



NATIONAL SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

URBAN SCHOOL BOARD EXCELLENCE

URBAN ADVOCATE: 2006 AWARD EDITION

2006 CUBE ANNUAL AWARD FOR URBAN SCHOOL BOARD EXCELLENCE

Norfolk Public Schools has been named the winner of the Council of Urban Boards of Education's third annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence. Houston Independent School District and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools were selected as finalists for the award, which will be presented at the CUBE Annual Conference in Phoenix.

All three school boards have been recognized for their leadership and efforts to improve student achievement, narrow the achievement gap, and bring their diverse communities together. As the winner, Norfolk will receive \$5,000 for its student scholarship fund from sponsor McGraw-Hill Education.

As the urban component of the National School Boards Association, CUBE works to promote best practices that showcase excellence in school board governance. The Award for Urban School Board Excellence, which is presented annually to a member district, is an example of CUBE fulfilling its mission to create opportunities for urban school board leaders to showcase their knowledge and skills as policy makers.

The judges cited Norfolk, the only district to be a CUBE finalist for the past three years, for its "significant achievement gains" and history of stability. Norfolk's approach to closing the achievement gap was called "an example to be

ment. The judges said Miami-Dade County's civic and community engagement efforts were top notch, and the district clearly demonstrated its student achievement and approach to improvement for all children.

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.

The finalists were selected by a panel of distinguished judges based on materials submitted by the school districts and on independent fol-

low-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. ■



Students at the Coral Way K-8 Bilingual Program, Miami-Dade County Schools, study the globe to learn about the world.

modeled" for other districts.

"The board is focused and shares the same vision," the panel stated. "This is the best total package, and the best in show."

Houston was commended for its board monitoring system, which includes a self-evaluation process for each member, and for tying its preschool agenda to achieve-

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NORFOLK DEVELOPING WORLD-CLASS SCHOOLS

With students speaking more than 41 native languages other than English and hailing from dozens of countries, Norfolk Public Schools already has the world represented in its classrooms.

Focused on one key goal – improving teaching and learning for all – Norfolk has championed equity and excellence for nearly a decade with stunning results. In the past year alone, the district has won the 2006 CUBE Annual Award for Urban Board Excellence and the 2005 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Now Norfolk wants to achieve a new standard: “world-class by 2010.”

“Our world is becoming increasingly flat. As a result, our students will have to compete with kids living in India and China and elsewhere around the globe,” says Barry Bishop, a seven-year school board member and newly-elected board chair. “If we aren’t giving our students the highest quality education possible, we aren’t doing our jobs.”

Powerful literacy sets new bar

By just about any measure, Norfolk students have mastered the basics. In 2004-05, for example, 92 percent of all fifth-graders performed at or above grade level in writing, while 80 percent or more met state standards in English and math.

Students at all grade levels, including secondary schools, achieve at similarly high levels. Norfolk also has narrowed the achievement gap significantly between various groups.

Preparing all students to live, compete, and contribute in a global society characterized by change, complexity, and diversity requires a new kind of literacy, however. Functional literacy – the ability to read, write, and pass basic skill tests – won’t give students the kind of life opportunities they deserve, Norfolk officials say.

In a world characterized by rapid change, students need a more powerful literacy, one that equips them to read, synthesize, and analyze vast amounts of information quickly and decisively.

Making sure all students “possess the habits of powerful literacy” is one of four world-class indicators the school board



Above: Students from Rosemont Middle School have the chance to build a computer from scratch that they can then take home to use. Opposite: Students at Ingleside Elementary School prepare for their place in a global economy by locating major cities of the world.

has identified as part of its new strategic plan. Other key measures include eliminating all achievement gaps; exceeding state, national, and international benchmarks at all schools; and preparing all students so they can access productive options and opportunities upon graduation.

In Norfolk Public Schools, all truly means all. Anything else is unacceptable.

“There is an intense focus on student performance and data in Norfolk,” says Stephen Jones, superintendent. “The board has an unwavering commitment to improving student achievement first and foremost. The first question they ask is: ‘How does this impact student performance?’”

Increasing access to academic rigor

In Norfolk, increasing students’ access to academic rigor – its primary strategy for addressing the nation’s longstanding achievement gap – begins in early childhood.

Taught by highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals at a ratio of two adults to 16 children, all early childhood classes use a research-based curriculum that focuses on the acquisition of language and pre-literacy skills.

Currently, 31 of 35 elementary schools have early childhood classes that serve more than 1,600 pre-kindergarten students, with another five scheduled to open in 2006-07. The district also operates five early childhood centers.

Norfolk also has reduced class sizes in kindergarten through grade three, and has adopted a literacy-based curriculum for elementary students. Struggling students also can take advantage of special programs on Saturdays, and before and after school, and the district has dramatically increased the number of students enrolled in more demanding courses at its five high schools.

The board also backed a major new initiative to ensure that AP offerings are equitable across the district. As a result, the number of students taking at least one AP



course has increased 42 percent since 2001-02, and minority student participation has increased 75 percent. Performance on AP exams also has increased, with the number of students earning a 3 or above increasing 75 percent since 2001-02.

African-American students have posted even more impressive gains, with the number of students earning a 3 or above increasing a whopping 185 percent during the same time period.

“We have set an ambitious goal to be a world-class school system by the year 2010,” says Jones. “That means our students need to complete Algebra I by the end of eighth grade. They have to be reading on grade level by the end of grade one and every year after that. They need to be fluent in a language other than English by the time they graduate.”

To continue building the capacity of teachers and principals, the district launched a new department to provide targeted professional development aimed at closing the achievement gap and accelerating all students. Future plans include increasing the number of gifted and talented teachers and making sure underserved groups are well-represented in talent development classrooms and programs.

Norfolk also plans to continue pushing more students to tackle the challenge of rigorous AP courses through its high school and middle school theme-based programs and by ensuring more students complete “gatekeeper” courses – like Algebra I in eighth grade – earlier in their academic career.

These efforts are assisted by Freshman Success transition programs that help ninth-graders adapt to the demands of high school academics. These actions will better prepare students for leadership roles in a variety of 21st century career options.

“Our board has demonstrated a great

deal of unity and a willingness to make tough decisions that support our schools,” Jones says.

Governance yields stability, support

Norfolk’s laser-like focus on improving academic achievement has helped the district sustain its momentum through its recent leadership transition. In keeping with its long-standing tradition of community engagement, the board actively involved the public in the superintendent search process, hosting forums and focus groups, and proactively seeking input from a wide range of individuals and groups regarding the characteristics desired in the system’s new chief executive officer.

“It was important for us to hear from our community,” says former board chair Theresa Whibley. “We had an idea of what we needed in our next leader, but we wanted to be sure that the public agreed.”

The district’s Guiding Coalition, an advisory group comprising business leaders, parents, higher education personnel, district administrators, teachers, and union representatives also weighed in before the board made its final decision.

A unanimous vote by the board and the extensive public engagement process provided a strong platform for the new superintendent to build upon.

Continuing this process, the district convened a task force of administrators, clerical employees, parents, and business partners as part of its ongoing push to improve customer service. Task force members are developing customer service standards, while advice from local experts helped drive staff training for more than 500 employees.

The district also recently completed a comprehensive customer service audit that will identify trouble spots and provide benchmark data to gauge improvement.

That’s just one example of how Norfolk’s school board and administration use data to drive decision-making to improve everything from teaching and learning to the district’s behind-the-scenes operations.

“Our school board members are passionate about our kids,” says Jones. “They work with the consultants that assist our district and hold themselves accountable for results, too. 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.”

The board’s reputation for good governance has generated enthusiastic support

from Norfolk’s business community, which helped recruit more than 1,000 mentors for students at 32 schools.

Led by the Norfolk mayor, a coalition of businesses also contributed \$40,000 to host a black-tie dinner and other staff appreciation events honoring principals, teachers, administrators, and the school board for winning the \$1 million prize from The Broad Foundation.

Strong business and community support is essential for Norfolk Public Schools to meet its world-class goal.

“All these things are possible, but our challenge is to find the resources to provide the necessary support,” Jones says. “‘World-class by 2010’ and ‘all means all’ are not just sayings to our employees. We believe it’s true and that we can deliver on that promise. With that kind of belief and buy-in you can accomplish great things.” ■

NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The School Board of the City of Norfolk

Theresa Whibley, Chair; Ursula D. Rhodes, Vice Chair; Barry C. Bishop; Mr. George W. Cook, Jr.; Mr. Wilson B. Dodson, III; Mr. James T. Driggers; Dr. Lillian P. Wright

Governance structure: Seven non-partisan board members are appointed to two-year terms by the City Council.

Superintendent: Dr. Stephen C. Jones

Student enrollment: 36,285 (Pre-K-12)

Staff: 6,261

Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 69.4%

Asian-American: 2.0%

Hispanic/Latino: 3.1%

White: 25.3%

Other: 0.2% includes Native American, Asian, and Multiracial categories

Students receiving FRL: 64.2%

Students in special education: 14.3%

ESL/ELL students: 1.3%

Average per pupil expenditures: \$7,403

Website: www.nps.k12.va.us

Data Source: Norfolk Public Schools, 2004-05 Division Performance Report

HOUSTON

CREATING A COLLEGE-BOUND CULTURE

Although more than 80 percent of its 210,000 students are considered economically disadvantaged, Houston Independent School District's biggest challenge isn't poverty.

School leaders also aren't fazed by their \$808 million building program or the fact that 26 percent of HISD students are not yet fully proficient in English.

The district's top challenge is getting parents and students to understand – and believe – that a college education is not only the new gateway to the American dream, but also a realistic goal.

"From start to finish, children and their parents [have to] be able to see college in their future," says Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra. "HISD must make college preparedness and awareness a part of every child's public school experience."

Creating a college-bound culture

For HISD, creating a college-bound culture starts in preschool and permeates every aspect of the nation's seventh largest school system.

This school year, for example, the district will provide pre-kindergarten programs for approximately 15,000 eligible 3- and 4-year olds.

This early intervention service also will be available to children of active duty members of the military this year. House Bill 1, the education reform law approved by the Texas Legislature and signed by Governor Rick Perry, expanded that program.

Making sure all kids are ready and able to learn is also why HISD expanded its free breakfast program from 50,000 to all 210,000 students.

Recognizing that for many high poverty students and their families, going to college may seem as daunting – and unrealistic – as going to the moon, the district develops a detailed success plan for every student.

These personal graduation plans, developed for all HISD students, outline the courses and steps each student needs to take to move successfully from middle school to college, and beyond.

Such extensive and individualized support is essential if students from high poverty families are going to break the



Above: Technology is a key component in helping drive student success at HISD. Opposite: Students celebrate the ground-breaking for a new school, which is part of an \$808 million-bond program that is transforming HISD.

multi-generational cycle of low expectations and resignation, school officials say.

Other key strategies HISD is using to raise expectations for all students include funding the PSAT exams for all 10th-graders, automatically enrolling middle school students in specified pre-Advanced Placement classes, and expanding its early college and dual credit programs.

Engagement ensures student success

Ensuring student success is a family affair in HISD. Viewing parents as partners, HISD reaches out in multiple ways to its diverse community, from town hall meetings to computer classes and English language instruction.

The district also works closely with parents, business leaders, representatives of faith-based organizations and other key groups, and has more than 32,000 registered volunteers.

"I really think that Dr. Saavedra is doing an excellent job, and that HISD is one of the better school districts in our area," says Debra Johnson, a longtime par-

ent – and grandparent – volunteer in HISD. "Parents are beginning to come back and get involved in the school part of their children's lives more. The district really helps parents learn about things like nutrition or how to deal with home issues, that will help them help their children. It's a great thing."

Strong community connections played a critical role in helping more than 5,000 hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees get back on their feet and back in school, while the Newcomer Charter High School welcomed immigrant high school students with smaller classes, flexible scheduling, and individual attention.

This year, over 1,400 community volunteers, including Houston Mayor Bill White and other elected officials, participated in HISD's annual door-to-door canvassing campaign, which resulted in 72 recovered drop-outs on the day of the event with more expected as drop-out prevention specialists continue to follow-up throughout the year.

A new charter school designed to meet the needs of non-traditional students, a

support program for pregnant teens, and other innovative programs are creating a “can do” atmosphere in HISD, which has increased student achievement in reading, math, and science by as much as 23 percentage points on state tests.

In 2002, HISD won the inaugural Broad Prize for Urban Education for posting the “greatest overall improvement in student achievement” while significantly narrowing the achievement gap across various income levels and ethnic groups.

The district’s focus on creating a college-bound culture is taking root. AP enrollment has jumped nearly 800 percent since 2001 for ninth and 10th-graders, while dual credit enrollment has soared, especially among Hispanic students.

Monitoring system increases accountability

Ultimate accountability for creating a college-bound culture rests with the HISD Board of Education, which “accepts responsibility” for the “high achievement for all students,” according to its Declaration of Beliefs and Visions.

The school board has developed a sophisticated monitoring system to measure how well the district is achieving its goals of increasing student achievement, management efficiency, and public support and confidence, creating a positive district culture and providing facilities that meet district standards.

Every aspect of the district, from school house operations and budgets to the superintendent’s performance contract, are aligned in similar fashion.

Focusing all district resources on the same goals generates better results for students and the community, school officials say.

This results orientation is evident at the school building level as well. Recognizing that decision making works best when it occurs “closest to the action,” the board has empowered principals and school-based staff to make decisions that meet the needs of their specific students and local communities.

To support this initiative, the school board has decentralized district administration and refocused resources to give schools more flexibility.

In addition to resources following students, the board has also approved a “small schools subsidy” that provides extra funds to the district’s smallest schools and gives them a chance to improve their programs and perhaps attract new students, thereby reversing their declining enrollment.

“Giving our students the best possible education means recognizing that the same formula does not apply to every student,” says Board President Diana Davila. “Our board vision states that unequal needs require unequal resources.”

A detailed school board monitoring system identifies specific target measures

for each of the district’s five main goals and makes sure that all policies and management systems are aligned with the overall goal and focus of improving academic achievement for all students.

For Katrina evacuees, who arrived in Houston battered and bruised academically as well as psychologically, this relentless focus on academic achievement resulted in special summer school session and other programs to boost student learning.

Such dynamic and goal-oriented programs, policies, and schools are a hallmark of HISD, according to David Feldman, a public affairs representative at Chevron: “Such programs that promote and encourage academic achievement and prepare students for higher education and ongoing success are rightfully of the highest priority in HISD.” ■



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Houston Independent School District Board of Education

Diana Davila, President; Manuel Rodriguez, Jr., First Vice President; Harvin C. Moore, Second Vice President; Arthur M. Gaines, Jr., Secretary; Greg Meyers, Assistant Secretary; Kevin H. Hoffman; Dianne Johnson; Natasha M. Kamrani; Lawrence Marshall

Governance structure: Nine board members are elected by district to serve four-year staggered terms.

Superintendent:

Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D.

Student enrollment: 210,000

Staff: Approximately 29,000 full and part-time employees

Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 29.9%

Asian-American: 3.1%

Hispanic/Latino: 58.3%

White: 8.5%

Native American: 0.1%

Students receiving FRL: 81.7%

Students in special education: 9.8%

ESL/ELL students: 27.9%

Average per pupil

expenditures: \$6,456

Website: www.houstonisd.org

Data Source: Houston Independent School District Statistical Highlights 2005-06 (May 2006)

MIAMI-DADE

GIVING STUDENTS THE WORLD

For Miami-Dade County Public Schools, giving students the world meant turning around the nation's fourth-largest school system first. Plagued by poverty, language barriers, and explosive growth, the district seemed destined for mediocrity when a reform-minded school board hired Rudolph (Rudy) Crew as superintendent in 2004.

Discarding public education's penchant for pilot programs and incremental change, the new board and leadership team acted swiftly, placing 39 schools in the educational equivalent of intensive care.

The district also launched a new countywide parent training program, forged historic operating agreements with local municipalities, and reached out to local businesses to help transform its high schools.

Now, student achievement is up dramatically, the gap is narrowing, and public support is building.

Zoning in on achievement

For the 39 schools in Miami-Dade's improvement zone, each day is a battle to break poverty's stranglehold on learning.

With five years of data showing schools were failing students and a ream of F grades from the state, Miami-Dade knew the system required an overhaul.

"Creating the improvement zone was a courageous move," says Board Chairman Agustin Barrera. "We needed to change everything about the schools that just weren't performing."

Recognizing that instruction must be tailored to meet the needs of various student groups, zone schools have more time to teach, thanks to longer school days and an extended school year.

With large numbers of students lacking basic skills, all zone schools focus intensely on reading, using a common curriculum and research-backed teaching methods. Instruction is monitored carefully.

Teachers also receive targeted professional development and earn 20 percent more than their colleagues at less-challenging schools, thanks to successful contract negotiations with the teachers union.

Schools are designated in and out of the zone as needed, depending on student performance and other factors.



Zoo Magnet students at Miami-Dade's Richmond Heights Middle School study and document the habits of wildlife.

The goal is to improve student achievement, not foster long-term dependence on additional resources. Once schools have all students achieving at acceptable levels, they move from improvement zone supervision to one of the six regional centers serving different geographic areas of the district.

Engaging partners

When more than 60 percent of all families live in poverty and 14 percent have limited English proficiency, getting them involved as partners in their children's education may seem like a middle-class fantasy.

For Miami-Dade, however, engaging parents is a key strategy in making sure all kids receive a great education – and the life opportunities that go with it.

In 2004, the district launched The Parent Academy, an ambitious, year-round initiative that offers free classes for parents on everything from storytelling and child nutrition to computer skills and financial management.

"If we really want to break the cycle, we have to help parents help themselves," says Barrera. "We have to lift parents as well as our students."

Designed by parents and community leaders, the academy offers classes online and throughout the county at area

schools, businesses, public libraries, and other partners.

The goals of the academy are three-fold:

- Help parents navigate the Miami-Dade school system
- Boost parents' capacity to help their children learn at home, and
- Increase parents' civic, academic, and vocational skills.

Last year, more than 18,000 parents participated, thanks in large measure to more than \$1.3 million in funding from businesses, foundations, and other sources.

Parents aren't the only ones re-engaging in Miami-Dade's public schools. The board has negotiated innovative – and historic – education compacts with municipal leaders.

As part of these new operating agreements, the district is partnering with local government institutions to transport and mentor students, build new schools, reduce class size, and offer unique course offerings.

The district also has launched a new strategic alliance with the Miami-Dade County Health Department and other partners to provide school health services for the more than 100,000 children who don't have health insurance or access to regular medical care.

Crew also meets regularly with business

CEOs, who are helping the district boost student internships and ratchet up local standards to meet stiff global competition

Once considered aloof and bureaucratic, Miami-Dade now serves as a catalyst for community betterment.

"You have to open up the door of opportunity to legitimately and fundamentally engage the community in this work," says Crew. "Parents and the community are not cosmetic players. They legitimately have a place at the table."

Increasing efficiency

Increasing students' access to academic rigor at all high schools while extending the school day and year, offering more teacher training, and providing a common reading curriculum at high-poverty schools, requires resources.

While school board members lobbied state legislators and local businesses for more financial support, the district slashed 500 positions from central administration. The savings, approximately \$38 million, was used to create and fund the school improvement zone.

The district also carved more than \$44 million from its existing budget to give employees pay raises and reduced building maintenance costs by 6 percent, or 21 cents per square foot. A lackluster construction management program was revamped and reinvigorated, and the district tightened its hold on its finances, resulting in faster, more efficient school construction and a more favorable outlook among bond rating firms.

As a result, the district built more than 18,000 new classroom seats in 2004-05 to relieve overcrowding, more than three times the number planned by the previous administration.

That record-setting pace continued in 2005-06, as another 19,000 classroom seats and \$570 million in new construction were completed.

Better fiscal and operations management is rebuilding public trust, a process enhanced by the district's development of its first comprehensive 5-year capital plan, which identified another \$3.3 billion in needs.

Community leaders are paying attention and opening their checkbooks. Business partners provided more than \$800,000 in funding for The Parent Academy and \$300,000 for health education.

"While it's difficult to gauge, public trust as a whole seems to be increasing," says Carvalho. "People believe the school board

can be trusted on the basis of true performance that's observable on multiple levels."

Karen Rivo, a longtime Miami-Dade parent leader, credits the transformation to a visionary, bold superintendent and a school board that works well together and knows how to leverage each other's strengths.

"It's been an amazing transition," says Rivo. "To have a superintendent who's willing to change things and a school board that brings together different things to the table and works so well together, has been incredibly wonderful to see."

Even former critics are supportive of the changes. A state taxpayer watchdog group, for example, recently commended the district for outpacing the state in reading and math gains while closing the achievement gap, saying: "Something important is happening in the Miami-Dade School District..."

Reform yields results

Dramatic reform is yielding dramatic results in Miami-Dade. This past June, for the first time since Florida began issuing school grades, more than half of all Miami-Dade schools – 179 of 328 – earned an "A" based on students' performance on state tests.

The district earned a "B" grade for the second year in a row, falling just seven points short of the highly coveted "A" and a major upgrade from the "C" grade the district earned in 2003-04.

The gains are particularly impressive for schools receiving educational intensive care. The majority – 22 of 39 schools in the improvement zone – have raised the letter grades received from the state.

More importantly, the 20 zone elementary schools saw a 17 percentage point gain in reading from 2005 to 2006, clearly demonstrating that the zone's innovative approach and specialized curriculum are working.

The districtwide push for higher standards and more rigorous academic coursework also is paying off. The College Board recently recognized seven Miami-Dade high schools for having the largest numbers of students in 2005 succeeding on college-level AP exams and for increasing its AP enrollment by 13 percent districtwide in just one year.

"You have to do both," says Barrera. "You have to raise the ceiling for students already performing at high levels while you lift the bottom, all without leaving anyone behind."

Giving children the world means more than simply meeting local, state or national standards, however. That's why Crew and other Miami-Dade leaders want all students to meet global academic standards.

"It's not enough that we meet achievement standards for kids in Florida, New York, or other states," says Crew. "Our kids aren't competing with other kids in Florida. They're competing with kids in Korea, Japan, and China. They can't just pass tests. They have to apply learning in a global economy." ■

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The School Board of Miami-Dade County

Agustin J. Barrera, Board Chair, (District 6); Perla Tabares Hantman, Board Vice Chair, (District 4); Frank J. Bolaños, Board Member, (District 5); Evelyn Langlieb Greer, Board Member, (District 9); Robert Ingram, Board Member, (District 1); Martin Karp, Board Member, (District 3); Ana Rivas Logan, Board Member, (District 7); Marta Pérez, Board Member, (District 8); Solomon C. Stinson, Board Member, (District 2)

Governance structure: Nine non-partisan board members are elected by district to serve four-year staggered terms.

Superintendent:

Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D

Student enrollment: 361,550

Staff: Full-Time 38,497;

Part-time 10,978; Total 49,475

Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 27.6%

Asian-American:

Hispanic/Latino: 60.4%

White: 9.6%

Other 2.4% includes Native American, Asian, and Multiracial categories

Students receiving FRL: 61.1%

Students in special education: 67,938 - 18%

ESL/ELL students: 52,482 - 14%

Average per pupil expenditures: \$7,045

Website: www2.dadeschools.net

Data Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Statistical Highlights 2005-2006 (May 2006)

The CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence recognizes successfully governed school districts. The award is presented to the school district that best demonstrates excellence in board governance, closing the achievement gap, academic achievement, and community engagement.

Each member will receive the application form for the 2007 award for Urban School Board Excellence next April. All applications received by May 25, 2007, will be considered in the next judging process.

The 2007 annual award for Urban School Board Excellence will be announced at the CUBE Annual Conference banquet in Atlanta, Georgia.



ABOUT CUBE

For almost four 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.

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