



NATIONAL SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

# URBAN SCHOOL BOARD EXCELLENCE

URBAN ADVOCATE: 2007 AWARD EDITION

## 2007 CUBE ANNUAL AWARD FOR URBAN SCHOOL BOARD EXCELLENCE

The Houston Independent School District and Miami-Dade County Public Schools have a great deal in common. Both are among the largest school systems in the nation (Miami-Dade County is fourth, Houston seventh). Both have disproportionately large numbers of non-English speaking immigrant students and in both districts, a majority of students live in poverty.

The districts have something else in common, too. Despite the challenges, both have made laudable progress in educating students and providing a model for other urban districts across the country.

In recognition of these efforts, the Houston and Miami-Dade County Public Schools have been named co-winners of the Council of Urban Education's 2007 Fourth Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence. The Fort Worth Independent School District was selected as a finalist.

Miami-Dade County and Houston were finalists for the 2006 CUBE Award, won by the Norfolk Public Schools.

Fort Worth, Houston, and Miami-Dade County have taken similar approaches to academic success. All three have focused heavily on parental and community support, targeted resources to the most needy students and set goals for improving secondary education, which typically lags behind elementary schools in academic performance.

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 finalists were selected by a panel of distinguished judges based on materials submitted by the school districts and on 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 Jo Ann Yee, California School Boards Association.



Students standing in front of Parent Academy sign. More than 55,000 parents completed the Parent Academy program during the last school year.

Applicants had to describe a vision for their governance role and show that the board implemented a strategy to narrow gaps in achievement among groups of students.

Also, the board had to demonstrate leadership in creating a learning environment conducive to student achievement and demonstrate that they had successfully strengthened community support for the district.

Photo courtesy of Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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# HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is no stranger to good news. During the past 15 years, the district has garnered plenty of attention for its academic successes. Now, the district can clear off a little more room in the trophy case, having been awarded the 2007 CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence along with Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

## HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Houston Independent School District Board of Education:

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

### Governance structure:

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

### Superintendent of Schools:

Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D

### Student enrollment: 202,936

### Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 29.2%  
Asian-American: 3.1%  
Hispanic/Latino: 59.3%  
White: 8.3%  
Native American: <1%

### Students receiving FRL: 78%

### Students in Special Education: 10%

### ESL/ELL students: 27.3%

### Average per pupil

expenditures: \$6,808

Staff: approx. 29,000 full and part-time employees

Website: [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org)



**HISD is making a major investment in the arts. The district will spend \$7.3 million this year to upgrade school band, choral, theater, dance and other arts programs, recognizing the important role an arts education can play in increasing student achievement.**

No one would suggest that Houston has had an easy road to success. More than 80 percent of students live in poverty while nearly one-third have limited English skills. The size of the district alone—more than 200,000 students—is an immense challenge in and of itself.

Despite the obstacles, the Houston Independent School District continues to distinguish itself in the field of urban education.

### 2006-07 A banner year

Public education today is a numbers-driven business—and by any measure, students in Houston posted impressive numbers during the 2006-07 school year.

The district had its best-ever showing on the state's Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) standardized tests. Ninety-four percent of Houston schools earned a rating of at least "academically acceptable," while 83 of Houston's 275 schools earned "Exemplary" or "Recognized" status. An Exemplary school is one in which at least 90 percent of students pass the TAKS tests, while to be a Recognized school, at least 75 percent of students must pass. What's more, the number of "Academically Unacceptable" schools

was cut nearly in half, dropping from 33 in 2005-06 to 17 in 2006-07.

"What I like about that is that the district isn't just lifting the floor," said Dr. Abelardo Saavedra, superintendent of the Houston Independent School District. "We're lifting the floor and the ceiling at the same time."

And while schools improved their ratings, so did students. Seventy-five percent of schools posted a higher passing rate on the TAKS math and social studies tests, 70 percent of schools improved reading passing rates and 60 percent improved in science.

Houston's performance on the TAKS was supported by results of the national Stanford test. Houston students beat the national average on the Stanford. Plus, SAT scores increased in 2006-07, while scores nationally declined.

Finally, Houston students both took and passed more Advanced Placement courses than ever before. AP enrollment has increased sharply during the past six years.

Saavedra credits the district's new teacher performance pay program with helping spur academic improvements.

Last year, the district paid \$6,000 bonuses to teachers whose students made measurable improvements. "We measure the academic growth of individual children in specific classrooms," Saavedra said. The bonuses are completely separate from the state school ratings. That means teachers at a struggling school have just as much chance to earn the bonuses as their colleagues at high-performing schools.

The school board plans to increase that bonus to \$8,000 this year and hopes to raise it to \$10,000 in 2008-09.

## **A decentralized approach to management**

The Houston Independent School District is the largest school system in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with more than 200,000 students and 29,000 employees. With such a big system, controlling everything from the central office would be a daunting, perhaps impossible, challenge.

So Houston's Board of Education and Superintendent Saavedra don't try to micromanage. Instead, the board has adopted a decentralized approach to management that puts more decision-making authority into the hands of principals and teachers—the people who directly interact with students. In turn, School Board President Manuel Rodriguez said employees feel a greater sense of ownership and accountability with their school's success because they have been involved in the decision-making process.

But while Rodriguez says the principals are "the captain of their boats," they don't act alone. Each school has a committee of parents, teachers, staff members and concerned citizens who help the principal make important decisions.

"As a parent that shook his finger in the face of principals and administrators for 24 years, it is less confrontational when parents are part of the process," Rodriguez said. "Once you have the parents as cohorts and partners, they become allies."

The school board gives principals and school leadership teams the leeway to make key decisions and set directions for their schools. For example, some Houston schools approached the board asking for a ban on student cell phones. Other schools said their parents felt

more comfortable if their child had a direct, immediate means of contacting them, so they opposed such a ban. Rather than coming up with a district-level policy that would have been guaranteed to anger a certain number of constituents, the board allowed each school to handle the cell phone policy as it saw fit.

The decentralized approach extends to the district level as well. Houston ISD is broken up into five geographic regions, each with its own set of schools. Each of the five regional offices is managed by a regional superintendent who supervises and coordinates a team of executive principals. This team ensures that the quality of instruction is consistent throughout the schools in that region. Regional managers are on hand in each office to talk to parents.

School leaders say this decentralized structure allows the large district to be more responsive to parent concerns.

Saavedra said that decentralized, shared decision-making philosophy extends to his relationship with the board. The board sets expectations and evaluates progress, he said, but leaves the running of day-to-day operations up to Saavedra and his staff.

"The school board pushes, which is what they ought to do," he said. "But they let me do my job as superintendent." Saavedra even has complete control over all personnel hiring, something few urban superintendents enjoy.

Saavedra's position with the board undoubtedly is aided by his familiarity with the district and the stability on top the Houston ISD has enjoyed—a sharp contrast to many urban districts that change superintendents on a regular basis. The school board had to fill the district's top job in late 2001 and again in late 2004. Instead of conducting an expensive superintendent search to hire a out-of-town candidate with national name value, the Houston school board took a low-key approach each time, turning to veteran educators with a proven track record of success in the district.

That approach led them to hire Kaye Stripling in 2001 when Rod Paige was named U.S. Secretary of Education. Stripling had started working for the Houston ISD in 1964 as a special education teacher and had worked her way up through the system's administrative

ranks. When Stripling retired in 2004, the board hired Saavedra, a native of nearby Corpus Christi who had spent four years as a regional supervisor in Houston ISD. Both hires were known commodities to the school board and, as a result, the district's operations never experienced the bumpy transition period that often accompanies a change in the superintendent's office.

## **Reaching out to parents**

Developing relationships with parents has been a key ingredient in Houston's success.

Building those bridges has taken a great deal of effort. As mentioned, the vast majority of students come from impoverished homes and parents in poor families as a group are not as active in their children's schools as parents from middle- and upper-income families. The Houston ISD also faces a language challenge, given that a disproportionate number of parents speak Spanish, not English.

So the district is taking extra steps to get parents involved. One outreach program is a series of Saturday workshops for students who need extra academic help and their parents. By getting parents in the classroom, teachers can get them directly involved in the education process.

The school board also developed a "Parent's Bill of Rights," a document printed in English, Spanish and Vietnamese informing parents of what they can rightfully expect when interacting with schools. These rights include guaranteeing parents the ability to examine curriculum materials, observe their child's classroom, review their child's records and be notified if their child is absent from school.

However, Rodriguez said, "The relationship works both ways." Under the Parent's Bill of Rights, parents must abide by school rules, treat school staff with respect and ensure their child turns his or her homework in on time.

The next step is a Parent Academy, a program just for moms and dads, that is planned for the fall. The academy will give parents information on how to navigate the school system, how to help their kids with homework and how to go back to school themselves.

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# MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The challenges facing the Miami-Dade County Board of Education seemed a mile high in 2004.

That's not to say good things weren't happening—many schools were making academic program. But the nation's fourth-largest school district still struggled with low-performing schools; huge numbers of poor children, many of whom didn't speak English; racial strife; and political turmoil among Dade County's elected bodies. Arguably the biggest challenge was the public's gen-



Students at Miami-Dade's Morningside Elementary School are ready to learn more than just reading, writing and arithmetic.

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### School Board of Miami-Dade County:

Agustin J. Barrera, Chair  
Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair  
Renier Diaz de la Portilla  
Evelyn Langlieb Greer  
Perla Tabares Hantman  
Dr. Robert B. Ingram  
Ana Rivas Logan  
Dr. Marta Pérez  
Dr. Solomon C. Stinson

**Governance structure:** Nine school board members elected from single member districts serve four-year staggered terms

**Superintendent of Schools:**  
Dr. Rudolph F. Crew

**Student enrollment:** 353,283

#### Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 26.9%  
Asian-American: <1%  
Hispanic/Latino: 61.2%  
White: 9.4%  
Other: 2.5%

**Students receiving FRL:** 61.3%

**Students in Special Education:**  
16%

**ESL/ELL students:** 15%

**Average per pupil expenditures:** \$6865

**Staff:** 50,271 full and part-time as of Oct 2006

**Website:** <http://www2.dadeschools.net/index.htm>

eral lack of trust for all government agencies, including the school district.

The board also needed to hire a new superintendent. After a highly publicized national search, they turned to former New York City School Chancellor Rudolph (Rudy) Crew. Hiring Crew, who was coveted by several other large urban districts, created headlines, but board members knew the hard work was just beginning and one hire would not be a miracle fix.

So far, Miami's bold move appears to be paying dividends for the district and its students. During the past three years, student performance has risen in Miami-Dade County and the district's attempts to narrow the performance gap between white and minority students—a critical issue for nearly all urban district—has been promising. Perhaps just as important, community support also is showing measurable signs of improvement.

In recognition of these efforts, Miami-Dade County has been named co-winner of the 2007 CUBE Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence, along with the Houston Independent School District.

Building public trust and support is perhaps the most difficult job urban school leaders face. Urban districts typically are the most complex, with various ethnic, socio-economic and political groups competing for power, often toward conflicting goals. Miami-Dade County's school leaders made winning public support a top priority. They targeted

low-performing schools for intensive remediation and have set their sights on improving high schools.

### Parental involvement is key to student success

From the beginning, board members knew parents must play a key role in any improvement efforts. However, demographics presented a challenge.

"When you have a school district with a large immigrant population and a large number of impoverished students, many students often aren't prepared to come to school," said Agustin Barrera, chair of the Miami-Dade County board. "A lot of times, we feed them the two meals a day they get."

Miami-Dade County's Parent Academy, started in 2004, offers a broad range of social services to give students a more stable, healthy home life, which in turn, will improve their chances of academic success.

The Academy works to help parents understand the district's programs and goals; reduce truancy; and promote student health and wellness. Parents also get help on academic skills they can use for their children. They receive training in everything from providing nutritious meals to saving money for college to selecting appropriate bedtime stories. They receive assistance in finding and paying for health care, dealing with the immigration process and gaining citizenship, and earning a GED or college degree.

"If you raise the skills of the parent, you raise the skills of the child," Barrera said.

Given that more than 60 percent of the district's families live in poverty and nearly 15 percent have limited English proficiency, this seemed like an uphill challenge. But to date, the academy is one of the district's most successful reform initiatives. More than 18,000 parents completed the program during the first full year of implementation, a number that jumped to 55,000 in 2006-07.

Corporate and charitable sponsors pay the entire bill for the year-round program, meaning the district isn't draining classroom resources. Most importantly, Crew said he hopes the Parent Academy can help more parents get what they want for their children.

"The fact that they are poor or don't speak English or come from another country shouldn't diminish that capacity," he said.

### **Board credibility a key**

District officials are working with other community leaders and elected officials as well. Agreements have been reached with local government bodies to build schools and fund education. Also, the district partnered with the Miami-Dade County Health Department to provide health services for 100,000 uninsured students.

This bridge-building is particularly necessary in Miami, where the relationship between the district and elected officials has been contentious. Crew has been highly visible and has actively courted business support. The district has received millions of dollars in private investments and relationships with governmental agencies have greatly improved.

"One of the problems the board had in the past was credibility," Barrera said, noting that Crew and the board were careful to be honest about the district's problems and progress, rather than make unrealistic promises. "We've been able to get support from businesses because business leaders know we'll spend the money the way we say we will."

Businesses now are asked to be part of the solution — and they have responded positively. Harve Mogul, president and CEO of the United Way of Miami-Dade, works with the district on public-private ventures, including a popular "Principal for a Day" program that invites commu-

nity leaders to spend time in schools.

"Over the past few years, there's been a lot of outreach to businesses," Mogul said, noting that community leaders are more receptive to these gestures because of Crew's honest, up-front approach.

People may not always like the news Crew delivers, Mogul said, but they appreciate and respect his open, truthful manner.

New leadership helped the board start fresh. During the past six years, the school board has added five new members and hired Crew. These new faces allowed the district to somewhat distance itself from past acrimony.

### **"Improvement Zone" a success**

Reviewing school data, board members learned that the district's biggest challenges were in a relatively small number of high-poverty schools that had underperformed for years.

In 2004, the district decided to focus its resources on 39 struggling schools in low-income neighborhoods. Most in the "School Improvement Zone" received "F's" on the state's academic report cards before the latest reforms.

Under the improvement zone plan, affected schools have limited autonomy and offer extended days and a longer year. Teachers work from a common reading-intensive curriculum and the central office closely monitors instruction. School Improvement Zone teachers also get extra professional development and 20 percent higher pay than their peers.

"The idea behind the School Improvement Zone was that we simply had to add more time and improve instruction for those youngsters," said Crew, who adopted a similar plan in New York City that proved successful.

Results have been promising. More than half of the zone's elementary school students now read at grade level, up from just one-third when the initiative started. All of the zone's schools have improved, with some making double-digit gains on state tests.

Board members note that the plan did not require any additional funding. Instead, existing funds were rearranged. The board also is working with schools to improve to the point they can move out of improvement zone status.

## **Secondary reform the next step**

After instituting the School Improvement Zone, district officials turned their attention to middle and high schools. The district's comprehensive secondary school reform plan has three goals: improve the graduation rate; increase the number of students attending college; and ensure that students are better prepared for the workforce. This effort includes:

- A ninth-grade academy to transition students into high school. Research has found that ninth grade produces the most dropouts, the largest disciplinary suspensions and a disproportionate percentage of retentions. Miami's ninth-grade academy puts students in a largely separate, self-contained environment where they can receive more personal attention from teachers. Teachers also get common planning time.

- Increased emphasis on Advanced Placement courses. This year, 13 Miami-Dade County high schools were recognized by *Newsweek* magazine, which grades schools largely on AP participation.

- Theme-based academies for 10<sup>th</sup>-, 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders organized around career interests. Students must apply knowledge and skills they learn in a practical setting.

Internships or dual enrollment in college for all seniors. Last year, more than 1,400 completed internships.

Crew said these efforts are "aimed at completely changing the way we organize high school education." Successful reform must prepare students for life after high school and build on their existing interests, he said.

Reform efforts started in 11 high schools last year and will extend to 11 more this year. The goal is to include all high schools, which are the district's area of greatest need, Barrera said.

Magnet high schools - those offering specialized academic programs - fare well, but Barrera said too many traditional neighborhood high schools continue to struggle. The district's efforts are part of a plan to make sure that all students get a sound education and proper preparation for life after graduation.

"We're trying to teach more than reading, writing and arithmetic," he said. ■

# FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2005, the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) faced a challenge completely out of the school system's control, but daunting nonetheless.

Four years of serious budget cuts — \$50 million in all — had stretched the district's budget to the breaking point. At the same time, Fort Worth "was facing all of the challenges any urban system is facing," Superintendent Melody

## FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Fort Worth Independent School District Board of Education:

William H. Koehler, President, Chris Hatch, Jean McClung, Christene C. Moss, Judy G. Needham, Juan Rangel, Norman Robbins, Camille Rodriguez, T.A. Sims

### Governance structure:

Nine board members are elected to serve four-year staggered terms — eight are elected to serve single member districts and the board president is elected at large

### Superintendent of Schools:

Melody A. Johnson

### Student enrollment: 80,000

#### Students by ethnicity:

African-American: 27%  
Asian-American: 1.7%  
Hispanic/Latino: 55%  
White: 15.9%  
Other: <1%

#### Students receiving FRL: 70.6%

#### Students in Special Education: 9%

#### ESL/ELL students: 26.6%

#### Average per pupil expenditures: \$7600 per student (approximate)

#### Staff: 9,880 full and part time

#### Website:

[www.fortworthisd.org](http://www.fortworthisd.org)



A proud FWISD graduate celebrates her accomplishment.

Johnson said. These include educating a diverse, often poor, population, dealing with rising state and federal testing standards and winning community support for public education.

## From restraints to opportunities

Johnson won't call the budget cuts a blessing in disguise, but she says the fiscal restraints forced district leaders to take a close look at every aspect of the school district's business. A yearlong series of audits examined areas such as curriculum, facilities, and administration. Funding priorities were set, with programs that directly impacted student performance placed at the top of the list.

"We rethought everything," Johnson said. Improved professional development for teachers became a point of emphasis. Accomplished veteran teachers were allowed to teach half a day and work the rest of the day as mentors to young or struggling teachers.

"None of those budget cuts took place in the classroom," School Board President Bill Koehler said.

In addition, the district turned to the community for help. More than 250 mentors now work with at-risk students to help them stay in school and out of

trouble. Businesses work with 400 seventh-graders each year on school-to-work issues and the City of Fort Worth has partnered with the district on an academically focused after-school program that serves more than 7,000 students.

The Fort Worth Chamber works with the district on numerous efforts, including a summer program that allows students to get hands-on experience in the workplace and develop skills for possible careers down the road.

## Cooperation key to academic progress

Johnson and other Fort Worth leaders point to results from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program as evidence that their efforts are working. Last year, 37 schools were named Academically Recognized or Exemplary by the state, more than double the number earning high distinction in 2005.

Minority students and students from low-income families are among the main beneficiaries of the district's improvement. The gap between white and minority students closed in 24 of 36 tested areas on the 2005-06 TAKS tests. In the last two years, the number of Hispanic high school students taking Advanced Placement courses has dou-

bled, while African-American participation has increased by 50 percent. The state awarded \$2.3 million in performance bonuses to teachers at 25 high-poverty schools for their success in helping disadvantaged children.

But Fort Worth isn't finished. After an audit found the district's curriculum lacked rigor, relevance and continuity across all schools, district educators went to work on a new and improved curriculum that is being unveiled this fall.

The upgraded curriculum is aligned with state and national standards and provides teachers with proven strategies for communicating the material. The revamped curriculum also features information parents can use at home and students received a summer activity sheet at every grade level and subject.

But knowing how contentious curriculum overhauls can be, particularly among teachers, Johnson put the educators themselves in charge of the revision process. Four hundred teachers participated in rewriting the curriculum.

"No individual can do this work alone," Johnson said. "Isolation is our enemy. We can't afford to have teachers close their doors and operate as solitary craftsmen."

Like many school districts, Fort Worth is now turning its attention to high school reform. Nationally, academic gains have

come far slower at the secondary school level than for younger students.

The district recently spent \$2 million to create ninth-grade academies at every high school. These smaller, self-contained programs give students a chance to get acclimated to high school life. In addition, 3,500 incoming ninth-graders attended a summer transition camp designed to make the jump to high school more comfortable. Also, two Fort Worth high schools are participating in the Texas High School Project, a public-private partnership aimed at boosting graduation and college enrollment rates.

### **A change in attitude benefits the board**

But in addition to the classroom initiatives, Koehler said the board's internal chemistry had to change for the district to be successful.

"I got the sense that a few years ago, there was a circle the wagons approach to management," Koehler said. "We thought it was critical to regain the public trust. To do that, we had to listen to them and not be defensive. We had to be transparent."

Koehler was elected in 2004 and several other new members joined at the same time. They, combined with like-minded board veterans, set about the change the board culture. Koehler said the board intentionally tried to bring an



**Even the youngest FWISD students embrace technology.**

end to the in-fighting that plagues many boards of education and focus their collective energy on solving the district's problems.

He also said the board enjoys a wonderful relationship with Johnson.

"Dr. Johnson has worked very effectively with our school board," said Fort Worth Chamber President Bill Thornton, who has worked closely with the district on a number of initiatives. "We have a cohesive and collaborative group that is like-minded in their focus on students." ■

### **HOUSTON CONTINUED**

"We've found that our most successful schools are the ones with the strongest parental involvement," Rodriguez said.

### **Looking Ahead – Dropout Prevention and Middle School Reform**

Despite all of the good work, everyone says the district has room to improve. Saavedra said the biggest challenge facing the district is students dropping out from high school.

"We need to look internally at our policies and determine if there is anything we do that creates this dropout problem," Saavedra said. In particular, he wants to look at grade retention policies, noting that students who are held back in the lower grades are at a significantly higher risk of dropping out once

they reach high school. But Saavedra, his team and the school board aren't waiting for answers. In April, they created the Dropout Recovery Center, a charter high school that targets students in danger of dropping out. They will get an accelerated program that will allow them to catch up, and their hours will be flexible in case they also work. Graduates will get assistance in finding careers after they leave school.

The district also has employed 10 full-time, year-round dropout prevention specialists, who work with students to solve the issues that may lead or even have led to them dropping out. In addition, the district has recruited hundreds of volunteers to go door-to-door and get dropouts back in school. This year's "Reach out to Dropouts" walk brought back dozens of students. The volunteer program has proven so successful that

other districts, even systems outside of Texas, have adopted similar efforts.

Rodriguez also notes that middle school reform is a critical issue for Houston. He believes many of the problems in high school, including dropouts, occur because students aren't adequately prepared in middle school. He said the reform efforts will beef up the academic content of the middle school curriculum.

"If we can address the middle school, I think we can address some of the basic problems in high school," Rodriguez said. ■

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 2008 award of Urban School Board Excellence next March. All applications received by May 5, 2008, will be considered in the next judging process. We encourage all member districts to apply.

The 2008 award for Urban School Board Excellence will be announced at the CUBE Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, September 25-28, 2008.



#### **ABOUT CUBE**

For four decades, the Council of Urban Boards of Education has been at the forefront in helping urban school districts strive for excellence. Established in 1967 by NSBA's Board of Directors, CUBE is the only national membership organization governed solely by urban school board members 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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***Serving America's Urban  
Public School Students***

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