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# THE ACHIEVER

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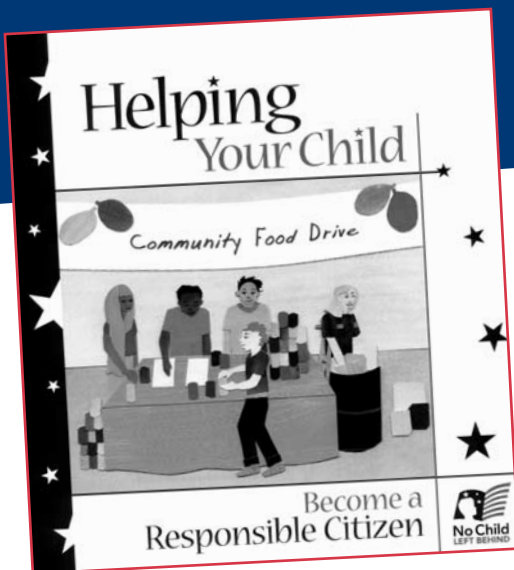
**FIRST CLASS**



“When it comes to  
the education of our  
children . . . failure is  
not an option.”

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

## **NEW RELEASE!** **Helping Your Child Booklet**



Just added to the 12-booklet *Helping Your Child* series is a publication that looks at the values and skills that make up good character and citizenship. ***Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen*** suggests activities that parents and their school-aged children can do to put those values to work in their daily lives and provides tips for working with teachers and schools to ensure that family members act together to promote the basic values that children can learn and use. Finally, the booklet provides an extensive list of books and other resources with character-related themes that can be read and discussed with children to encourage character and citizenship development.

The *Helping Your Child* series aims to provide parents with the tools and information necessary to help their children succeed in school and life. These booklets, which feature practical lessons and activities to help both school-aged and preschool children develop the skills necessary to achieve, are available in both English and Spanish.

For an online copy, visit [www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/hyc.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/hyc.html) or call the Department of Education's publications center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS with identification number EK0540B to place an advance order.



# THE ACHIEVER

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## New Web Resource Designed for School Emergencies

In an effort to provide school leaders with more information about emergency preparedness, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge on March 7 unveiled a new section on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site—[www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan)—designed to be a simple resource to help school officials plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents and terrorist acts.

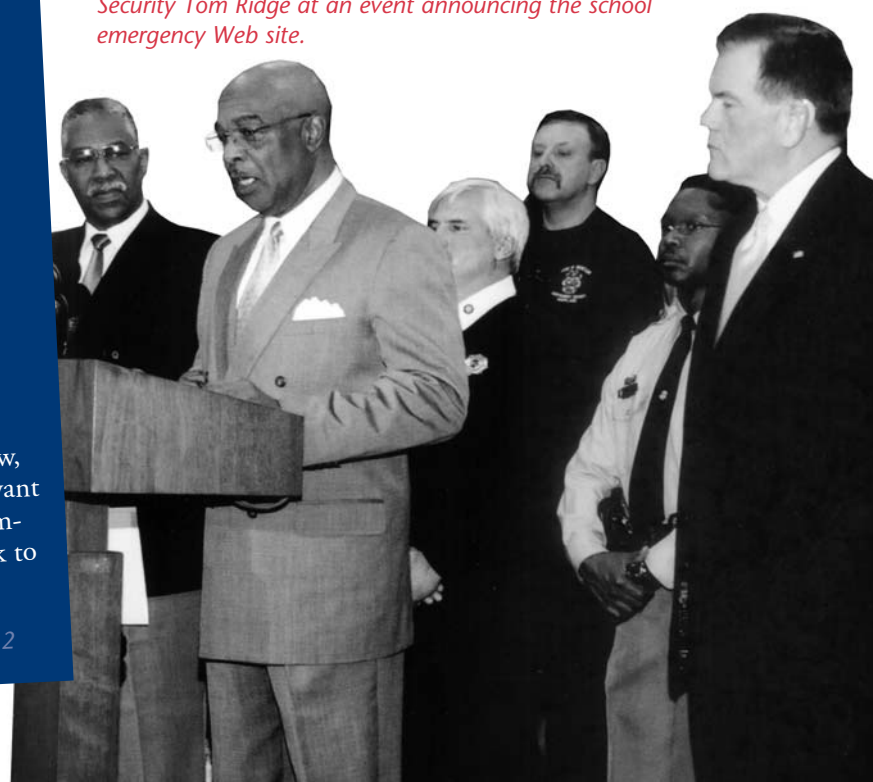
"The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. At that moment, everyone involved—from top to bottom—should know the drill and know each other," Secretary Paige said.

In addition to unveiling the Web site, Paige announced that \$30 million is available in FY 2003 to help school districts improve and strengthen emergency response and crisis management plans. Funds may be used to train school personnel, parents and students in crisis response; coordinate with local emergency responders, including fire and police department staff; purchase equipment; and coordinate with groups and organizations responsible for recovery issues, such as health and mental health agencies. An additional \$30 million is included in the proposed FY 2004 budget.

Applications for this program will be available in early spring 2003. Funding decisions will be made in the summer.

The Education Department has been working with the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies on school preparedness. In addition, the Department along with experts from around the country has developed a model emergency response and crisis management plan, which is available at the new Web site.

*"The tide of events since September 11, 2001, demands that schools be better prepared. We're here to help to provide more information and resources and to highlight programs we know work," said Paige, pictured with U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge at an event announcing the school emergency Web site.*



### Spreading the "Gospel of Achievement"



National Urban League's President Hugh Price and Vice President of Education Velma Cobb last month spoke with ED's Beth Ann Bryan, senior adviser to Secretary Paige, about the Urban League's plans for reaching out to families on the key role reading plays in a child's achievement in school.

The National Urban League received a \$500,000 grant last October to develop Reading Information Centers nationwide in the Urban League cities of Cleveland, Ohio; Houston, Texas; Miami, Fl.; and Washington, D.C. For this campaign, the Urban League has published a resource guide in partnership with Scholastic, Inc., entitled Read and Rise.

**Bryan:** What is the Urban League doing as a result of No Child Left Behind?

**Cobb:** We've been training our affiliates about the law, especially the provision on parent engagement. We want them to hold similar kinds of workshops in their communities to make sure that parents know how to talk to the people in their child's school.

*continued on page 2*

## U.S. Department of Education

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**Price:** There are three basic components of the Campaign for African-American Achievement. First, to spread the gospel of achievement in the African American community. Second, to create materials and venues where parents can get specific information about how to help their children become good readers; that's where the *Read and Rise* guide comes in. Third, to interface with schools. A number of our affiliates are getting into that area.



Beth Ann Bryan

**Bryan:** How did the idea come about for Read and Rise?

**Cobb:** In 1997, when we started the Campaign for African-American Achievement, we set out to support the academic and social development of students of color. And as we looked across the country at our affiliate networks, results in those cities were comparable to the results of the NAEP tests: many African American children were reading below basic level. What started out as a one-pager on what parents could do to improve their child's language and pre-reading skills grew into a full-fledged parents' guide to reading development from zero to nine years of age.

**Bryan:** Can anyone order one of these Read and Rise booklets?

**Cobb:** Absolutely, they're free. We have already disseminated 700,000 copies. They are available online at [www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org). You can also call 212-558-5471 or drop by your local Urban League.

**Bryan:** Tell us more about the Reading Information Centers in Cleveland, Houston, Miami and Washington?

**Cobb:** The Reading Information Centers are a key part of our grassroots campaign to drive home the message that parents and caregivers must be active participants

in their children's learning and that our children must be able to read in order to achieve. The centers will be a great community resource for information about reading and will help families to help their children improve their reading and language skills. The centers also will help community-based organizations that offer after-school programs, such as churches and non-profits, to design activities that will improve and enhance children's reading skills.

**Bryan:** When will the centers open?

**Cobb:** The centers are scheduled to open toward the end of March. They will be staffed 20 hours a week. Parents will be able to borrow books and other information from the centers. The centers also will offer children story hours and training for caregivers on how to incorporate reading into their care sites. We want people to see the Urban League as a clearinghouse for information on reading and literacy.

**Bryan:** Are you seeing a change in the communities where you work?

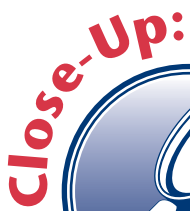
**Price:** Definitely. Our campaign and *No Child Left Behind*, as well as many other measures, have helped to create what I call a "grassroots academic achievement movement." There was a perception that our children weren't into academic achievement, that their parents weren't aware of the issues. But I think we're seeing that turn around. Many parents are overcoming their own instinct that this is the school's business, not their business. We've had a consistent message that achievement is everybody's business.

*The Reading Information Centers, which the National Urban League opened across the country last month, will host children story hours and provide training for caregivers. Below, Price chats with Cobb.*



“The phrase ‘scientifically based research’ appears 111 times in the *No Child Left Behind Act*. It is there with good reason. If teachers, schools and states are going to be held accountable for raising student achievement, they need the tools that will allow them to identify and utilize effective practices and programs. The only tried-and-true tool for generating cumulative advances in knowledge and practice is the scientific method.”

Grover J. (Russ) Whitehurst, director of the Institute of Education Sciences at the Education Department, in a statement before the House Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations.



## No Child Left Behind Troops to Teachers

In her role as first lady, Laura Bush has championed the Troops to Teachers program as a part of her Ready to Read, Ready to Learn education initiative and in her visits to military bases in the United States and abroad. The Troops to Teachers program encourages former military personnel to become classroom teachers. The program recruits eligible participants and provides them with referral and placement services as well as financial assistance for teaching in high-need schools. The purpose of this program is to help relieve teacher shortages, especially in high-need areas such as math, science and special education; provide positive role models for public school students; and assist former military personnel in making the transition to teaching as a second career. To date, more than 4,300 teachers have been hired through the program, in every state and in more than 2,000 school districts.

Troops to Teachers is funded through the U.S. Department of Education, which transfers the funds to the Department of Defense through the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) office. Troops-to-Teachers itself does not provide participants with preservice training to become certified teachers; rather, the program provides guidance on how to obtain certification, maintains a nationwide teacher referral system, has placement offices in 40 states and provides participants with lists of district vacancies. Participants may receive a stipend of up to \$5,000 to pay for certification costs or a bonus of \$10,000 if they teach full time in a high-need school as an elementary, secondary, vocational or technical teacher for at least three years.

According to a Troops to Teachers survey conducted in 1998, the program has successfully recruited significant numbers of men and minorities to teaching. For example, 90 percent of Troops-to-Teachers participants are male and 29 percent are minorities, compared to 26 percent and 13 percent, respectively, among all teachers.

State education agencies may operate Troops to Teachers recruitment offices, identify and coordinate activities with high-need school districts.

For more information, visit [www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com) or call 1-800-231-6242.

# Tips for Educators



If you don't have a school crisis plan in partnership with public safety agencies, develop one. Or if you do, review it. Ensure that your plan addresses issues related to terrorism, such as biological, radiological and chemical attacks, and includes the following four major areas:

### Prevention/Mitigation:

- Ensure a process is in place for controlling access and egress to the school. Require all persons who do not have authority to be in the school to sign in.

### Preparedness:

- Have site plans for each school facility readily available and ensure they are shared with first responders and agencies responsible for emergency preparedness.
- Make sure every student has a secondary contact person and contact information readily available. Remember that during a crisis many parents and guardians may not be able to get to the school to pick up their child.

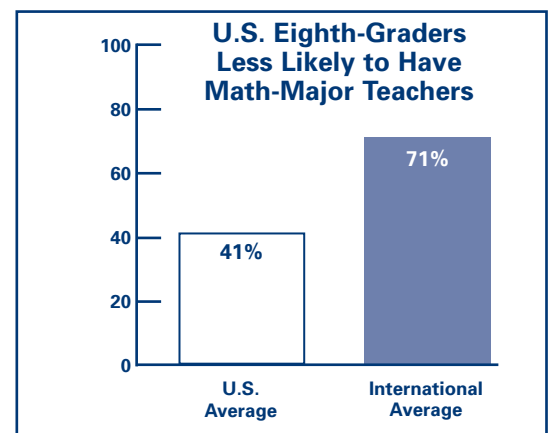
### Response:

- Develop a command structure for responding to a crisis. The roles and responsibilities for educators, law enforcement and fire officials, and other first responders in responding to different types of crisis need to be developed, reviewed and approved.

### Recovery:

- Identify and approve a team of credentialed mental health workers to provide mental health services to faculty and students after a crisis. Understand that recovery takes place over time and that the services of this team may be needed over an extended time period.

For the full text of guidelines, visit [www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan).



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Third International Mathematics and Science Study—Repeat*, 1999.