

COUNCIL OF URBAN BOARDS OF EDUCATION

# 2005-2006 CUBE Report



Perspectives on Urban School Board Leadership



SERVING AMERICA'S URBAN  
PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

# Council of Urban Boards of Education 2005-2006



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Dear CUBE Member:

Almost 25 percent of all public school children reside in the nation's urban centers. Many of them are minority – almost half of the minority children in the U.S. attend an urban public school – and many of them are poor.

What, how, and where these children are learning is a major focus of the Council of Urban Boards of Education, the one organization that solely serves the governance leaders of the nation's largest districts. The 108 CUBE member districts benefit from programming and products that help members become effective policy makers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education.

As the professional organization for urban school board members, CUBE provides you with programming on cutting-edge issues, issues-based task forces on which to serve, and products such as the CUBE Annual Survey of School Climate. We awarded the second **CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence** to a deserving member – the School District of Hillsborough County, Fla. – and recognized Norfolk, Va., and San Antonio as the finalists.

This year's edition of Perspectives: 2005-2006 takes a look back at the past 12 months. However, our focus continues to look forward as we strive to improve academic achievement for all students. Thank you for moving ahead with us as well.

Don E. Blom  
Associate Executive Director  
Constituent Services  
NSBA

Brian Perkins  
CUBE Chair  
New Haven Public Schools  
New Haven, Conn.



## Perspectives on Urban School Board Leadership 2005-2006

It was an event that left images seared into our collective conscience in ways only such touchstones can. Like all life-altering events, it has made us confront realities that many choose to push aside or avoid altogether. And those realities — race, poverty, politics, and culture — sit at the doorsteps of schools everywhere, every day.

Today, less than a year after Hurricane Katrina displaced more than 370,000 schoolchildren, districts across the United States are searching for answers to these vexing issues in an effort to provide an equal education for all students. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the 108 school districts served by the Council of Urban Boards of Education.

As leaders of the nation's largest urban districts, CUBE members receive training and tools to deal with the realities that schoolchildren face daily. All of CUBE's work serves one purpose: to help urban school boards do their jobs better by underscoring their commitment to education for all students.

Generations from now, the words Hurricane Katrina will continue to spark memories of

heroism, tragedy, sadness, and courage. For the children displaced by the storm, the trauma of fleeing their homes will be blunted — at least somewhat — by the comfort of knowing that they could turn to a place that offered stability and a chance to learn: the public school.

Whether that school was in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, or Mobile County, or in Denver, Buffalo, or St. Louis, CUBE districts welcomed all students with open arms. As Noel Hammatt, a member of the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, said during CUBE's Annual Conference: "Local school boards opened their doors and took in students without ever wondering where the federal government stood. We did the job that needed to be done. In my mind, there's no better justification for local control and school boards than what we saw in the last few weeks."

### Race and Poverty

Long before Katrina, CUBE programming focused on how poverty and racial issues impact student achievement. Now, CUBE is looking at school climate and its impact on achievement, using data collected from more than 33,000 students across

the United States. And in 2006, CUBE will focus on ways to create safe schools, how to deal with poverty and the achievement gap, and continue its ongoing "Conversation on Race" series.

This type of programming is critical to all school board members — especially the ones that were impacted significantly by Hurricane Katrina. And no school district felt the brunt of the storm more than Orleans Parish, which serves New Orleans and surrounding suburbs. During a session at the CUBE Annual Conference in Las Vegas, school board member Jimmy Fahrenholtz said that the district's 65,000 students were gone and that at least 80 flooded schools would need to be bulldozed to the ground.

"There's going to be some distress and trauma, but we're going to come back," Fahrenholtz said. "We're in New Orleans. We've faced bubonic plague, influenza, yellow fever, all kinds of hurricanes, and more floods than you can read about in the Bible. Now our job is to provide a free and appropriate education to whoever walks through our doors."

The challenges of providing that free and

appropriate education are compounded in Orleans Parish and other urban school districts that confront the twin issues of race and poverty, which rose for the fourth straight year in 2004. In his 2005 book, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*, author Jonathan Kozol writes that U.S. schools are more segregated than ever by race and economics.

CUBE's response to this ongoing crisis is to provide programming that resonates with and informs its members. Among those who discussed race and poverty this past year: author Richard Rothstein, whose 2004 book *Class and Schools* says educators alone cannot lift children from poverty; John A. Powell, executive director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity; David Berliner, author of *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud, and the Attack on America's Public Schools*; and Glenn Singleton, executive director of the San Francisco-based Pacific Educational Group.

Rothstein, speaking at the NSBA Annual Conference in San Diego, says it is far simpler to let schools take responsibility for children. And that is a reason schools – especially urban schools – take the brunt of blame for many of society's ills.

"It's not to say that urban schools cannot do a better job," Rothstein told CUBE leaders. "But student achievement is a product of both students' social backgrounds and the quality of schools. You can't expect satisfactory outcomes by focusing on just one."

Singleton, a consultant who is helping school districts boost minority achievement, says racial, social, and economic factors are not necessarily interchangeable when attempting to explain the achievement gaps between students.

"Don't redefine racial factors into other terms that we're more comfortable with," Singleton said during a session at the CUBE Annual Conference. "In order to address the racial achievement disparity, it is necessary to address race."

School board members don't have to look far to identify the impact that race has on students. CUBE's 2005 school climate survey (see related story, pages 7-8) revealed that students' experiences — such as whether they feel safe at school or that teachers hold high expectations — are influenced by race. And students from Clark County, NV talked of the challenges that schools have to promote diversity during a panel session at the CUBE Annual Conference.

The session was one in a series of workshops sponsored by CUBE's Racial Isolation Task Force that are designed to combat what Singleton calls "race fatigue." Florence Johnson, the task force's co-chair and president of the Buffalo, NY school board, says the workshops will continue because issues of race and poverty are "still a problem in our country."

"Race touches every facet of a student's life," says Johnson. "It becomes a matter of demanding that those responsible for policy development and financial support provide sufficient funds."

## Finding Funds Difficult

Finding those funds – at the local, state, and federal level – has been especially difficult over the past year. To fund hurricane relief efforts and slice into a growing federal deficit, Congress cut federal spending on education for the first time in a decade. The cuts left educators questioning whether school districts could meet the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act and using words like "abysmal," "devastating," and "unconscionable" to describe Congress' moves.

In September, NSBA urged Congress to send relief assistance funds directly to school districts that have suffered losses due to the hurricanes. Instead, Congress passed legislation that resulted in a reduction in federal funds for public schools and enacted a private school voucher program under the guise of hurricane relief. The legislation, passed just weeks before the Florida Supreme Court declared that state's voucher program unconstitutional, provides public, private, and charter schools up to \$6,000 for each displaced student and up to \$7,500 per special education student enrolled following Katrina and Rita.

"This has been a year of great challenges for our nation, from war to devastating hurricanes," NSBA President Joan Schmidt said following the vote in December. "The nation's defense bill, which includes funding for our troops during a time of war, should never have been used as a cover to enact bad legislation for our public schools. But that is precisely what Congress has done ... leaving behind broken promises to America's schoolchildren."

Michael A. Resnick, NSBA's Associate Executive Director, warned CUBE members at the CUBE Annual Conference that education funding was in jeopardy because the federal government's budget woes cannot be resolved quickly.

"This is not going to be a quick fix," he said. "This is not a one-year deal. Over time, those [district] budgets are going to be dissipated by unexpected expenses."

The federal budget woes only heightened the pinch that many urban districts already are feeling due to declining enrollment and shrinking state funding. In Detroit, where enrollment has fallen by 35,000 students over the past decade, the district developed a deficit-reduction package that led to the closure of more than 30 schools and 2,800 layoffs. Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and St. Louis also made large cuts to balance 2005-06 budgets. And before Katrina hit, the state of Louisiana announced that it would take over the financially troubled New Orleans schools.

Some districts, however, expanded existing programs or added new ones to improve student achievement. Denver, boosted by the approval of a \$25 million voter referendum in November, started a merit-pay system for teachers based on improvements in student performance. Bonus plans were proposed in Charlotte and Houston as well to keep highly qualified teachers in challenging schools.

Visit CUBE's website for up-to-date information on what's happening with CUBE. Members can join e-mail groups, read the latest edition of the *Urban Advocate*, download upcoming conference brochures, handouts from previous meetings, links to all member districts, and much more. [www.nsba.org/cube](http://www.nsba.org/cube)



Chicago expanded its after-hours tutoring program for students who scored below national norms, at a cost of \$4 million. Los Angeles continued its four-year, \$100 million effort to expand full-day kindergarten to all of its 450 elementary schools. The Tucson Unified School District board looked at cutting the \$4.9 million it spends on full-day kindergarten — but ultimately spared the program.

James Comer, founder of the Yale Child Study Center's School Development Program, told board members at the CUBE Issues Seminar in Boston that investing in programs such as these will make a difference.

"Every time a child is helped by those around him or her to deal with a crisis, the child grows," he says. "The child gains confidence in handling his or her environment. So helping administrators and teachers learn how to help children is investing in that. It will go a long way toward addressing many problems."

Given the financial challenges that districts face, the NSBA Board of Directors has made a significant investment to increase the association's advocacy presence on Capitol Hill. And it has paid off, as the U.S. Department of Education has made revisions to the No Child Left Behind Act over the past year, thanks in part to legislation pushed by NSBA and the Forum on Educational Accountability, a coalition of 67 education and civic organizations.

But as Reginald Felton, NSBA's Director of Federal Programs, told CUBE members at the Issues Seminar, the effort to make changes to NCLB and other legislation requires the presence of local board members to be truly successful.

"As you begin your own talks with members of Congress, there are very few of them who won't acknowledge that changes are needed," Felton said. "What they have to understand is that acknowledgement is not good enough. We need them to move forward so that the changes we're seeking will come about."

## Houston: Growing district faces new hurdle

The Houston Independent School District is spending about \$186,000 a day to cover the costs associated with educating more than 6,000 students displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita last fall.

And the district hasn't blinked at spending the money, even though it did not receive word until January that it would be reimbursed — \$6,000 per student, \$7,500 for those with special needs — for the expense.

In the chaotic weeks after Hurricane Katrina, Houston was praised for enrolling more than 5,000 Louisiana students. The district has worked hard to keep Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra's promise to the school board: "We're

going to treat them like our own kids."

The long-awaited reimbursements are part of the \$1.6 billion education hurricane relief package that President Bush signed in December to help reopen the 700 hurricane-affected public and private schools across the Gulf Coast. The money — which is allocated in quarterly payments to state education agencies that will then make payments to the district — covers about 90 percent of the expenses.

"It would have been nice to receive the money directly, especially in our district where we reportedly will take a \$30 million hit at the end of the school year for this effort,"

says Kevin Hoffman, a member of the Houston school board. "We're going to do all we can to expedite the flow of this money."

The City of Houston won national praise for welcoming Katrina refugees as the Astrodome and downtown convention center were transformed into huge shelters. The city remains home to almost 150,000 evacuees, and area school districts have enrolled some 25,000 students from New Orleans.

"Of course, if we had a chance to do it all over again, we wouldn't change a thing. This is a responsibility that we have to our neighbors, but it does come at a cost," Hoffman says.

## Politics and Governance

How can urban school districts address the problems that educators face? One way is to join other CUBE school districts and participate in advocacy efforts at the state and federal level. Another is by being willing to have their work judged by outside organizations and measurements.

The latter is something CUBE member districts do. For example, 10 of the 11 districts that participated in the 2005 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment are CUBE members. Those districts are Atlanta; Austin; Boston; Charlotte, NC; Chicago; Cleveland; Houston; Los Angeles; San Diego; and Washington, DC.

Accolades for urban school districts are tough to come by, but CUBE districts have proven that hard work and careful attention to governance can pay off. Three of the five finalists for the 2005 Broad Prize for Urban Education — Boston; Norfolk, Va.; and San Francisco — are CUBE members. Norfolk won the award, and was a finalist for the second consecutive year for the CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence along with San Antonio and the School District of Hillsborough County, FL, this year's winner.

Thomas W. Payzant, who is retiring after a decade as Boston's superintendent, cited these and other efforts during a speech at the CUBE Issues Seminar. Payzant, whose district won the first CUBE Annual Award, said standards-based reforms have changed education significantly because “once you have standards, you are in direct conflict with and challenging the bell shape curve.”

To some extent, Payzant said, the success of any governance structure depends on relationships — among board members, with community groups, and with the superintendent. “It comes down to have a very clear understanding [about] the rules of communications and engagement,” he said.

Still, education and politics are intertwined, especially at the urban level. That's one reason CUBE devoted much of its attention to sessions on sound

governance and civility in 2005. The Governance & Training Task Force surveyed CUBE members to learn more about board evaluations, and the Communications Task Force sponsored a session on civil discourse at the CUBE Annual Conference.

“The discourse on our boards is a unique experience,” Phillip Boyle, president of Learning and Governing Associates, said during the conference. “There's nothing else like it in our lives. There is no other institution that works this way. That's one of the reasons it's so hard. We don't get to practice these skills.”

Jo Ann Yee, director of urban education and outreach for the California School Boards Association, said conflict stems partly from the psychological shift that board members must make from individual candidate to team member after they are elected. She said it is a difficult perspective for some board members.

“Often what they really want to do is represent a particular interest or constituency group or keep an eye on the board and superintendent so they don't get out of line,” Yee said. “But they can't do that and be a successful team player. And a team is what it takes.”

Urban school board members are being squeezed from all directions. And while it is important to recognize the increasingly political nature of public education, boards must have a common vision with norms and beliefs. Noel Hammatt, East Baton Rouge school board member, said board members must move beyond sound bites and policy statements to be successful.

“Everyone, at some level, got on the school board because they want to make things better. You're going to have to practice a level of humility,” he said during the civil discourse session. “We need to step off our soapbox and truly listen and start to find those small pieces of common ground. Leadership is about convincing people to work together and move forward. It's about doing the job that needs to be done. It's not about winning battles.”

## Boston: Focused on Excellence

Every urban school board must deal with issues surrounding race and poverty — and their impact on children. But few have addressed these issues with the institutional focus of the Boston Public Schools.

Since the Boston school committee adopted its Focus on Education reform plan in 1996, the school district has worked to close the achievement gap between white and minority students and between affluent and poorer children.

This focus is paying dividends. For example, from 1998 to 2003, the achievement gap between the lowest-scoring and highest-scoring racial groups (Asian/white and Hispanics) narrowed from 23 percentage points to 13 in English language arts.

Passing rates among racial groups rose from the 57 to 80 percentage range to the 79 to 92 percent range.

Meanwhile, in 2004, student test scores in Boston improved at a faster rate than the state average in nearly every grade tested.

“The achievement gap is not something we're looking at for the first time,” says schools spokesperson Chris Horan. “But, over the last couple years, we've really launched a more elaborate campaign.”

As part of that campaign, school officials have focused on data-driven decision making, early education, literacy and math instruction, a “sheltered English instruction” program for English language learners, after-school programs, and additional professional

development for school teams.

For students at the highest risk of failure, the school system has established a 12-month school year and invested in extra support in reading and math. The district also provides mandatory summer school for academically struggling students, is investing in reduced class sizes, and is encouraging minority participation in Advanced Placement courses.

At the same time, the community has helped by investing additional resources in its schools. Between fiscal years 1996 and 2002, the city boosted the district's operating budget by 43 percent — to \$635 million.

With such dedication, it is little wonder that Boston won the 2004 CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence.



Many school improvement initiatives focus on raising test scores, but the learning environment also influences students, teachers, and staff members. And students' perceptions about that environment – especially as they relate to safety, teachers, and the learning process – affect achievement as well.

## *Where We Learn: The CUBE Survey of Urban School Climate*

Student perceptions were the central focus of *Where We Learn: The CUBE Survey of Urban School Climate*. The largest research project ever undertaken by CUBE, the survey includes responses from 33,000 students in 13 states.

“Perceptions can have a distinct impact on how well students learn,” says Brian Perkins, chair of the CUBE Steering Committee and the principal investigator for the survey. “Students who think their schools are the ‘best ever’ are more likely to feel confident about themselves as learners than students who feel they are the targets of bullying, racism, or disrespect. Feelings like these, both positive and negative, define a school’s climate — that is, the personality of the learning environment.”

Researchers and educators agree that school climate influences students, teachers, and staff members and affects student achievement. CUBE’s Urban

Student Achievement Task Force shepherded the survey in the hopes that student perceptions can help school boards in their decision making and improvement initiatives.

The study results, to be released in spring 2006, are divided into five categories: school safety; bullying; trust, respect, and ethos of caring; racial self-concept; and general climate.

“The results from the survey were overwhelmingly positive,” says Warren Hayman, Co-Chair, CUBE Urban Student Achievement Task Force. “Most important, it found that most students feel safe in their schools and are not themselves the targets of bullying. It was also encouraging to discover that more than 70 percent of the students surveyed say they enjoy learning at their school, and 80 percent plan to continue their education in one form or another.”

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Fifteen CUBE school districts participated in the CUBE Survey on Urban School Climate. In all, more than 33,000 students from 13 states took part in the survey.

Participating districts (in alphabetical order) were:

- :: Baltimore County Public Schools  
Towson, MD
- :: Cartwright School District #83  
Phoenix, AZ
- :: Chicago Public Schools  
Chicago, IL
- :: Fort Bend Independent School District  
Sugar Land, TX
- :: Grand Rapids Public Schools  
Grand Rapids, MI
- :: Isaac School District #5  
Phoenix, AZ
- :: Lincoln Public Schools  
Lincoln, NE
- :: Mobile County Public School System  
Mobile, AL
- :: New Haven Public School District  
New Haven, CT
- :: Portsmouth City Public Schools  
Portsmouth, VA
- :: Orleans Parish Public Schools  
New Orleans, LA
- :: San Francisco Unified School District  
San Francisco, CA
- :: St. Paul Independent School District #625 – St. Paul, MN
- :: Tulsa Public Schools  
Tulsa, OK
- :: Ysleta Independent School District  
El Paso, TX



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Perkins and Hayman said the results point to a few areas that need attention and further investigation. Among them:

- :: The degree to which students witness others being bullied;
- :: Why students in upper grades do not have much confidence that teachers can stop bullying;
- :: Why some races are more likely to believe that other races do better in school than they do; and

:: Why older students have less trust in their teachers.

The findings, Perkins says, should provide policymakers with their clearest picture yet about the experiences, attitudes, and non-academic development of children in urban schools. Much of CUBE's programming at meetings in 2006-07 will focus on how urban school leaders can provide a firm foundation on which to create positive learning experiences for all students — regardless of race, gender, or grade.

## Fort Bend: Survey Seeks Information

Having spent years focusing on the needs of its diverse student population, the school board of the Fort Bend (TX) Independent School District jumped at the chance to participate in CUBE's national school climate survey.

"The climate survey gives the district an opportunity to assess the value of some of those prior efforts in diversity and determine if we need to do some things differently," says school board member Cynthia Knox. "It's information that helps me understand what the district should focus on."

The district already conducts a "diversity survey" to gather information that identifies issues surrounding its diverse student population.

School officials also look at issues where the racial or ethnic background of a student might influence his or her experiences at school—such as the number of minorities in advanced or honors classes, the diversity of curricular and extracurricular activities, and whether any race is disproportionately represented in discipline referrals.

The results of the climate survey also should help district officials in refining diversity training for staff members, including non-certified personnel such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians.

"The goal is really to treat all children with respect at all times," says Maria Pitre, director of research and staff development. "We don't

want staff members to have any generalizations or stereotypes or preconceptions about kids."

The survey results have been reviewed by the school board and central administration, as well as the school system's diversity task force and advisory council—two groups that will help set the agenda on the district's diversity initiative. Focus groups of students will be invited to meet with school officials to provide an anecdotal perspective to the data.

One finding that caught Knox's eye is the student response about whether any adults cared about their educational success. "The majority didn't feel they had any particular adult who cared about their education," she says. "Things like that really do stand out."

## CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence

The three districts are far apart in terms of geography – one is in Florida, one in Texas, and one in Virginia – but they have one big thing in common: a desire and drive to educate all children to the best of their ability.

That desire – and willingness to implement and pursue programs to achieve continued success – is what set the winner and two finalists apart in the race for the Council of Urban Boards of Education's second annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence.

The School District of Hillsborough County in Tampa, FL, Virginia's Norfolk Public Schools and Texas' San Antonio Independent School District were selected last summer as finalists for the award, sponsored by McGraw-Hill Education. Hillsborough County won the top honor at the CUBE Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

Tampa's application "stood out from the very beginning," the judges said, citing the district's internal accountability system and the board's focus on collaborative governance. As examples, they noted that the district has master board training that includes the senior administrative staff as well as an urban education institute that informs teachers and staff on issues unique to urban schools.

"I think for years we've tried to do the same thing

for every school on the theory that that's what's fair," says Candy Olson, the school board chair. "We've learned that doing the same for every school is not what's fair. We have to do different things where there are different needs."

All three school boards, which govern majority minority districts, were recognized for their leadership and efforts to improve student achievement, narrow the achievement gap, and bring their diverse communities together. As the winner, Tampa received \$5,000 for its student scholarship fund.

Among the finalists, the judges noted that San Antonio has a board and superintendent with a particularly strong working relationship. Both the superintendent and the board "understand the relationship between good governance, closing the achievement gap, advancing district-wide academic excellence, and strengthening the community," the judges stated.

"Being very clear about roles, responsibilities and the purpose of the board has made a significant difference," says Julian Treviño, chair of the SAISD Board of Trustees. "You need to create a culture where people recognize that the whole is more important than individual members."

Norfolk, the only district to be a finalist for two consecutive years, was recognized for its focus on

board professional development and self-evaluation as well as its community outreach efforts.

"Our staff members live, eat, and breathe our goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning for all," says Theresa Whibley, Norfolk's board chair. "Everything we do is focused on improving our students' academic achievement."

The award, given for the first time in 2004, provides CUBE with an opportunity to honor best practices that showcase excellence in school board governance. Applicants had to describe a vision for their governance role and show that the board implemented a strategy to narrow gaps in achievement between groups of students. Also, the board had to demonstrate leadership in creating a learning environment conducive to student achievement and show that they had successfully strengthened community support for the district.

Finalists were selected by a panel of distinguished judges based on materials submitted by the school districts and independent follow up research. All three finalists made presentations in a CUBE Best Practices session.

The judges were Ben Canada, Texas Association of School Boards; Arnold Fege, Public Education Network; Michael Usdan, Institute for Educational Leadership; and JoAnn Yee, California School Boards Association.

### Hillsborough County: Success for all Students

The slogan, "Success for All Students," is more than just a catchy phrase in the School District of Hillsborough County in Tampa (FL). School officials are relentless in their drive to improve students' academic achievement.

Winner of the 2005 CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence, Tampa leads the state of Florida in the percentage of schools scoring an A, B, or C in the state's grading system — a true accomplishment for a school system with a large number of high-poverty students.

While many metropolitan school systems struggle with meeting the federal standards of the No Child Left Behind Act, Tampa already has exceeded its 2007 adequate yearly progress

(AYP) goals in middle school mathematics and other areas. Indeed, the number of schools that made AYP increased by 25 percent last year.

The school district also boasts some of the nation's best high schools. Ten out of 23 schools were listed in *Newsweek's* 2005 America's Best High Schools. The district's high school graduation rate is 79.3 percent, compared to a state average of 71.6 percent.

Ranked as one of the "most outstanding school districts in the United States" by the 14th annual *Expansion Management* magazine report card, Tampa officials put academic achievement on the agenda at every school board meeting, and the board is working diligently to close the achievement gap between white and minority students.

To that end, the school district has worked to boost minority participation in Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses. Honors enrollment in schools with greater than 40 percent of students receiving free and reduced-price meals increased four percent in just one year, while AP offerings in low-income schools increased seven percent.

Hillsborough County also has its expanded early childhood education efforts and started an innovative program that pairs academic specialists with struggling readers in kindergarten through second grade to provide additional tutoring and support.

# Council of Urban Boards of Education

## *Steering Committee*

### Vision

Urban school board leaders efficiently governing local public school districts for high student achievement.

### Mission

To create opportunities for urban school board leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policymakers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education.

### CUBE Steering Committee Members serve as

- :: Ambassadors for CUBE
- :: Leaders for urban school board members
- :: Advocates for public education
- :: Supporters of NSBA's urban vision, mission, and goals
- :: Promoters of the purposes of CUBE



The CUBE Steering Committee, composed of urban school board members from across the nation, provides leadership and representation at the national level for the membership. Steering Committee members, along with staff, develop a comprehensive urban agenda, sponsor legislative advocacy meetings, educate board members through conferences and publications, and work in coalitions with other education organizations to promote urban education goals. The Steering Committee is the vehicle that provides the leadership across the nation and links the efforts of CUBE to those of our rapidly-growing base of 108 CUBE districts.

Under the committee's leadership and direction, CUBE member districts have the opportunity to gather information, develop recommendations and take appropriate action to improve the quality and equality of education for all urban schoolchildren.

CUBE Steering Committee members are elected by the CUBE membership to a three-year term. The Steering Committee elects the CUBE chair and vice chair. The CUBE chair serves on the NSBA Board of Directors as an ex-officio voting member.

### 2005-2006 CUBE Steering Committee Members

- |                                                                                      |                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| :: Brian Perkins, CUBE Chair<br>New Haven Public Schools<br>New Haven, CT            | :: Christene C. Moss<br>Fort Worth Independent School District<br>Fort Worth, TX                   |
| :: Stephen Corona, CUBE Vice Chair<br>Fort Wayne Community Schools<br>Fort Wayne, IN | :: Al Oertwig<br>St. Paul Public Schools<br>St. Paul, MN                                           |
| :: Rashidah Abdulhaqq<br>Cleveland Municipal School District<br>Cleveland, OH        | :: David L. Thomas, Jr.<br>CUBE Immediate Past Chair<br>Mobile County Public Schools<br>Mobile, AL |
| :: Lock P. Beachum, Sr.<br>Youngstown City School District<br>Youngstown, OH         | :: David Tokofsky<br>Los Angeles Unified School District<br>Los Angeles, CA                        |
| :: Tariq Butt<br>Chicago Public Schools<br>Chicago, IL                               | :: Jill Wynns<br>San Francisco<br>Unified School District<br>San Francisco, CA                     |
| :: Harry Garewal<br>Phoenix Union High School District<br>Phoenix, AZ                |                                                                                                    |
| :: Warren C. Hayman<br>Baltimore County Public Schools<br>Towson, MD                 |                                                                                                    |

#### Ex-Officio Members

- :: Joan Schmidt, NSBA President
- :: Barbara L. Bolas, NSBA Director
- :: Anne L. Bryant, NSBA Executive Director



## CUBE Task Force

CUBE is supported by four issues-based task forces. The Communications, Racial Isolation, Urban Student Achievement, and Governance and Training task forces consider and discuss key issues faced by urban school board members. The goal of each task force is to study and research issues, identify workable solutions and strategies, and produce materials and outcomes to assist all CUBE members. Especially important, the task forces help direct CUBE on ways to strengthen services to its members. Each task force is led by a small executive group that sets the agenda, promotes work continuity and provides leadership in delivering products to members.

### Communications

The Communications Task Force is committed to helping board members better communicate with their constituents by developing strategies to build a more positive school image and garner support in the community. In 2004, the task force developed the toolkit, *Telling Your Story* for marketing urban public education.

#### Executive Group Co-Chairs:

Jimmy Fahrenheit, New Orleans, LA, and Christene C. Moss, Fort Worth, TX

#### Members:

Noel Hammatt, East Baton Rouge, LA  
Katherine Hawks Haney, Youngstown, OH  
Mary Marks, Anchorage, AK  
Willetta Milam, Cleveland, OH  
Coach Joe White, Jr., Charlotte, NC

#### NSBA Staff Liaison:

Glenn Cook, NSBA Managing Editor of Publications

### Racial Isolation

This task force considers the issue of racial isolation in urban schools and examines the education and policy ramifications surrounding issues of race, including the minority achievement gap, desegregation, the disproportionate number of minorities assigned to special education classes, and the disproportionate percentage of minority students disciplined. The goal is to equip urban school board members with the latest research and suggested approaches to help prevent student isolation based on race. Much of last year focused on ways to address and prevent over-identification of minorities in special education through conference programming. This task force also published a report that identifies programs used to address this issue.

#### Executive Group Co-Chairs:

Jill Wynns, San Francisco, CA, and Florence Johnson, Buffalo, NY

#### Members:

Rashidah Abdulhaqq, Cleveland, OH  
Beatty Seabrook Burney, Jacksonville, FL  
Tariq Butt, Chicago, IL  
Deena Hayes, Guilford, NC  
Brenda Priestly Jackson, Jacksonville, FL  
Dot K. Kearns, Guilford, NC  
Vilma Leake, Charlotte, NC  
Christene C. Moss, Fort Worth, TX  
Darryl W. Porter, Rochester, NY  
Justin R. Rodriguez, San Antonio, TX  
Karen Shepard, Omaha, NE

#### NSBA Staff Liaison:

Naomi Gittins, NSBA Senior Staff Attorney

### Urban Student Achievement

The focus of this task force is to study the achievement gap between urban school districts and their non-urban counterparts, exploring programs that are helping students achieve, and bringing attention to successful urban schools. The Urban Student Achievement Task Force launched the CUBE School Climate Survey Research Project to spotlight the importance of school climate as a factor in student achievement.

#### Executive Group Co-Chairs:

Warren C. Hayman, Baltimore Country, MD, and Carol C. Coen, Ft. Wayne, IN

#### Members:

Martha Garcia, Phoenix, AZ  
Stephanie W. Gatewood, Memphis, TN  
Everett J. Jennings, East Orange, NJ  
Sandra Jensen, Omaha, NE  
Lillie Larsen, Lincoln, NE  
Cathy Newsome, Tulsa, OK  
Al Oertwig, St. Paul, MN  
Brian K. Perkins, New Haven, CT  
David Tokofsky, Los Angeles, CA  
David Thomas, Mobile, AL  
Julian H. Treviño, San Antonio, TX  
Mike Write, Youngstown, OH

#### NSBA Staff Liaison:

Katrina Kelley, CUBE Director

### Governance & Training

This task force provides information, training, support and resources to help urban school board members serve as effective leaders in their school districts. The Governance & Training Task Force last year spearheaded CUBE's *Brown v. Board of Education* projects including the documentary *Renewing the Promise*, sponsored the membership needs assessment survey, and developed a mentoring program for first-time CUBE meeting attendees.

#### Executive Group Co-Chairs:

Lock P. Beachum, Sr., Youngstown, OH, and Elizabeth Daniels, Portsmouth, VA

#### Members:

Abdul-Malik R. Ali, Trenton, NJ  
Clayton R. Luckie II, Dayton, OH  
Brian Keith Nance, Portsmouth, VA  
Evelyn Shapiro, Phoenix, AZ  
Sandra Smith-Jones, Virginia Beach, VA

#### NSBA Staff Liaison:

Barbara Allen, NSBA Director of Caucus and Urban Development

# Council of Urban Boards of Education

## 2006 Meetings Calendar

Each year, the Council of Urban Boards of Education offers networking and professional development opportunities through the urban-focused Issues Seminar, forums, site visits, and the CUBE Annual Conference. Urban school leaders share ideas on best practices and policies and learn strategies to meet the challenges they face in their districts.



### 2006 Meetings Schedule

#### CUBE Issues Forum

*(held in conjunction with NSBA's  
Federal Relations Network Conference)*

February 4, 2006

Grand Hyatt Hotel  
Washington, DC

CUBE Welcome Reception  
(Smithsonian National Museum of the  
American Indian)  
February 4, 2006

#### CUBE Congressional Luncheon

February 7, 2006  
Washington, DC

#### NSBA Annual Conference

April 6-11, 2006

Chicago, IL

*Visit <http://www.nsba.org> for up-to-date information*

CUBE Site Visit and Early-bird programming  
April 6-8, 2006

CUBE Annual Conference Programming  
April 8-10, 2006

NSBA Annual Conference Programming  
April 8-11, 2006

#### CUBE Issues Seminar

June 23-25, 2006  
Renaissance Chicago Hotel  
Chicago, IL

#### CUBE 38th Annual Conference

September 28 - October 1, 2006  
Phoenix, AZ

CUBE Early-bird programming  
September 28, 2006

CUBE Site Visit and  
Annual Conference Programming  
September 29 - October 1, 2006

CUBE Annual Award (held in conjunction with  
CUBE Annual Conference Banquet)  
September 30, 2006

### 2007 Meetings Schedule

#### CUBE Issues Forum

February 3, 2007  
Washington, DC

#### CUBE Congressional Luncheon

February 6, 2007  
Washington, DC

#### NSBA Annual Conference (Urban Programming)

April 12-15, 2007  
San Francisco, CA

#### CUBE Issues Seminar

June 22-24, 2007  
Miami, FL

#### CUBE 39th Annual Conference

September 27-30, 2007  
Atlanta, GA

CUBE recognizes the following corporate partners for their support in serving America's urban school students:  
ARAMARK Education; Chartwells School Dining Services; French Toast Official School Wear; Holt, Rinehart & Winston;

# Council of Urban Boards of Education

## Member Districts

Anchorage School District, Anchorage, AK  
 Birmingham Public School System, Birmingham, AL  
 Mobile County Public Schools, Mobile, AL  
 Montgomery Public Schools, Montgomery, AL  
 Little Rock School District, Little Rock, AR  
 Alhambra School District, Phoenix, AZ  
 Cartwright School District #83, Phoenix, AZ  
 Isaac School District #5, Phoenix, AZ  
 Phoenix Elementary Schools, Phoenix, AZ  
 Phoenix Union High School District, Phoenix, AZ  
 Roosevelt School District #66, Phoenix, AZ  
 Sunnyside Unified School District, Tucson, AZ  
 Tucson Unified School District, Tucson, AZ  
 Chula Vista Elementary School District, Chula Vista, CA  
 Orange County Department of Education, Costa Mesa, CA  
 Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles, CA  
 Riverside Unified School District, Riverside, CA  
 San Diego City Schools, San Diego, CA  
 San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, CA  
 Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, CO  
 Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO  
 Bridgeport Public School District, Bridgeport, CT  
 New Haven Public School District, New Haven, CT  
 District of Columbia Board of Education, Washington, DC  
 Broward County School District, Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
 Duval County School Board, Jacksonville, FL  
 Pinellas County School District, Largo, FL  
 Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami, FL  
 Hillsborough County School District, Tampa, FL  
 Palm Beach County School District, West Palm Beach, FL  
 Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA  
 Hawaii State Board of Education, Honolulu, HI  
 Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL  
 East Chicago Board of Education, East Chicago, IN  
 Fort Wayne Community Schools, Fort Wayne, IN

Gary Community Schools, Gary, IN  
 Indianapolis Public Schools, Indianapolis, IN  
 South Bend Community School Corp., South Bend, IN  
 Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY  
 E. Baton Rouge Parish, E. Baton Rouge, LA  
 Orleans Parish Public Schools, New Orleans, LA  
 Baltimore County Public Schools, Towson, MD  
 Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA  
 Detroit Public School System, Detroit, MI  
 Lansing Public Schools, Lansing, MI  
 Pontiac Public School District, Pontiac, MI  
 St. Paul Independent School District #625, St. Paul, MN  
 Jackson Public Schools, Jackson, MS  
 Kansas City School District, Kansas City, MO  
 St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, MO  
 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Charlotte, NC  
 Durham Public Schools, Durham, NC  
 Cumberland County School District, Fayetteville, NC  
 Guilford County Public Schools, Greensboro, NC  
 Wake County Public Schools, Raleigh, NC  
 Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, NE  
 Omaha School District, Omaha, NE  
 Camden Public Schools, Camden, NJ  
 East Orange School District, East Orange, NJ  
 Jersey City School District, Jersey City, NJ  
 Newark Board of Education, Newark, NJ  
 Paterson Public Schools, Paterson, NJ  
 Trenton Public Schools, Trenton, NJ  
 Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque, NM  
 Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV  
 Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo, NY  
 Rochester City School District, Rochester, NY  
 Syracuse City School District, Syracuse, NY  
 Wyandanch Union Free School District, Wyandanch, NY  
 Akron Public Schools, Akron, OH

Cincinnati School District, Cincinnati, OH  
 Cleveland City School District, Cleveland, OH  
 Columbus City School District, Columbus, OH  
 Dayton Board of Education, Dayton, OH  
 Springfield City School District, Springfield, OH  
 Toledo Public Schools, Toledo, OH  
 Youngstown City School District, Youngstown, OH  
 Oklahoma City Public Schools #89, Oklahoma City, OK  
 Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, OK  
 Norristown Area School District, Norristown, PA  
 Philadelphia School District, Philadelphia, PA  
 Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pittsburgh, PA  
 Richland County School District One, Columbia, SC  
 Knox County Schools, Knoxville, TN  
 Memphis City Schools, Memphis, TN  
 Metro Nashville Public Schools, Nashville, TN  
 Austin Independent School District, Austin, TX  
 Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, TX  
 Ft. Worth Independent School District, Fort Worth, TX  
 Houston Independent School District, Houston, TX  
 Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, TX  
 Laredo Independent School District, Laredo, TX  
 Mesquite Independent School District, Mesquite, TX  
 San Antonio Ind. School District, San Antonio, TX  
 Ft. Bend School District, Sugar Land, TX  
 Hampton City Schools, Hampton, VA  
 Norfolk Public Schools, Norfolk, VA  
 Portsmouth Public Schools, Portsmouth, VA  
 Richmond City Schools, Richmond, VA  
 Roanoke City Public Schools, Roanoke, VA  
 Virginia Beach City School District, Virginia Beach, VA  
 Virgin Islands Board of Education, St. Thomas, VI  
 Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI  
 Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI



The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is a nationwide advocacy organization for public school governance. NSBA's mission is to foster excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership. Founded in 1940, NSBA is a not-for-profit federation of state associations of school boards across America including the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## About the Council of Urban Boards of Education

**NSBA President** :: Joan E. Schmidt  
**President-Elect** :: E. Jane Gallucci  
**Secretary-Treasurer** :: Norman Wooten  
**Immediate Past President** :: George H. McShan

### NSBA Board of Directors ::

Barbara L. Bolas  
 Eldean A. Borg  
 Jill L. Brake  
 Mary Broderick  
 Diane S. Brunworth  
 William E. Coffield Sr.  
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 Juanita Haugen  
 Robert A. Lane  
 Randy J. Manning  
 William R. Meek  
 Carolyn J. Ortman  
 Leni Patterson  
 Brian K. Perkins  
 Earl C. Rickman III  
 C.H. "Sonny" Savoie  
 William L. "Bill" Williams  
 Anthony L. "Tony" Wong  
 David A. Farnelo, ex officio  
 Frank E. Barham, ex officio

**Executive Director** :: Anne L. Bryant

**Deputy Executive Director** :: Joseph S. Villani

### Associate Executive Directors ::

Richard J. Anderson  
 Don E. Blom  
 Susan P. Merry  
 Francisco Negrón  
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### National Affiliate Program

**Associate Executive Director** :: Don E. Blom  
**Assistant Executive Director** :: Marilee C. Rist  
**CUBE Director** :: Katrina A. Kelley  
**National Affiliate Services Director** :: Gene Broderson  
**Editor, *Urban Advocate*** :: Del Stover  
**NA Sales Representatives** :: Denise Taylor and Laurie Hart  
**Writer, *CUBE Annual Report*** :: Glenn Cook

For more than three decades, the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) has been at the forefront in helping urban school districts strive for excellence.

Established in 1967 by the National School Boards Association's Board of Directors, CUBE is the only national membership organization governed solely by urban school board members and dedicated to the needs and interests of urban school boards. CUBE's mission is to create opportunities for urban school board leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policy makers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education.

CUBE districts serve 7.6 million students and spend a combined total of \$83.1 billion to educate those students.


The urban component of NSBA's National Affiliate Program, CUBE enjoys its own dedicated urban staff but also is supported by the full range of NSBA staff and resources. The CUBE public education agenda is represented in the Congress, Administration, and courts by NSBA's

legislative and legal advocacy staffs.

Individual school boards are eligible to participate in CUBE if they are a member of their state school boards association, serve a community with a core city population of at least 100,000, or are urban in character. Board members and superintendents in CUBE districts receive a full array of National Affiliate services along with the specialized services delivered by NSBA's urban staff.

These specialized services include national representation by the CUBE Steering Committee, a voting seat on the NSBA Board of Directors, urban-focused issues seminars, workshops, conferences, site visits, legislative advocacy, research projects, networking opportunities, publications such as the *Urban Advocate* and the *CUBE Directory*, and local policy governance assistance.

CUBE helps urban school leaders find solutions and alternatives to challenge at the local level and seeks to improve their policy-making effectiveness.



**The Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) is the urban component of the National School Boards Association's National Affiliate Program. The National Affiliate Program is a partnership that includes almost 2,500 local school districts, the NSBA Federation of state school boards associations, and the NSBA professional staff, working together to provide a unified national voice promoting improved student achievement and supporting local governance of public education.**

Through the National Affiliate Program, CUBE districts receive a variety of NSBA resources that support their decision-making processes and help them be effective advocates for public education in their communities, state capitals, and the national arena. NSBA lobbies on behalf of public education on Capitol Hill, at the White House, and before federal agencies and the courts. As National Affiliates, CUBE districts benefit directly from this unified, strong voice on behalf of public school governance.

Throughout the National Affiliate Program, CUBE districts have access to a wide variety of publications and services on the challenging topics facing school boards nationwide. Benefits include:

#### **A platform so their VOICE can be heard.**

- ∴ Targeted legislative alerts and updates via web, phone, and fax that equip board members to participate in a national grassroots advocacy campaign.
- ∴ Representation on Capitol Hill and in the courts on the crucial issues facing local school boards, as provided by NSBA's advocacy team and Office of General Counsel.

#### **Tools, resources, and networking to implement their VISION.**

- ∴ Policy Research Briefs
- ∴ Grant Writer
- ∴ Information research services
- ∴ No Child Left Behind resource guides
- ∴ National Education Policy Network
- ∴ Key Work of School Boards publications
- ∴ NSBA Annual Conference
- ∴ T+L Conference
- ∴ CUBE Issues Forums and Annual Conference
- ∴ Periodic briefings

#### **KNOWLEDGE to make informed decisions.**

- ∴ National Affiliate e-Newsletter
- ∴ *School Board News*
- ∴ Student achievement publications
- ∴ *Leadership Insider*
- ∴ Professional development through conferences and meetings
- ∴ Key Work of School Boards resources
- ∴ Online Learning Center
- ∴ Special alerts on key issues
- ∴ *Urban Advocate*

#### **SAVINGS on NSBA meetings and resources.**

- ∴ Discounts at CUBE meetings and other NSBA meetings and conferences
- ∴ Discount on membership in NSBA's Technology Leadership Network
- ∴ Discounts on NSBA publications



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