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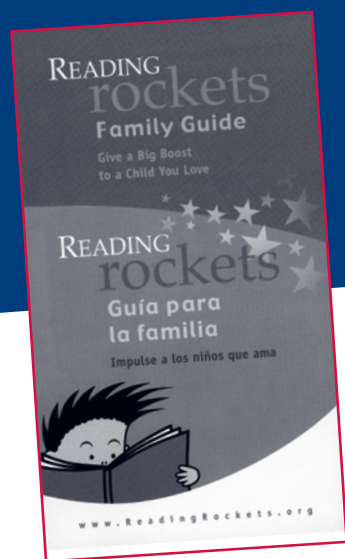
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FIRST CLASS



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

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



READING ROCKETS! *The Sky's the Limit for PBS Reading Project*

How young children learn to read, why so many struggle and how adults can help are the focus of a national reading initiative by WETA, the Public Broadcasting Service's flagship television and radio station in Washington, D.C. WETA produces Reading Rockets, a multimedia project that uses video, print and online media to provide research-based tools and strategies for teaching children how to read. Among these resources are—

- *Launching Young Readers*, which dissects the building blocks of reading into a five-part PBS television series that covers the roots of reading, sounds and symbols, fluent reading, writing and spelling, and reading for meaning;
- The *Reading Rockets Family Guide*—printed in both English and Spanish—which includes tips on working with schools and teachers, ideas for using the public library and valuable Web addresses;
- Get Ready to Read!, an easy-to-use screening tool that assesses the pre-reading skill levels of four-year-olds;
- www.colorincolorado.org, a bilingual Web site for Spanish speaking parents;
- *Reading Rockets News*, a monthly e-newsletter, which includes a calendar of local and national literacy events; and
- Hundreds of research-based articles that explain, for example, the difference between a morpheme and phoneme, how dialogic reading is an effective way to read to preschoolers and how context counts in second language learning.

For more information, visit www.ReadingRockets.org, a one-stop shop for these and additional resources, including broadcast dates for television programming. Reading Rockets was funded by a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.



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President Proposes Record \$57B for 2005 Education Budget

President Bush continued his commitment to America's students and their families by submitting earlier this month a budget request for 2005 that provides \$57.3 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Education. The budget request includes an additional \$1.7 billion—the largest dollar increase of any domestic agency—representing a 3 percent increase over 2004 for education programs.

The president's 2005 budget request continues to place a strong priority on assisting the nation's neediest students and includes historic funding increases to help states and

school districts implement *No Child Left Behind*, the president's sweeping education reform law. The budget proposes a \$1 billion increase in Title I grants to help the neediest local schools and a \$1 billion increase for special education grants to states.

The 2005 request also includes \$12.9 billion, an \$823 million increase for Pell Grants, to help an estimated 5.3 million students from low-income families pay for their higher education. In total, student aid for higher education would increase to more than \$73 billion—a \$4.2 billion or 6 percent increase over 2004 levels. Almost 10 million students and parents—a 426,000 increase—would receive one or more grants, loans or work-study awards.

If approved by lawmakers, the \$57.3 billion budget would be a 35.8 percent increase since the president took office, from \$42.2 billion in 2001 to the proposed \$57.3 billion in 2005.

For highlights of the 2005 budget request, visit www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleases/2004/02/02022004.html.

"Laclede Elementary School shatters stereotypes," said President Bush about the predominantly black and economically disadvantaged school that has vastly improved students' test scores over the last few years. He is pictured with Principal Yolanda Moss.

White House Photos by Tina Hager

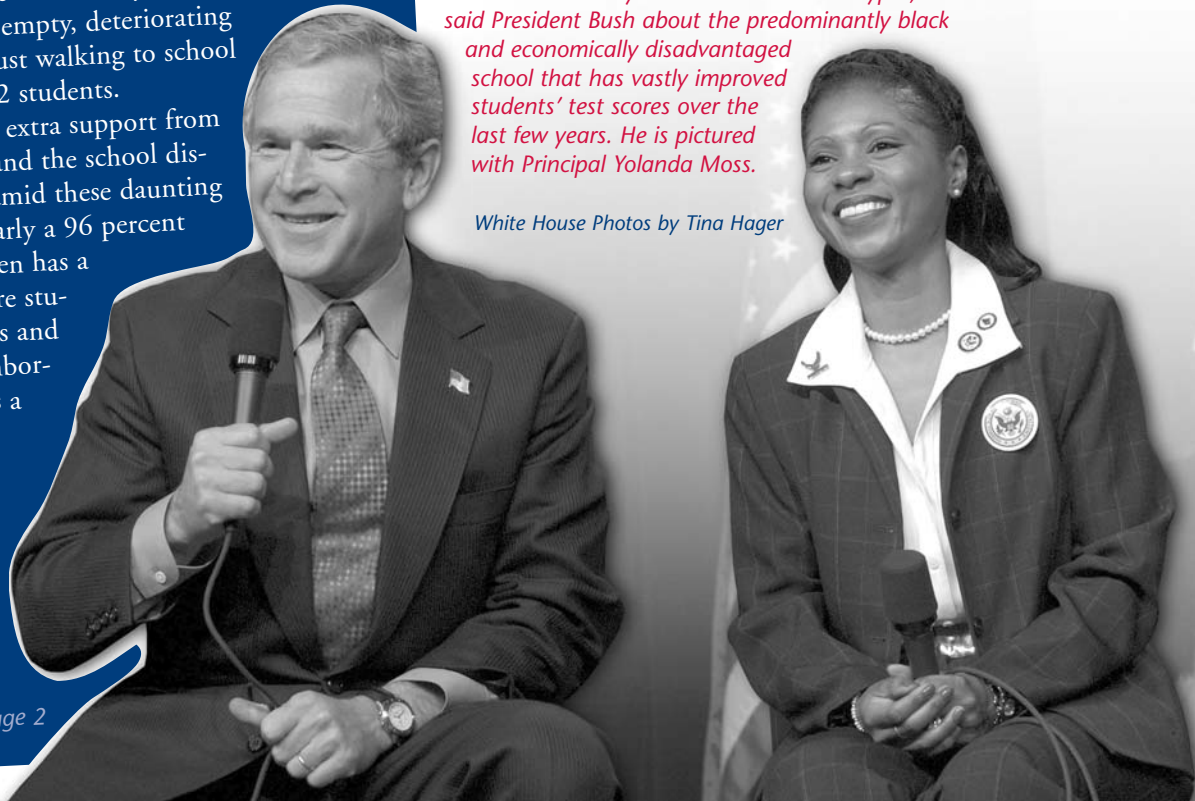
Shattering Stereotypes Missouri Urban School Held Up as a National Model of Achievement

By Maggie Riechers

In a blighted neighborhood on the north side of St. Louis, Mo., stands Pierre Laclede Elementary School. The surrounding area consists of empty, deteriorating buildings and vacant lots. Just walking to school can be dangerous for its 282 students. Maintaining safety calls for extra support from drug enforcement officers and the school district's security patrol. Yet, amid these daunting conditions, Laclede has nearly a 96 percent daily attendance rate. It even has a cabbage patch garden where students grow their own fruits and vegetables. For these neighborhood children, it stands as a safe and secure place.

"Laclede Elementary School shatters stereotypes," said President George W. Bush, during a recent visit to the inner-city school, where most of the students are

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Department of Education (ED). Rod Paige, Secretary.

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For information on ED programs, resources and events, contact: Information Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202, 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), usa_learn@ed.gov.

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black and 96 percent qualify for free lunch subsidies. The school is a 2003 *No Child Left Behind* Blue Ribbon School winner and was singled out by the Missouri State Board of Education as “a model of excellence to be replicated throughout the state.” Its scores on the state tests have improved every year in all categories. In 2003, nearly 66 percent of fourth-graders scored at the proficient and advanced levels in mathematics, compared to 30 percent four years prior. In communication arts, over 82 percent of third-graders scored at the same levels—an enormous jump from 7 percent in 1999.

The school's cornerstones for learning are its “triple A standards”: attendance, attitude and achievement. Each builds on the others. Fifth-grader Rhianna Davis, who greeted President Bush at the door during his visit in January, has had perfect attendance since starting preschool at Laclede. “I like coming to school,” says the honor roll student. “I don't want to miss a day because we learn something new every day.” Attendance, the first of the triple A standards, carries rewards for those students with perfect records. Every 10 weeks children who

haven't missed a day get to participate in a lottery to win a bike, which is donated by a local business. Rhianna has won twice.

When Audrey Ferguson, Missouri's 2002-03 Teacher of the Year, began at Laclede in the late seventies, “it was pretty much a traditional school,” she said. “Everybody did their own thing.”

During the eighties and nineties the school was selected as a “special project” by the district and began using some innovative instructional methods, which it still uses today. For example, student test scores are used to determine the direction of instruction. Skills needing improvement are identified as “must teach” skills and used to develop lesson plans, which teachers tailor to each student. In addition to reviewing the results of state tests, the school uses its own testing to continually monitor students' progress throughout the year.

A key to improving overall school communications has been a summer planning committee comprised of teachers and staff. Funded through private grants, the committee meets during the school vacation period to plan for the year ahead. It looks at the climate of the school, from safety and maintenance issues to student behavior and academics, and helps to coordinate school programs. The committee also

devises the tests Laclede uses to

further assess students.

Students won't learn, however, if they don't have the right attitude, the second cornerstone of the triple A standards. “Attitude must be in place before achievement can be reached,” said Principal Yolanda Moss, who taught at the school for five years before being named principal in 2003. As such, the school includes character education in its focus. Students are awarded in categories such as the Most Caring Student and Do the Right Thing Actions, and for participating in Safety Patrol and service clubs. On the flip side, students with discipline problems are sent to the CAP room, which stands for Controlling Attitude and Performance, where a discipline assistant provides tutoring and other help to improve behavior.

The success of Laclede, President Bush pointed out, stems from its ability to defy expectations. It happens “... when you raise the bar, when you're not afraid to hold people to account, when you empower teachers and your principals to achieve the objective we all want,” he said. “And that's to make sure not one single child in America is left behind.”

For more information about Laclede Elementary, visit www.slps.org or call 314-385-0546.

President Bush, who visited Laclede Elementary in January to highlight the school's achievement, fields questions from students.



"[I]nherent in the *No Child Left Behind Act* is not only ... the need to track each child, but it's also the trust of local people to make the right decisions."

President Bush, in his remarks at Pierre Laclède Elementary School, St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 5, 2004.

Paige's Circle



Close-Up:



No Child Left Behind Second Anniversary Update

Jan. 8, 2004, marked the second anniversary of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the most significant reform in America's education system since the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

The sweeping reforms of NCLB are designed to change the culture of the nation's schools by ensuring all children can read and do mathematics at grade level, by closing the achievement gap, by offering more flexibility to state and local schools, by giving parents more options about their child's education and by teaching students based on what works.

President Bush and U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige celebrated the law's two-year anniversary by hailing its accomplishments to date during a roundtable discussion at West View Elementary School in Knoxville, Tenn. These highlights included:

- **State accountability plans.** On June 10, 2003, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico had approved accountability plans under NCLB.
- **Reading First.** All 50 states and the District of Columbia have Reading First plans to ensure that every child is reading on grade level by the end of the third grade. As of Oct. 1, 2003, the U.S. Department of Education had distributed \$1.78 billion in Reading First funds to provide teacher training and instructional materials.
- **Supplemental services.** Using tutoring money provided under NCLB, low-income parents whose children attend certain schools identified as needing improvement may select from over 1,600 supplemental educational service providers to help address the specific needs of their child.
- **More information for parents.** Under NCLB, states and school districts are publishing report cards showing how well students are achieving so communities and parents can know how well their schools are doing.

In a recent speech given at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C., U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige drew parallels between the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. An excerpt follows:

In my view, the Brown v. Board of Education case is one of the most important decisions in our history. ... It began a process to make our citizens and our institutions fully respect each American. The Brown decision ended the myth that there were two kinds of people. ...

But I also will argue that we still have a long way to go, that the de facto legacy of segregation remains. Sadly, the vestiges of segregation are alive and well. That is why the No Child Left Behind Act is the next step after Brown. It addresses latent segregation, a de facto apartheid that is emerging in our schools. Like Brown, No Child Left Behind is facing resistance. ...

Those who fought against Brown were on the wrong side of history, just as those who fight No Child Left Behind will one day also be labeled. We have come to expect strident resistance to any major changes in education, particularly if they change the status quo and challenge the educational establishment that seeks to protect itself. ...

Two score and 10 years have passed since Brown. It may take generations to finally achieve equality of opportunity. We must make our schools equitable in order to make our society and culture equitable. ... So unless we begin to eliminate racism in our schools, other later attempts will probably be unsuccessful. Our work for the future begins now, and it begins in our educational institutions.

For the full speech, visit www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/01/01072004.html.

- **Data management tools.** In Sept. 2003, the Department announced the School Information Partnership to assist states for the ensuing two years in reporting and analyzing certain data. Designed to empower parents and educators in making informed decisions and improving schools results, the partnership recently unveiled its Web site—www.schoolresults.org—which displays school, district and state data required to be publicly reported by NCLB.

A new poll released last month found that a significant majority (54 percent) of Americans view NCLB favorably (see chart for details).

For a fact sheet listing the accomplishments under NCLB, visit www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/01/01082004factsheet.html.

Support for No Child Left Behind

Parents with children in public schools	61%
African Americans	60%
Married women with children	58%

Source: Americans for Better Education Survey, Jan. 5-6, 2004, www.bettered.org.