’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. He announced that Education Secretary Betsy DeVos will recommend policy and funding proposals aimed at preventing school violence and improving physical security at the nation’s schools.

The assistant secretary acknowledged that some schools in districts across the nation are serving students very well while others are falling short, and believes ESSA offers a critical opportunity to change that.

“If the basic tenet of ESSA is more local control and greater flexibility,” Brogan said, “the saddest thing in the world is if we don’t pick up the gauntlet that’s been thrown to our feet by Congress.”



## Congressman Supports Fixing Aging Schools

Pennsylvania Democrat Dwight Evans has long been a supporter of repairing the nation's aging schools, so it was no surprise when the congressman introduced the Rehabilitation of Historic Schools Act (H.R. 922). The legislation would qualify funds spent upgrading school buildings for tax credits. What was surprising is that Evans says his bill was partly inspired by President Donald Trump.

"President Trump used the rehabilitation tax credit to renovate an old post office here in D.C. into a fancy hotel," Evans told urban educators at the Council of the Great City Schools' recent Annual Legislative/Policy Conference. "My thinking is: if that tax credit is good enough for his hotel, it's good enough to fix up schools for our kids!"

According to Evans, the federal historic rehab tax credit program requires reuse of a building in a way that is different from its original function, a restriction he said keeps local governments from partnering with private developers to rehabilitate schools.

Evans said his bill would qualify public schools to take advantage of the tax credit. He cited a similar bill enacted in Virginia that transformed a high school built during the Great Depression into a high-performing magnet school.

"My bill wouldn't fix 100 percent of our schools," admitted Evans, "but it would be an important tool in the toolbox."

The congressman said that inadequate public school facilities pose significant health and safety threats to more than 50 million students and three million teachers, particularly those in high-poverty schools. He referenced a 1996 report by the U.S. Government Accounting Office that found more than 15,000 schools were circulating air unfit to breathe.

"Our children deserve an equal shot at the future, regardless of their zip code," declared Evans. "This is about what our values are as a country."

Evans estimates the cost to repair aging schools in his Philadelphia district at \$4.5 billion. And a 2014 Department of Educa-



**Congressman Dwight Evans discusses his support for upgrading school buildings.**

tion study set the figure to bring all public schools into good condition at \$197 billion.

Evans said he believes the federal government has an obligation to upgrade schools because schools are neighborhood amenities that attract and retain residents. And schools in disrepair have a negative impact on communities.

"We have neighborhoods across this country that are on the brink of tipping either toward blight or growth," said Evans. "To transform these neighborhoods, school buildings have to be at the heart of it."

A member of the House Ways and Means Committee, Evans feels strongly that school buildings are a vital part of the nation's infrastructure and that using tax credits to fix aging schools can encourage private investment.

In addition to his bill, he is a proponent of Rep. Bobby Scott's (D-Va.) Rebuild America's Schools Act, which would create a \$70 billion grant program and \$30 billion tax bond program targeting high-poverty schools.

He observed that next month the nation will celebrate the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which ruled that desegregation of the nation's schools was to proceed "with all deliberate speed." Yet according to Evans, 64 years later American children are still learning, or trying to learn, in settings that are massively unequal.

"Children in lower-income school districts start from behind, and most of them never catch up," said Evans. "For all kids to compete, they have to have school facilities that allow them to compete."

## Three Urban Districts Awarded Grants To Help Students

Shelby County Schools in Memphis was recently awarded a \$1-million grant it will use to partner with three local organizations to create community schools that will provide wraparound services to students and community members.

The grant is part of the Together for Students Initiative, which is designed to help communities implement student-centered blueprints for learning. Four communities across the nation were given grants to fund projects that combine quality educational opportunities for students with health and wellness services, mentoring college readiness activities and work-based learning experiences.

Ohio's Dayton Public Schools and several local organizations received a \$1-million grant to continue to increase parent, youth and teacher involvement in planning and overseeing programs and changing policy through community organizing. The grant will also be used to fund teacher professional development programs.

And Chicago Public Schools and several local organizations received a \$750,000-grant to give Chicago youth access to engaging learning opportunities – in and outside the classroom – to develop social-emotional learning skills.

The Together for Students Initiative is a partnership among three organizations: the Coalition for Community Schools, Communities in Schools and Strive Together. The aim of the initiative is to accelerate the progress of communities in transforming how they meet the needs of individual learners.

"There is no one-size-fits-all fix for the challenges facing America's students," said Dale Erquiaga, Communities in Schools president and CEO. "Individual communities know what they need to do to get their students on the path to success – the Together for Students grants will help our communities make those ideas a reality."

## Principal Pipelines Boosted Achievement In Four Urban School Districts

Denver Public Schools was one of six large school districts that built a principal pipeline in 2011, providing novice principals with mentors, coaches and high-quality professional development.

According to a recent report, the effort paid off with all six districts demonstrating positive effects on student achievement in reading and math.

*Principal Pipelines: A Feasible, Affordable, and Effective Way for Districts to Improve Schools* by the RAND Corporation, reviewed the Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI), an \$85 million, six-year program funded by the Wallace Foundation and launched in the 2011-2012 school year.

In addition to Denver, the other districts participating represented by the Council of the Great City Schools were North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte; Florida's Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa; and the New York City school system. Also participating were Georgia's Gwinnet County Public Schools and Maryland's Prince George's County Schools.

Researchers compared student achievement test scores in pipeline district schools that received new principals with similar schools elsewhere in the districts' states, that received new principals.

The report found that after three or more years, schools with newly placed principals in pipeline districts outperformed comparison schools by 6.22 percentile points in reading and 2.87 percentile points in math. The improvement in reading and math not only occurred in elementary and middle schools, but also high schools. The report did not offer individual district results.

In addition, building principal pipelines were found to improve principal retention. According to the report, after three years

pipeline districts had nearly eight fewer losses for every 100 newly placed principals compared with other districts in their state.

Denver Public Schools used the \$12.5 million it received from the Wallace Foundation to support 176 new principal hires, who participated in the district's school leader onboarding program. According to district officials, 63 percent of those who attended principal onboarding are still school leaders in the district, while 70 percent of pipeline participants are still with the district.

In addition, 54 percent of district principals and 52 percent of assistant principals have attended one or more of the pipeline programs.

"These findings reinforce that our investment in leadership pipelines is a key lever for improving our schools and is paying off," said Denver Schools Superintendent Susana Cordova in a news release.

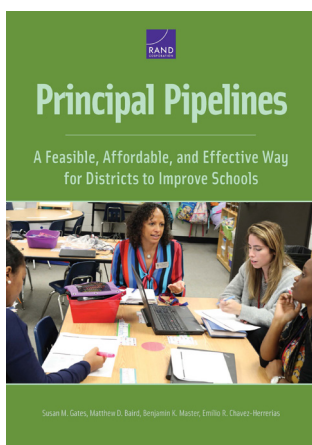
Each of the districts that participated in PPI put in place four components to increase principal effectiveness: rigorous

standards, high-quality pre-service preparation, data-informed hiring and support and evaluation of principals.

Pipeline-building was also found to be relatively inexpensive, with each district spending about \$42 a student a year on pipeline activities during the initiative.

"Districts looking for ways to enhance school outcomes and improve the retention of newly placed principals should be encouraged by the experiences of the [pipeline] districts," the authors of the report wrote. "Our findings suggest that when districts focused attention on activities related to principal pipelines, principals, schools and students benefitted."

The report is available at: [www.wallace-foundation.org/principalpipeline](http://www.wallace-foundation.org/principalpipeline).



## Urban Districts Named Best Communities For Music Education

New York's Rochester City School District offers vocal and general music instruction in every school and instrumental music is provided at every school for students in grades 4-12.

As a result, the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) recently recognized the school district as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education."

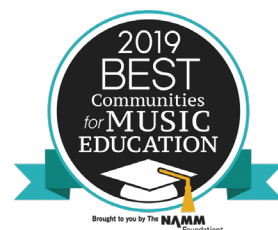
NAMM recognized 623 school districts whose teachers, administrators, students, and parents work to keep comprehensive music education an integral part of the core curriculum.

The designation for "Best Communities for Music Education" is awarded to districts that not only have high

participation in music classes and support for music programs, but also meet the standards related to funding and graduation requirements.

In addition to Rochester, urban school districts honored this year were: Texas' Arlington Independent School District; Fort Worth Independent School District and San Antonio Independent School District; New Mexico's Albuquerque Public Schools; Alabama's Birmingham City Schools; North Carolina's Guilford County Schools; Tennessee's Metro Nashville Public Schools and Shelby County Schools in Memphis; the School District of Philadelphia; Clark County School District in Las Vegas; and Florida's Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa; Orange County Public Schools in Orlando; and Palm Beach County Public Schools.

This is the 20th year in a row Clark County School District has made the list and the ninth year in a row Shelby County Schools made the list.





## Miami School District Receives International Honor

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has been named the 2018 Cambridge District of the Year Award for its successful implementation of the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education Program, a rigorous academic curriculum that stresses “broad and balanced study” and enables students to accumulate college-level credits or to attain advanced standing at the university level.

The nation’s fourth largest school district won in the large district category. The honor recognizes districts that have high academic achievement among students participating in Cambridge programs and for showing commitment to serving economically disadvantaged students.

Miami-Dade implements 82 Cam-

bridge Programs in 70 schools and has expanded access to Cambridge International exams in the past two years by approximately 37 percent.

The district achieved a 71 percent pass rate on Cambridge International exams for the 2017-2018 school year.

“Miami-Dade County Public Schools is second to none, accomplishing yet another incredible and powerful achievement,” said Miami Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho. “I am proud of our students for once again outperforming their peers nationwide and feel indebted to the leaders of our schools, the educators who teach these rigorous courses, and our School Board for having the wisdom to bring forth these educational opportunities.”

**Racial Equity** continued from page 3

- Allocating resources strategically through a racial equity framework;
- Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities;
- Creating healthy, supportive, culturally responsive environments;
- Working in partnership with families and communities who represent students of color; and
- Making clear commitments and delivering on them.

After passage of the strategic plan, Juneau called it a courageous statement to the district’s community, families and students.

“The plan reflects what I heard from our community and our shared commitment to racial equity and justice,” said Juneau. “While our ongoing work to provide excellence to all of our students will continue, this plan has clarity about how we will ensure success for students and families we have historically underserved.”

## Des Moines Honored For Improving Equity

In an effort to improve the academic and social outcomes of boys and young men of color, Iowa’s Des Moines Public Schools has hired school-based equity coaches, sponsors an annual national summit to help educators improve school climate and culture and has a central office-based School Climate, Culture and Community Coordinator.

The initiatives have been a success, with several district schools closing the achievement gap.

In recognition of its efforts, the Des Moines school system was recently selected as one of the three grand prize winners in the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Magna Awards program, sponsored by the National School Boards Association’s (NSBA) *American School Board Journal*.

The awards recognize school districts across the country for their programs that break down barriers for underserved students.

**Des Moines** continued on page 12

## Las Vegas, Palm Beach Educators Inducted Into Hall of Fame



Mary Jo Murray

Two urban school district educators are among the five inductees recently selected to enter the National Teachers Hall of Fame.

Mary Jo Murray is a math and calculus teacher at Suncoast Community High School in Palm Beach, Fla., and had no idea a routine pep rally held at her school would turn into a surprise induction announcement. But that’s exactly what happened, when during the rally she learned that she was named to the National Teachers Hall of Fame 2019 induction class.

A 36-year veteran teacher, Murray has taught at Suncoast since 2003.

As part of the school’s math, science and engineering program, she teaches honors calculus and pre-calculus. Murray has also taught at the university level.

Richard Knoeppel, a teacher at Advanced Technologies Academy in Las Vegas, was blindsided when Clark County



Richard Knoeppel

school district officials, school staff and National Teachers Hall of Fame representatives recently surprised him in his classroom to notify him of his selection to the National Teachers

Hall of Fame.

Knoeppel has been teaching architectural design at A-TECH since 1994. In addition to starting the school’s computer-aided design and drafting program, where he helped build a nationally recognized

**Hall of Fame** continued on page 12



## Hawaii Teacher Receives “LifeChanger” Award

Lori Kwee, fifth from left, a fourth-grade teacher at Ala Wai Elementary in Honolulu, was recently named a national 2018-2019 LifeChanger of the Year Grand Prize Finalist during an assembly held in the school's cafeteria. Sponsored by The National Life Group, the LifeChanger of the Year program recognizes and rewards the very best K-12 public and private school educators and employees across the nation who are making a difference in the lives of students. Kwee was one of five finalists selected from more than 832 teachers, administrators and school district employees nominated for the award. As a grand prize finalist, Kwee received \$2,500 and her school received \$2,500. The grand prize winner will be announced in May.

## Two Big-City School Districts Win Energy Award

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently awarded Iowa's Des Moines Public Schools high marks for its continued performance in improving and managing energy efficiency in its schools by selecting the district as one of its 2019 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year – Sustained Excellence recipients.

This is the highest honor among the ENERGY STAR awards and is presented to those partners that have already received ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year recognition for a minimum of two consecutive years. This is the eighth year in a row the Des Moines school district has been named an Energy Star Partner of the Year.

In 2017, the Des Moines school system earned an ENERGY STAR certification

for 94 percent of school buildings, with an average ENERGY STAR score of 92 percent across all school buildings. The district has also saved more than \$15 million in energy costs since 2008, with its energy-saving efforts such as replacing more than 23,000 fluorescent lights with LED lights and purchasing more than 13,000 ENERGY STAR certified computers for students and staff. The district has also created an interactive data-centric energy report card that provides insight into districtwide and building-specific energy usage.

Des Moines was not the only big-city school district to be honored with a 2019 ENERGY STAR Award. Florida's Pinellas

**Energy Award** continued on page 12

## Retired L.A. Educator Shines Spotlight On Notable Alumni

The nation's second largest school district is celebrating the publication of a book that shows the school system to have been as central to the city's worldwide fame as the entertainment industry is.

*Alumni History and Hall of Fame*, researched and written by former school administrator Robert Collins and his wife Sandy, spotlights alumni of the Los Angeles School District who have had notable career success in industries such as entertainment, business, science, education, journalism, law and sports.

District officials said the book reinforces the system's “legacy as a premiere school district in the country by identifying more than a thousand graduates who have distinguished themselves through achievement,” including Nobel laureates, Olympic medalists and Oscar and Grammy winners.

Collins spent more than five years searching high schools, libraries, local universities, websites and speaking to high school alumni associations to find notable district graduates. The book is divided into sections, such as “Scientists and the Nobel Prize,” “Hollywood Industry Film,” “Doctors and Researchers,” and “The Artists.”

Comedian Carol Burnett; recent Oscar-winning actress Regina King; choreographer Alvin Ailey; and jazz musician Herb Alpert are among the alumni featured.

The 400-page book is available at: <https://halloffame.lausd.net/>.



Robert Collins and his wife Sandy wrote a book on notable alumni from the Los Angeles school district.



## Pictorial of 2019 Legislative Conference



Council Chair Larry Feldman discusses the *Every Student Succeeds Act* with U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos during a meeting between DeVos and Council school leaders.



Sacramento school board member Darrel Woo, left, and San Diego school board member Michael McQuary attend a legislative briefing.



Columbus Schools Superintendent Talisa Dixon talks with school board member Michael Cole.



Denver school board member Allegra Haynes poses a question to congressional staffers.



Dallas Schools Superintendent Michael Hinojosa listens intently during a conference session.

**Photos by Alex Jones**





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#### **Energy Awards** *continued from page 11*

County Schools was also a recipient of the EPA's annual award.

According to the EPA, the school district was awarded 92 ENERGY STAR building certifications, making them the highest-ranked district school in the state of Florida for 2018. The school district has also seen an overall 17.5 percent reduction in energy consumption and a total of \$21.9 million in energy cost avoidance within the past four years.

Each year, EPA's ENERGY STAR program honors businesses and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to protecting the environment through superior energy achievements. This year, 183 recipients from 37 states were honored for their outstanding contributions to public health and the environment.

In a press release, EPA Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation Bill Wehrum applauded the 2019 ENERGY STAR Award Winners.

"Their innovation and leadership enhance America's economic competitiveness," said Wehrum. "Reducing costly energy waste improves air quality and public health while protecting the environment."

#### **Hall of Fame** *continued from page 9*

program of study in architectural design, he is a member of the Nevada STEM Advisory Council. Knoepfel was also selected as the 2019 Nevada Teacher of the Year.

The National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas was created in 1989 to honor exceptional teachers. Nominees must have a minimum of 20 years of teaching experience.

This year's honorees will attend several activities in Washington, D.C., and be formally inducted in June in Emporia.

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#### **Des Moines** *continued from page 9*

Winners were recognized in three enrollment categories, with the Des Moines school system winning in the over 20,000 students category.

"It takes commitment to start an equity program and fortitude to sustain it," said NSBA Executive Director & CEO Thomas Gentzel. "I congratulate the 2019 Magna Award winning districts for performing the hard and sometimes unpopular work to ensure their students are supported and provided with the tools and opportunities needed to succeed."

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## **Urban COO Wins Council Award**

David Palmer, the retired deputy director of transportation for the Los Angeles Unified School District, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Council of the Great City Schools at its recent Chief Operating Officers Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

The award honors business officials who exemplify leadership, innovation, commitment and professionalism in urban education.

Palmer is a 40-year veteran of the school bus industry, overseeing the design and implementation of performance standards, benchmarks and accountabilities. In his role as deputy director, he managed the bus operations for the Los Angeles school system, which included providing transportation for more than 75,000 students on 2,500 school buses to 850 schools and centers as well as the fleet and maintenance for more than 3,300 vehicles. He has also been an adviser for the Council's *Key Performance Indicator* projects.