



SERVING AMERICA'S URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

COUNCIL OF URBAN BOARDS OF EDUCATION



■ Perspectives on Urban School Board Leadership

2006-2007 CUBE Annual Report



Dear CUBE Member:

As an urban school leader in one of CUBE's 113 member districts, you've worked hard in the past year to serve your community's schoolchildren — some of the more than 8 million students educated in CUBE districts. And you've done laudable work.

This work has been all the more noteworthy because you've successfully educated children in the face of a host of complex issues, immense challenges, and, in too many cases, a level of financial resources that continues to fall short of what is really needed.

Through its programming, CUBE is working with you, striving to provide the training and informational support that you need to become more efficient policymakers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education. In the past year, you've had opportunities to attend conferences and access resources that provided valuable insight into such issues as student diversity, the racial achievement gap, school safety, and federal funding, to name just a few. We released our first survey of school climate in CUBE member districts and are working on a second that will measure the attitudes teachers and administrators have about educating our urban schoolchildren.

With the support of NSBA's Office of Advocacy and Issues Management, CUBE also worked to put your urban school perspective before members of Congress and the Administration. Federal officials have heard from us about the needed changes to the No Child Left Behind Act and the necessity for a more serious federal investment in urban education.

Perspectives 2006-07 takes a look back at CUBE's efforts over the past year, and I think you'll agree we can be proud of the work that's been done. But I want to assure you that CUBE intends to be just as productive in the years ahead, and I encourage you to take advantage of our programming-rich conferences and other services designed to help you as urban school board members.

Finally, I want to thank you for your commitment to urban education. We have an immense task ahead of us, but in partnership with CUBE, I know we are up to the challenge.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brian Perkins".

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

## CUBE Staff

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## Perspectives on Urban School Board Leadership 2006-2007

Over the past year, as urban school leaders wrestled with the immense challenges facing their school systems, the Council of Urban Boards of Education continued to be a valuable partner in the effort to educate America's urban schoolchildren.

Much of CUBE's efforts were devoted to providing its record-high 113 member districts with training and tools to do their jobs better. Throughout the year, CUBE sponsored conferences and publications that examined critical issues of importance to urban policymakers—everything from strategies to raise student achievement to best practices to keep schools safe, and from an analysis of school climate nationwide to ideas for responding to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

At the same time, working closely with NSBA, CUBE advocacy efforts put the concerns of urban school boards before members of Congress—and sought to influence federal legislation and funding that have such an influence on urban education.

None of the myriad challenges facing urban school boards have eased, but CUBE continues to work to make the task of urban policymakers a little easier—and better prepared for the challenges that still lie ahead. Now, as

CUBE celebrates its 40th anniversary of working on behalf of excellence and equity in urban public schools, it's a good time to reflect on the work of the past year.

### 🌐 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

For urban school policymakers, several noteworthy occurrences in 2006 underscored how issues of race, language, cultural diversity, and poverty have highlighted the challenges of educating urban children—and demanded greater efforts from urban school leaders.

Across the nation, but particularly in California and the Southwest, tens of thousands of Hispanic students walked out of school in the spring of 2006 to protest federal immigration policies—a healthy sign of civic activism by young people but a nightmare for school officials worried about student safety. Meanwhile, in Nebraska, the state Legislature passed a law to break up the Omaha Public Schools—possibly along racial lines—as a political slap at a city school system attempting to force suburban and state policymakers to confront pressing issues of race and equity.

Finally, in Washington, D.C., attorneys for the Seattle and Louisville, Ky., school systems appeared before the

U.S. Supreme Court to defend their use of race-based admissions policies to promote classroom diversity.

Against this backdrop, CUBE devoted a significant share of its conference programming to understanding and responding to the demographic, social, and political forces at work behind these events. The culmination of this effort was visible at last year's Annual Conference in Phoenix, Ariz., where the theme was "Building Culturally Competent Governance for Urban Schools."

At that meeting, Barbara McCloud, senior associate with the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C., warned school board members that demographic trends will demand even greater efforts by urban school districts to improve their "cultural competence." More needs to be done, she said, to institutionalize values that respect student diversity, improve equity among student populations, and better prepare staff to understand the cultural values, communication styles, and home experiences of students.

Such efforts are not just about making the school experience more equitable or pleasant for students, she added. The efforts of school boards ultimately will affect the bottom line: student achievement within their districts and

the economic health of the nation as it competes in a global economy. “How we educate every single child is inextricably tied to the future of this country,” McCloud said.

That message was echoed by Glenn Singleton, executive director of the San Francisco-based Pacific Educational Group, who was interviewed by CUBE’s newsletter, *Urban Advocate*. Singleton focused his remarks specifically to the issue of race and its role in the educational experience.

Too many policymakers are uncomfortable talking about race — in and of itself — as an issue, he said. But the reality is that racial, social, and economic factors are not interchangeable when attempting to explain the achievement gaps between students.

“Don’t redefine racial factors into other terms (such as socioeconomics) that we’re more comfortable with,” he warned. “In order to address the racial achievement disparity, it is necessary to address race.”

Singleton’s comments were underscored by last year’s release of CUBE’s ambitious research effort, *Where We Learn: A School Climate Survey*. Out of 25 questions put to urban students, the answers to 23 were influenced by race, said Brian Perkins, chair of the CUBE Steering Committee and the survey’s principal investigator. “You see that different ethnic groups are experiencing school differently.”

None of this was particularly news to veteran policymakers. But some conference speakers suggested that urban boards should not assume that awareness of the issues equates to a successful handling of them. For example, Russell Skiba, an associate professor at Indiana University and co-director of the Safe & Responsive Schools Project, suggested at a session hosted by the CUBE Racial Isolation Task Force during the CUBE’s summer

Issues Forum in Chicago that school leaders take a closer look at their district’s disciplinary records. Although a long-recognized problem, few districts have solved the tendency of African-American students — particularly males — to be suspended or expelled at far higher rates than whites.

But Skiba offered some advice that would prove worthwhile on any issue related to the changing face of urban schools: “You have to have clear and frank discussions on diversity, especially in all-white teams of teachers.”

## 🌱 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Despite the fiscal, social, and political issues that urban school boards continually must address, the central focus of board members — and of CUBE — is student achievement.

That focus has led to promising gains in test scores. Many urban districts are reporting rising test scores, with dozens improving at rates above their state’s average. And that progress has been achieved despite inadequate financial support and the enrollment of large numbers of at-risk and special needs children.

As part of its focus on cultural competence, CUBE took a special look at the student achievement of the growing Hispanic student population. In the August 2006 *Urban Advocate*, one article took note of Arizona’s Phoenix Union High School District, a Hispanic-majority school system where students score near the state average in reading, writing, and math, and every school met federal annual yearly progress (AYP) goals in 2004-05.

“In a couple of years, we went from lagging 15 to 20 points behind Arizona standards to reducing the academic deficit to [1 to 2] percentage points, said board member Harry Garewal, who also served on the CUBE Steering Committee.

Although all students deserve equal attention, CUBE’s focus on Hispanic education was timely. Although many urban districts have a sizable Hispanic population, their numbers continue to increase — by 2020, one in four children in the nation will be Hispanic. As many as half of the students will be foreign-born; many will start school with little or no fluency in English.

Such statistics emphasize the need for urban school boards to focus attention on the academic performance of Hispanics, particularly when it comes to English proficiency, said Adam Chavarria, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

“Unlike immigrants at the turn of the century, when they could be absorbed into the economy as long as they had a strong back and a willingness to work, we’re in a knowledge-based economy where today’s immigrants don’t have the luxury of three generations to learn English,” Chavarria said in an interview with *Urban Advocate*.

At CUBE’s annual conference, the Urban Student Achievement Task Force sponsored a session that considered the unique needs of immigrant students and the politically charged issues surrounding the education of undocumented immigrants. Among the speakers: a panel of Hispanic students from the Phoenix Union High School District who offered their perspective on how public schools can better respond to the needs of Hispanic students.

One of the most poignant moments of this discussion was when students shared stories of bright classmates who dropped out of school or lost opportunities to attend college because of federal immigration rules or financial roadblocks.

“Kids work so hard to get their diplomas, but they can’t go anywhere beyond that,” one student told board



members. “Some kids can go on to college, but some [bright] kids have to stop their education. They can’t do anything beyond that. It hurts me to hear this.”

This session spurred CUBE to revisit this issue and the federal legislation that addresses this challenge in Washington, D.C., during the Federal Relations Network Conference. NSBA and CUBE support the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act which could provide conditional permanent resident status upon acceptance to college, graduation from high school, or being awarded a general equivalency diploma.

Perhaps the most well-received presentation of the year was delivered by Rudolph “Rudy” Crew, superintendent of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, whose keynote presentation at the annual meeting about “working smarter” to improve student achievement.

By that, he said, school boards need to consider more drastic, systemic changes to how learning occurs in schools. What’s really needed, he suggested, was for boards to find ways to expand the school day or year to provide more time for instruction, to consider new compensation packages designed to attract the best teachers to troubled schools, or design a more flexible schedule that allows struggling students an extra year to complete high school.

“What you want to do is engage in out-of-the-box thinking,” he said. “Be creative and entrepreneurial. We have to turn our attention increasingly to questions of governance and structure.”

## 🌱 SCHOOL SAFETY

For a child, there’s no safer place to spend the day than at a public school. But given the social woes that lie in the community just outside the doors of many urban schools, CUBE members recognize that they must constantly strive to maintain that safe school environment.

CUBE’s commitment to safe schools was very clear at its summer Issues Seminar, where law enforcement and school safety experts gathered with urban school leaders to explore the meeting’s theme: “Connecting with Communities to Create Safe Urban Schools.”

This focus on community engagement is necessary for school officials because they so often fear talking openly to parents and the public about security and safety issues, said Kenneth S. Trump, president of the Cincinnati-based National School Safety and Security Services. Many worry that such talk will suggest schools aren’t safe, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

“Most parents want to know that you care, that you have some plans,” he said. “They want to know it’s on your radar screen.” Safety issues can arise in any school, he added, and the community’s confidence in the handling of such issues will be far better if it already is aware of the work school officials have done to protect students.

Such confidence would be well deserved. Nationwide, school violence is down significantly from a decade ago, and by one measure, the likelihood of

any particular school experiencing a homicide is once every 12,800 years. School officials have put more police and security officers in their schools. They’ve turned to metal detectors and surveillance cameras as a deterrent. And they worked harder to improve the school climate and student attitudes about appropriate behavior.

To maintain this enviable record, CUBE’s issues-based task forces took a leading role this year in addressing some of the safety issues on the minds of urban school leaders. The Communications Task Force, for example, sponsored a roundtable discussion on crisis communications plans to deal with high-profile acts of violence on campus, while the Governance & Training Task Force sponsored a workshop about the newest high-tech problem for urban schools: cyberbullying.

One of the most important messages offered during the year, however, was echoed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, professor of public health practices at Harvard University. She warned urban policymakers against relying too heavily on simplistic solutions — such as metal detectors and surveillance cameras.

Such gadgetry has its uses, she acknowledged. But a school’s front line of defense is its people — teachers who care about students, counselors who intervene with the troubled child, school resource officers who spot the student victimized by bullying, and parents and students who share rumors they hear about potential trouble.

That advice has been taken to heart by the Palm Beach County (Fla.) Public Schools, which has an entire department devoted to helping individual schools set up anti-bullying, peer mediation, conflict resolution, classroom management, and other prevention and intervention programs to reinforce positive student behaviors that make schools safer.



“We need to be upfront in what we do in [transforming] our attitudes about our social norms,” Prothrow-Stith said. “We need to work as a society to get along. We need adults with a one-on-one investment in children. It’s truly a different measure that’s needed ... almost surrogate parenting.”

### 🌀 NCLB and ADVOCACY

For much of 2006, CUBE member districts — working in conjunction with NSBA’s Office of Advocacy and Issues Management — laid the groundwork for what is likely to prove a lengthy and complex debate in Congress this year over reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In both 2006 and 2007, urban school leaders descended on Capitol Hill to meet with their representatives in the House and Senate and outline their concerns about NCLB. One meeting was with Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), who in January took over as chair of the House Education & the Workforce Committee.

At a CUBE-sponsored luncheon, Miller told urban school leaders that he recognized that changes in the law were necessary, but he was less than sympathetic to complaints that it was impossible to raise every child to proficient levels

by the law’s 2014 deadline. Before school officials insist that this goal must be eased, he said, “let’s see if you can get 60 or 70 percent proficiency.”

Several months prior to the midterm elections, NSBA offered its own recommendations for improvements to the law, which it titled the No Child Left Behind Improvements Act. Its provisions would fix problems with the measuring of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); improve flexibility for states (and schools) in implementing NCLB rules; and improve rules on school transfers, tutoring, and sanctions.

Many of those recommendations were incorporated into a bill (H.R.5709) introduced by Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) and later appeared to varying degrees in other legislation introduced by members of Congress. Michael Resnick, associate executive director of NSBA’s advocacy office, told urban leaders at CUBE’s annual meeting that NSBA was working hard to get the views of urban school boards into the political debate early in the process.

“We decided to take a proactive stance and outline what we believe the standards should be ... and not worry about what other people will do,” he said.

At the same time, the promise of NCLB is severely hampered by inadequate funding — and CUBE and NSBA spent much of 2006 championing the need for a greater federal investment in public education. Compared to what was promised to public schools when NCLB was passed in 2001, Congress has underfunded Title I programs by \$43.45 billion to date. Funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act also has been disappointing.

### Omaha: Fighting for equity

For much of 2006, the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) was embroiled in an ugly political brawl with the Nebraska legislature, which approved a controversial plan to break up the city school system into three separate districts, possibly along racial lines.

The dispute had its roots in a growing Latino population and state funding inequities that strained the school district’s ability to serve English language learners, as well as maintain a quality academic program that held the loyalty of middle-class parents.

Without that support, school officials feared, white flight to suburban schools could leave the district with no hope of maintaining its relatively successful school integration efforts.

Unable to convince suburban educators or state policymakers that these issues had to be addressed, Omaha school officials began to escalate their advocacy efforts. They filed a lawsuit against the state’s education funding formula and attempted to enforce a century-old law that gave OPS authority over any school within the city limits, a law ignored by politicians who, during the early years of desegregation, allowed small districts

to retain their independence as the city annexed the areas they served.

According to Superintendent John Mackiel, this was a calculated move to force public debate about school integration and financial equity, but the legislature’s reaction was far more draconian than expected. It passed a bill to force all school systems in the two-county metropolitan area to share a common tax base and responsibility for integration. It also called for splitting up OPS, with some lawmakers suggesting a break-up on racial lines to strengthen parental support for their neighborhood schools.

As 2006 came to an end, NSBA's advocacy staff watched federal lawmakers put off any decision on key education spending until the 110th Congress took office. But, with a new Democratic majority now in control, there is hope for a new look at funding priorities in 2007—and a more receptive environment that calls for more appropriate education spending.

NSBA's advocacy efforts on behalf of CUBE could use the help of urban school leaders, Resnick told attendees of CUBE's annual meeting. "This is not something that NSBA is doing alone," he said. "It requires all of us working on it if we're going to be successful. The stakes are really too high. We need the voice of urban boards in our advocacy network."

### 🌐 SCHOOL CLIMATE

With the release of *Where We Learn: The CUBE Survey of Urban School Climate*, CUBE brought national attention to a critical question influencing student learning: Are urban schools a safe and nurturing environment for children?

The largest research project ever conducted by CUBE, *Where We Learn* surveyed nearly 32,000 students from 15 urban school districts in 13 states. Students indicated their attitudes on five general issues: school safety; bullying; trust, respect, and ethos of caring; self-concept; and general school climate.

The findings, announced at press conference in Washington, D.C., indicated that urban students feel generally positive about their schools. But a number of CUBE member districts took a closer look at student responses and took action on identified problem areas: For example, Baltimore County put more attention on anti-bullying efforts.

As 2006 came to a close, Omaha's efforts to provoke a policy debate had achieved its goal, albeit not exactly as planned. The break-up legislation, now challenged by both federal and state lawsuits, was on hold, and some state lawmakers were backpedaling, suggesting they're willing to forego OPS's break-up and let metropolitan-area school districts bring forward their own solution to the problems under debate.

Meanwhile, public hearings by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and community meetings sponsored by the NAACP brought needed attention to

issues of equity and integration. OPS officials also announced agreement with some neighboring school districts on just such an alternative and were working for its wider acceptance.

The school board is not deterred by the fight it faces, OPS school board Chair Sandra Jensen told urban school leaders at CUBE's annual conference in Phoenix. "We began to see that our kids were being disenfranchised as [they] were becoming more isolated socioeconomically and racially. We began to see that we were the only ones who cared that there were not enough financial resources for our children.

"This is a crucial study since research shows that improved school climate contributes to greater student achievement, higher morale, and better relationships with the community," NSBA Executive Director Anne L. Bryant said at a press conference announcing the study's release.

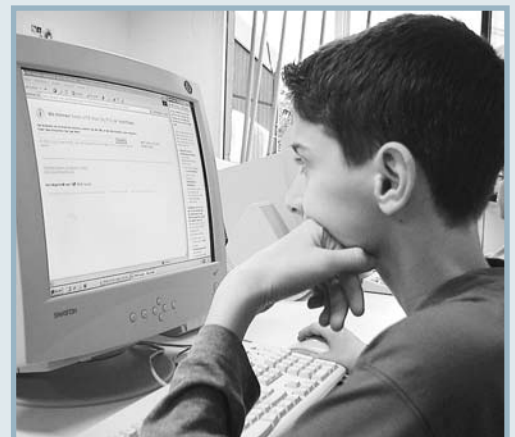
But this wasn't the end of CUBE's examination of this important issue. Even before the report's release, CUBE Steering Committee Chair Brian Perkins, who also is the survey's principal investigator, began work on a follow-up survey that examines the perceptions of 5,000 teachers and administrators nationwide toward their schools.

This new study is important because urban school policymakers need to understand the difference in perspective between adults and students regarding school climate, said Perkins, who also serves as president of the New Haven, Conn., school board and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. If adults aren't seeing the same problems as students—or different ones—then there may be unidentified problems that need addressing.

The results, which will be released this spring, will make it "more obvious as to why we should be collecting this sort of data," he said. "What's happening in school isn't always as adults see it."



So we tried to get some action and get some dialogue going for our children. We don't apologize for that."





## 🌟 CUBE ANNUAL AWARD

To be named a finalist for the CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence, a school board must show a vision for its governance role and demonstrate leadership in creating a learning environment conducive to student achievement. It also must show that it has successfully strengthened community support for the school district.

Three school districts achieved this distinction in 2006. The Norfolk Public Schools was named the winner of the CUBE award, while the Houston Independent School District and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools were selected as finalists.

A finalist for the past three years, Norfolk won the top spot in 2006 for its “significant achievement gains” and history of stability, noted the panel of distinguished judges that selected the winner.

One of the most notable accomplishments of Norfolk was its approach to closing the achievement gap by focusing on literacy, academic rigor, greater support for the classroom, and efforts to increase the capacity of teachers and principals to support learning.

Its approach, the panel stated, is “an example to be modeled” for other districts.

All three school districts exemplified the very best in school board governance. Houston was cited for its board monitoring system, which includes a self-evaluation process for each member, and for tying its preschool agenda to achievement.

Miami-Dade County was cited by the judges for its civic and community engagement efforts and the district’s intervention efforts for its most academically struggling schools.

Finalists were selected based on material submitted by the school districts and independent follow-up research. The judges were Benjamin Canada, Texas Association of School Boards; Arnold Fege, Public Education Network; Audrey Hutchinson, National League of Cities; Michael Usdan, Institute for Educational Leadership; and JoAnn Yee, California School Boards Association.

Meanwhile, CUBE also awarded its first annual Lifetime Achievement Award to two long-serving board members during the annual meeting. Henry Spears, a 30-year local school board member for Alabama’s Montgomery Public Schools and former CUBE vice chair, and Lawrence Marshall, a nine-year board member for the Houston Independent School District, were honored for their outstanding contributions to urban school board service.

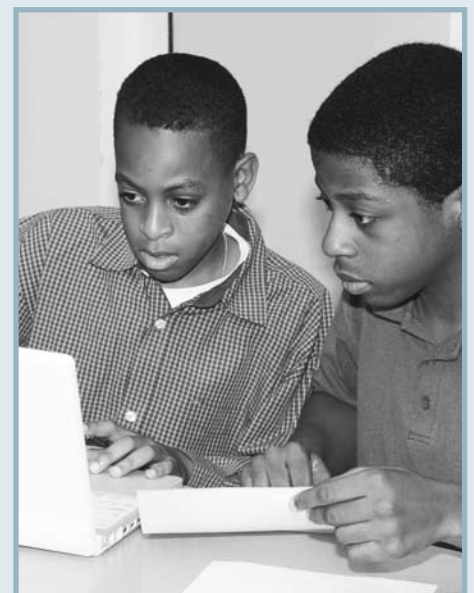
## Los Angeles: A battle for control

The Los Angeles Unified School District also found itself in a political fight in 2006 — with a popular mayor who made an aggressive and sometimes heavy-handed effort to take control over the sprawling 712,000-student school system.

For the LAUSD school board, LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s takeover attempt was an unnecessary distraction. It also threatened to undermine public confidence in the school system, as the mayor spent much of the year seeking

to build political support for his efforts by publicly denigrating the school system as failing.

School officials responded with a strong defense, rallying community supporters and lobbying state lawmakers to reject the mayor’s call for takeover legislation. The California School Boards Association also rallied to the school board’s defense, and the NSBA Delegate Assembly, at the urging of CUBE, approved a belief and policy statement opposing any jurisdiction’s attempt to remove, diminish, or interfere with the authority of a school board.





## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

This year marks the 40th anniversary of NSBA's initiative to help urban school boards strive for excellence and equity.

The Council of Urban Boards of Education started in 1967 with a different name — the Council of Big City Boards of Education — and focused largely on the needs of the nation's largest core-city school districts. The need for the council was outlined by its first chair, John C. Beatty, Jr., who told the NSBA Board of Directors in 1968 that “the lead-time between the educational problems of the big city boards and those boards of education representing smaller jurisdictions is rapidly being diminished. Through NSBA, the core-city board members want a forum through which they can exchange information on the major educational problems confronting their metropolitan areas.”

But that mission changed slightly in 1978, when the council changed its name to CUBE because many school boards had “big city” educational problems but did not meet the original membership requirement of serving a large core-city population. Urban school leaders wanted a more flexible definition of an urban school district so they could reach out to smaller districts with similar urban problems.

Ultimately, CUBE was integrated into NSBA's Direct Affiliate (now National Affiliate) program and, in 1986, the organization's stature increased within NSBA when the

NSBA Delegate Assembly amended its constitution to make the CUBE chair a full voting member of the NSBA Board of Directors.

Although new issues have appeared over the years, most of the big issues facing CUBE have not changed since 1968, when the council reported to the NSBA Board of Directors that its major concerns focused on funding, collective bargaining, its relationship with administrators, and racial integration.

The past decade, however, has seen a big increase in CUBE's focus on student achievement — a legacy, perhaps, of the standards movement and NSBA's Key Work of School Boards initiative. Most recently, CUBE also has exercised its growing resources with a number of new initiatives, including its recent *Brown v. Board of Education* projects, such as the documentary “*Renewing the Promise*”, a mentoring program for first-time CUBE meeting attendees, the work of the task forces, Conversations on Race Series, and its ambitious School Climate Survey Research Project.

As we look ahead, CUBE remains committed to providing its member districts with the training and services that urban school districts need and deserve. Forty years after CUBE was started, we remain steadfast in our goals. Through frank discussions at our conferences, to timely and topical research and publications, to the recognition of outstanding boards and board members, we pledge to give you the tools for excellence and equity in your schools.

School board Chair Marlene Canter rejected Villaraigosa's criticism of the school district in an interview with the *Urban Advocate*. “Our test scores are moving up,” she said. “Thirty-two schools just became California Distinguished Schools. We're in the midst of the biggest school construction program in the U.S., so we're relieving overcrowding that's been overlooked for decades. I can go on and on. This is a district on the move.”

In the end, political and legal obstacles stymied the mayor's grand ambitions. The California legislature refused to turn over full control of

LAUSD and instead passed a plan that diluted the power of the elected school board in favor of an appointed superintendent, who would be chosen by a council of mayors from the 26 cities within LAUSD. It did, however, give Villaraigosa direct control over the school district's three lowest-performing high schools and their feeder schools.

But even that partial victory fell short. In December, a state judge nullified the takeover legislation, ruling that the California constitution forbade taking authority from the school board.

At the close of 2006, Villaraigosa appealed the judge's decision. But school officials were talking about moving forward — and Canter suggested that the mayor had a chance to help L.A. schoolchildren without the need for lawyers.

“Partnerships between cities and schools do not require legislation,” she said. “So, regardless of what happens in court, we are continuing to build our relationships with the mayor and his staff, and we are continuing to lead this district forward in reform.”

**Vision**

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

**Mission**

To create opportunities for urban school board members 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 purpose 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 CUBE’s efforts to those of our growing base of 113 CUBE districts.

Under the Steering 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.

**2006-2007 CUBE Steering Committee Members**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Brian Perkins<br/>CUBE Chair<br/>New Haven Public Schools<br/>New Haven, CT</li> <li>■ Stephen Corona<br/>CUBE Vice Chair<br/>Fort Wayne Community Schools<br/>Fort Wayne, IN</li> <li>■ Rashidah Abdulhaqq<br/>Cleveland Municipal School District<br/>Cleveland, OH</li> <li>■ Lock P. Beachum Sr.<br/>Youngstown City School District<br/>Youngstown, OH</li> <li>■ Tariq Butt<br/>Chicago Public Schools<br/>Chicago, IL</li> <li>■ Elizabeth Daniels<br/>Portsmouth Public Schools<br/>Portsmouth, VA</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Harry Garewal<br/>Phoenix Union High School District<br/>Phoenix, AZ</li> <li>■ Warren C. Hayman<br/>Baltimore County Public Schools<br/>Towson, MD</li> <li>■ Vilma Leake<br/>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools<br/>Charlotte, NC</li> <li>■ Christene C. Moss<br/>Fort Worth Independent School District<br/>Fort Worth, TX</li> <li>■ Evelyn L. Shapiro<br/>Isaac School District #5<br/>Phoenix, AZ</li> <li>■ David L. Thomas Jr.<br/>Mobile County Public School System<br/>Mobile, AL</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ David Tokofsky<br/>Los Angeles Unified School District<br/>Los Angeles, CA</li> <li>■ Jill Wynns<br/>San Francisco Unified School District<br/>San Francisco, CA</li> </ul> <p><b>Ex-Officio Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Jane Gallucci<br/>NSBA President</li> <li>■ Anne L. Bryant<br/>NSBA Executive Director</li> <li>■ Earl C. Rickman III<br/>NSBA Board of Directors Liaison</li> </ul> |
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**Norfolk: Seeking a world-class education**

Winning CUBE’s third annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence was national recognition for what’s a well-known fact back home — Virginia’s Norfolk Public Schools are well on their way to the goal of being a world-class school system by 2010.

That success is largely due to a laser-like focus on student achievement. In recent years, the school system has reduced class sizes in the primary grades, adopted a literacy-based curriculum for elementary students, and added special programs on Saturdays for academically struggling students.

At the same time, the school district has encouraged high school students to take more academically rigorous courses and

worked to make AP offerings equitable among its schools. It also has focused more attention on early education, adding classes and using a research-based curriculum that focuses on the acquisition of language and pre-literacy skills.

All of these efforts have had an impact on student achievement. In 2004-05, for example, 92 percent of all fifth-graders performed at or above grade level in



## CUBE Task Forces

CUBE is supported by four issues-based task forces. The Communications, Racial Isolation, Urban Student Achievement, and Governance & 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 delivery products to its 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.

#### **Executive Group Co-Chairs:**

Jimmy Fahrenholtz, New Orleans, LA, and  
Christene C. Moss, Ft. Worth, TX

#### **Members:**

Noel Hammatt, East Baton Rouge, LA  
Katherine Hawks Haney, Youngstown, OH  
Paula Johnson, Detroit, MI  
Mary Marks, Anchorage, AK  
Willetta Milam, Cleveland, OH  
Elizabeth Reilinger, Boston, MA  
Nandi Sekou, Virgin Islands  
Marie Lynette Thornton, Detroit, MI  
Susan Valdes, Hillsborough County, FL  
Joe I. White Jr., Charlotte, NC

#### **NSBA Staff Liaison:**

Barbara Hunter  
Communications Director

### Racial Isolation

This task force 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.

#### **Executive Group Co-Chairs:**

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

#### **Members:**

Rashidah Abdulhaqq, Cleveland, OH  
Betty Seabrook Burney, Jacksonville, FL  
Tariq Butt, Chicago, IL  
Joyce J. Fountain, Elgin, IL  
Judy M. Gomez, Virgin Islands  
Deena Hayes, Guilford County, NC  
Brenda Priestly Jackson, Jacksonville, FL  
Dot K. Kearns, Guilford, NC  
Vilma Leake, Charlotte, NC  
Darryl W. Porter, Rochester, NY  
Justin R. Rodriguez, San Antonio, TX  
Oswin Sewer, Sr., Virgin Islands  
Karen Shepard, Omaha, NE

#### **NSBA Staff Liaison:**

Naomi Gittins, 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.

#### **Executive Group Co-Chairs:**

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

#### **Members:**

Jeanette S. Carmany, Aurora, CO  
Alexandria Coronado, Orange County, CA  
Peter Downs, St. Louis, MO  
Jorge Galiber, Virgin Islands  
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

Julian H. Trevino, San Antonio, TX

#### **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.

#### **Executive Group Co-Chairs:**

Lock P. Beachum, Sr., Youngstown, OH,

and Elizabeth Daniels, Portsmouth, VA

#### **Members:**

Abdul-Malik R. Ali, Trenton, NJ

Lori L. Brady, Savannah, GA

Ruth Ann Fate, Tulsa, OK

Terrence D. Joseph, Virgin Islands

Clayton R. Luckie II, Dayton, OH

Brian Keith Nance, Portsmouth, VA

Evelyn Shapiro, Phoenix, AZ

Sandra Smith-Jones, Virginia Beach, VA

Debra Smith-Watlington, Virgin Islands

#### **NSBA Staff Liaison:**

Barbara Allen, Director of Caucus and  
Urban Development

writing, while 90 percent or more met state standards in English and math. What's more, Norfolk has significantly narrowed the achievement gap between various student groups.

“There is an intense focus on student performance and data in Norfolk,” Superintendent Stephen Jones said. “The board has an unwavering commitment to improving student achievement first and foremost. The

first question they ask is: ‘How does this impact on student performance?’”

To maintain such a focus has required continuity, even with a recent leadership transition. That's been possible partly because of a longstanding tradition of community involvement, officials say. During its last superintendent search, for example, the board actively involved the public in the search process, and it relies on a

task force of school personnel, parents, and business leaders to improve the district's “customer service.”

But the bottom line is the school board's commitment to children. “Our school board members are passionate about our kids,” Jones said. “Because they put aside personal agendas and base every decision on what is best for all students in our schools, they find it easy to act as one.”



## Council of Urban Boards of Education 2007 Meetings Calendar

Each year, the Council of Urban Boards of Education offers networking and professional development opportunities through its 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.

### 2007 Meetings Schedule

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#### **CUBE Issues Forum & Congressional Luncheon on Capitol Hill**

January 27-30, 2007  
Washington, D.C.

Conducted in conjunction with NSBA's Federal Relations Network Conference, CUBE hosts an early-bird Issues Forum on urban legislative issues, focusing on the implications of new and pending legislation and regulations on urban districts, and an annual congressional luncheon featuring a keynote presentation.

#### **CUBE Urban Programming — NSBA Annual Conference & Exposition**

April 12-17, 2007  
San Francisco, CA

Held in conjunction with NSBA's Annual Conference & Exposition, this important gathering includes site visits to the host city's innovative schools, reviews CUBE's advocacy agenda, and offers programming of interest to CUBE member districts.

#### **CUBE Issues Seminar**

June 21-24, 2007  
New York City, NY

CUBE sponsors targeted, focused issues seminars that address the critical challenges facing today's urban school districts, such as poverty, race, school climate, equity in school finance, and student achievement.

#### **CUBE Annual Conference and CUBE Annual Award**

September 27-30, 2007  
Atlanta, GA

Each fall, urban school leaders meet and network with their peers from across the nation. CUBE programming features such essential urban topics as integration, racism in urban schools, school governance, textbooks, urban school board, and privatization. An urban legislative update also is included.

CUBE would like to acknowledge the School Board of the City of Norfolk (VA), the Board of Education, Houston Independent School District (TX), and the School Board of Miami-Dade County (FL) for allowing us to feature the uplifting images of their students and board members throughout this report.

## 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  
Pomona Unified School District, Pomona, 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  
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  
Clayton County Public Schools, Jonesboro, GA  
Savannah-Chatham Public Schools, Savannah, GA  
Hawaii State Board of Education, Honolulu, HI  
Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL  
Elgin School District Unit #46, Elgin, IL  
Community High School District #218, Oak Lawn, IL  
Springfield School District #186, Springfield, IL

East Chicago Board of Education, East Chicago, IN  
Fort Wayne Community Schools, Fort Wayne, IN  
Indianapolis Public Schools, Indianapolis, IN  
South Bend Community School Corp., South Bend, IN  
Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines, IA  
Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, KY  
E. Baton Rouge Parish, E. Baton Rouge, LA  
Jefferson Parish School Board, Marrero, LA  
Orleans Parish Public Schools, New Orleans, LA  
Baltimore County Public Schools, Towson, MD  
Prince George's County Board of Ed., Upper Marlboro, 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  
Ferguson-Florissant School District, Ferguson, MO  
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  
Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo, NY  
Rochester City School District, Rochester, NY  
Syracuse City School District, Syracuse, NY  
Wyandanch Union Free School District, Wyandanch, NY

Yonkers Public Schools, Yonkers, 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  
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  
Reading School District, Reading, 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  
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  
Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria, VA  
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  
Seattle School District #1, Seattle, WA  
Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, WI  
Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI

## About the Council of Urban Boards of Education

This year, the Council of Urban Boards of Education completes its fourth decade at the forefront in helping urban school districts strive for excellence.

Established in 1967 by the National School Boards Association Board of Directors, CUBE's mission is to serve urban school board members by creating opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policymakers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education.

CUBE is the only national organization governed solely by urban school board members and dedicated to their needs and interests. The 113 urban school districts that are active members of CUBE educate nearly 8 million students.

The urban component of NSBA's National Affiliate Program, CUBE operates with its own staff but also is supported by the full range of NSBA's rich resources. The CUBE public education agenda, for example, 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 challenges at the local level and seeks to improve their policy-making effectiveness.

### National Affiliate Program:

Associate Executive Director

■ **Don E. Blom**

Assistant Executive Director

■ **Marilee C. Rist**

Council of Urban Boards of Education Director

■ **Katrina A. Kelley**

National Affiliate Services Director

■ **Gene Broderson**

### NSBA:

NSBA President

■ **E. Jane Gallucci**

President-Elect

■ **Norm D. Wooten**

Secretary-Treasurer

■ **Barbara L. Bolas**

Liaison to CUBE

■ **Earl Rickman**

Immediate Past President

■ **Joan E. Schmidt**

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, and Michael A. Resnick**

### Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) Team

*From left,*  
**Jessica Bonaluto**, Senior Manager;  
**Judy Tucker Adams**, Coordinator;  
**Katrina Kelley**, Director.



## About NSBA and the National Affiliate Program

The National School Boards Association is a not-for-profit Federation of state school boards associations across the United States. Its mission is to foster excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership. It achieves that mission by representing the school board perspective before federal government agencies and with national organizations that affect education, and by providing vital information and services to state school boards associations and local school boards throughout the nation.

Founded in 1940, NSBA now represents 95,000 local school board members, virtually all of whom are elected. These local officials govern nearly 15,000 local school districts serving the nation's more than 47 million public school students.

The Council of Urban Boards of Education is the urban component of the NSBA's National Affiliate Program, a partnership that includes almost 2,500 local school districts, the NSBA Federation of state school boards associations, and the NSBA professional staff. Together, these partners work 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:

### **An advocacy network championing public education**

- 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.

### **Training and networking opportunities**

- NSBA Annual Conference
- T+L Conference
- CUBE Issues Seminar, Issues Forums and Annual Conference
- Periodic briefings
- Online Learning Center

### **Publications, research, and online resources**

- *American School Board Journal*
- Grant Writer
- Information research services
- Key Work of School Boards publications

- Leadership Insider
- No Child Left Behind resource guides
- National Education Policy Network
- National Affiliate e-Newsletter
- Policy Research Briefs
- *School Board News*
- Student achievement publications
- Special alerts on key issues
- *Urban Advocate*

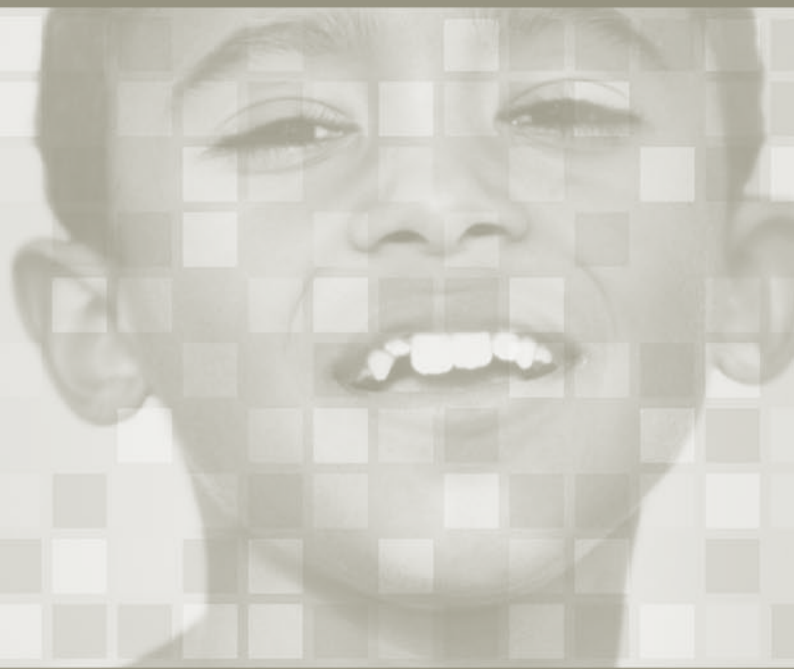
### **Savings on NSBA meetings and resources**

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



# 2006-2007 CUBE Annual Report

■ Perspectives on Urban School Board Leadership



SERVING AMERICA'S URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS



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