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FIRST CLASS



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

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



FREE Web Site! **Online Research Made Easier**

With 1,200 educational resources supported by 30 federal agencies, the Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) Web site—www.ed.gov/free—has been updated to help users do more precise and faster searches. New search capabilities eliminate the guesswork in locating a wealth of resources for teaching and learning on a variety of subjects—from

arts to vocational education.

In addition, FREE just added some dynamic resources to its repertoire (one of which includes an animated illustration of a raindrop traveling through the water cycle). Examples of these new resources include:

Emergence of Advertising in America—Nearly 9,000 images from the Library of Congress present the early history of advertising in the United States, including cookbooks, billboards, print advertisements, trade cards, calendars, almanacs and leaflets.

Exploring Earth: Visualizations—100 animations and images from the National Science Foundation illuminate key concepts in earth science, including how coal forms, how continents grow, how geysers erupt, how waves and tectonic plates move and more.

Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers—Parent tips, video clips and transcripts from the Department of Education, including interviews with some of the nation's foremost reading experts; motivational e-cards that grandparents and teachers can send to children; and a forum for sharing suggestions and booklists.



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No Child Left Behind Empowers Parents

No Child Left Behind ensures that parents receive the information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education.

Based on achievement data from last school year, each state must compile a list of schools that did not make academic progress (what's commonly referred to as adequate yearly progress, or AYP). Working within the law's parameters, each state sets its own standards for academic achievement and goals for annual progress. Schools receiving federal Title I funds that don't meet the state goals are designated as needing improvement; schools must then notify the parents.

Some parents are now finding this notice in their mail-

boxes—and the results may be unexpected. Parents may be understandably concerned about their child's school, but they should also feel empowered.

Many parents now have the right to know how their child's school is doing and whether their child's teachers meet the definition of a "highly qualified" teacher in the *No Child Left Behind* law. Parents can choose to transfer their child from a Title I school needing improvement to a public school that is performing better. Children from low-income families in schools needing improvement for more than one year will be eligible to receive additional academic services or tutoring—at no cost to parents. Parents who have questions should contact their local school districts, or log on to www.ed.gov for more information.

Success on the Summer Reading Front

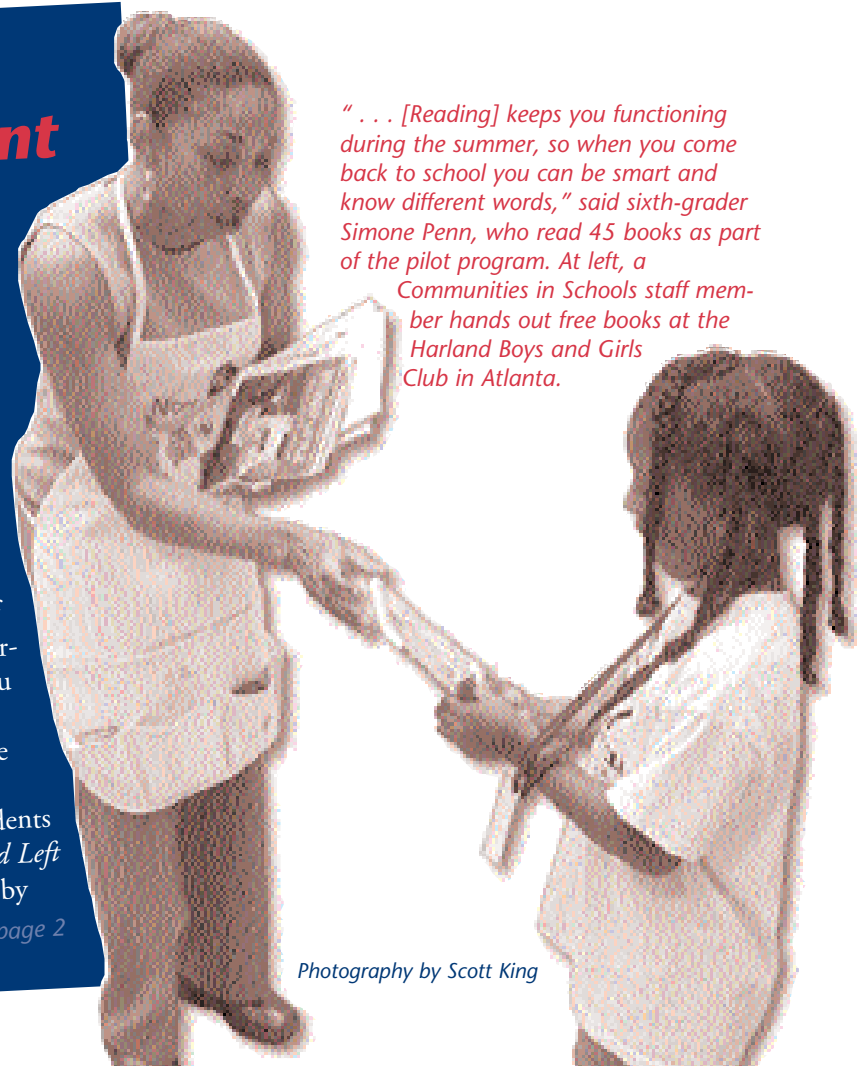
Middle school students in the Atlanta public school system spent their summer doing more than having fun in the sun—they were reading books as part of the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program.

The pilot program encouraged students in grades K–8 to read during the summer months and thereby avoid the loss of reading skills that often occurs during summer vacation. Students in the program were asked to read an average of one book a week.

Some exceeded that mark, like sixth-grader Simone Penn, who read 45 books. "Reading is kind of fun," she reasons. "[Plus,] it keeps you functioning during the summer, so when you come back to school you can be smart and know different words."

Students were expected to read 10 age-appropriate books during the summer months and then briefly describe the books by completing a simple form. Students who participated are receiving an embossed "No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achiever" certificate signed by

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"... [Reading] keeps you functioning during the summer, so when you come back to school you can be smart and know different words," said sixth-grader Simone Penn, who read 45 books as part of the pilot program. At left, a

Communities in Schools staff member hands out free books at the Harland Boys and Girls Club in Atlanta.

Photography by Scott King



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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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Secretary Rod Paige and Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly L. Hall, along with a variety of prizes. (Results of the total number of books that children read were not available at the time this publication went to press.)

Atlanta was chosen to pilot the program because of its dedicated school leaders and its strides over the past several years in narrowing the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged students.

Since many students in the high-poverty district live in homes where books are unaffordable luxuries, reading 10 books a week was no small challenge—until the program's partners stepped in to help.

"When a parent has to make the decision on whether or not to buy food and clothing or a book, obviously it's going to be food and clothing," says Linda Lancaster of First Book, a children's literacy organization that donated more than 55,000 books to the program. First Book is a national nonprofit organization that gives children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In the last two years, First Book has provided almost 15 million new books to children in need in hundreds of communities nationwide.

Other contributing corporate and nonprofit partners included Barnes and Noble; BellSouth Telecom Pioneers; Boy Scouts of America; Chick-fil-A; MeadWestvaco; Scholastic, Inc.; Six Flags, Inc.; Target stores; Walt Disney Company; Atlanta-Fulton County Library System; Atlanta Coca-Cola Bottling Company; Communities in Schools of Atlanta; City of Atlanta Bureau of Parks and Recreation; Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta; Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce; Atlanta Partners for Education; Atlanta Council of PTAs; and Parenting Coalition International.

Contributing partners donated their time and talent—such as the "DisneyHAND Reading Together with Belle," a series of interactive readings performed by Belle from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast"—and also prizes. For example, Coca-Cola donated 10 bicycles and 85 tickets to its local museum; Six Flags pledged passes to its theme park; and Scholastic, Inc., pledged a book to every child that met the 10-book quota. Among other incentives, the Atlanta-Fulton County Library system, whose local branches posted running tallies of participating students' accomplishments, is set to award eight personal computers through a lottery, in which only children in the program could participate.

Jill Van Leesten of Communities in Schools of

Atlanta, one of the school district's family-support arms, says children felt better equipped to begin the new school year as a result of participating in the summer reading program. "They feel like they've done something over the summer," she says. "And their parents feel more comfortable, too."

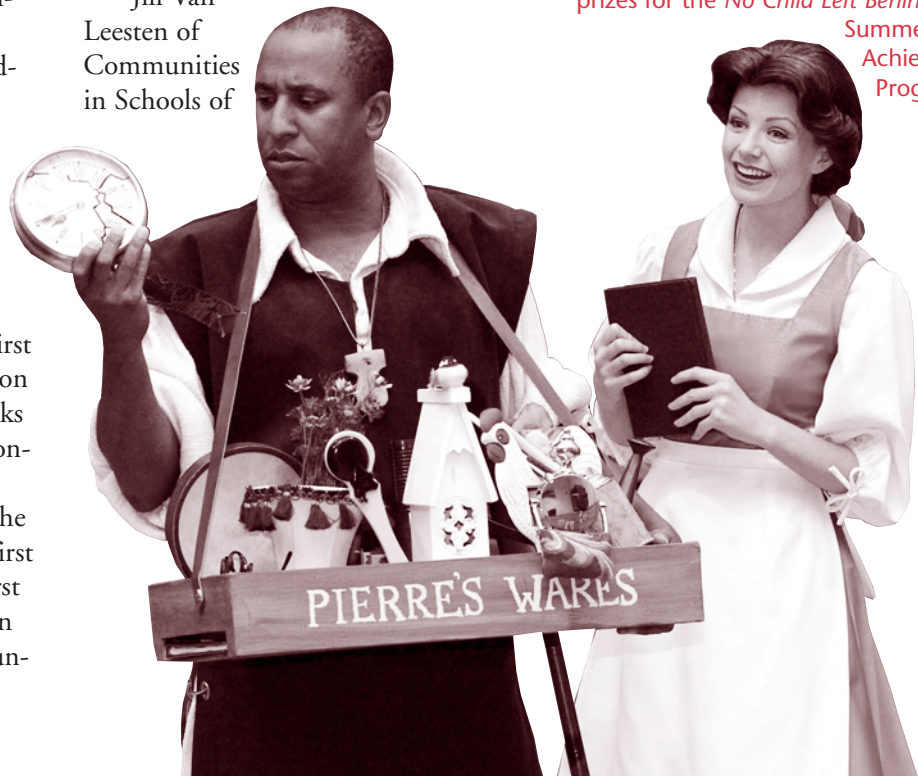
Tawanda Copeland, whose fifth-grade daughter Ashanti was a participant that read 25 books this summer, said, "Instead of going outside playing so much or watching TV, I let her read to me or to her little brother."

Copeland's daughter also received support through her school's virtual book club, which incorporated the program's suggested reading list. The online chat group, established by a former media specialist at Waters Elementary in connection with other area and national schools, provided a forum for children to compare and contrast their ideas, which the program considers just as important as filling the reading logs.

More information about the No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers program is available at www.ed.gov/parents/academic/summer/reading/index.html.

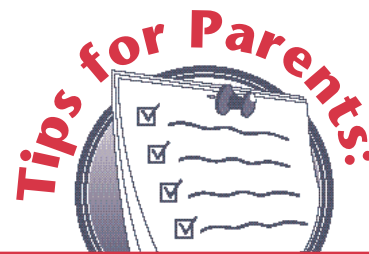
Below, Pierre and Belle, from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, during a performance in June at the Harland Boys and Girls Club. Disney was one of 20 partners that donated prizes for the No Child Left Behind

Summer Reading Achievers Program.



“Reading is the one skill upon which all others depend, and research tells us that children who don’t read during the summer may lose a month or more of the reading progress they had made in school.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, announcing the pilot No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers Program.



These tips may help boost your child’s reading skills and make reading fun—

- Get a library card for your child. Children love seeing their names on the cards and choosing books they either want to read or have read to them. Many libraries offer story hours and computers for public use. Librarians also can help your child with everything from locating books to tackling research.
- Read with your child for at least 20 minutes every night from a broad selection of children’s books, including fairy tales, songs, poetry, fiction and nonfiction.
- For beginning readers, point at each word as you read it. This helps children learn that we read from left to right. It also helps children understand that the word they say is the word they see.
- Let your beginning reader read to you.
- Talk with your child about the pictures and what is happening in the story to help develop comprehension skills.
- Read your child’s favorite book over and over again. Children love hearing certain stories many times, and the repetition helps them connect the sounds they hear with the written words.
- Invite your younger children to join in when you read stories that have rhyming words and lines that repeat.
- Point out new words and explain what they mean.

Source: Adapted from *Summer Reading Achievers* brochure.

Close-Up:



No Child Left Behind Distance Education

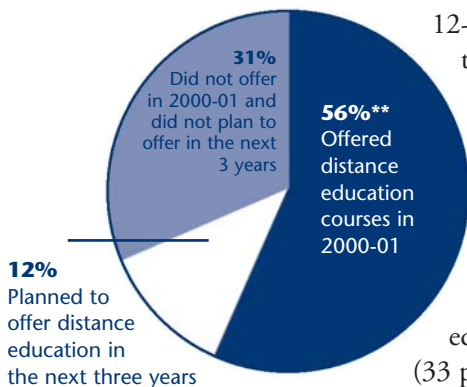
Enrollment in distance education courses has nearly doubled since 1995, with more than half of the nation’s colleges and universities offering distance education courses in 2000-01, according to a new report by the Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000-2001, the third survey of its kind from NCES, reports 3.1 million enrollments* in distance education courses at the 4,130 institutions that responded to the survey.

Nearly 56 percent of higher education institutions offer distance learning (see chart below), as compared to 33 percent in 1994-95 and 44 percent in 1997-98, when previous surveys were done. The reports define distance education as education or training courses delivered to off-campus sites via audio, video or computer technologies.

Other key findings include—

- Public institutions were more likely to offer distance education courses than private institutions. During the 12-month 2000-01 academic year, distance education courses were offered by 90 percent of public two-year institutions and 89 percent of public four-year institutions, compared to 40 percent of private four-year institutions and 16 percent of private two-year institutions.



- For institutions that did not plan to offer distance education in the next three years, factors perceived as preventing these institutions from starting distance education included inconsistency with the institution’s mission (44 percent), program development costs (33 percent), concerns about course quality (26 percent), limited technological infrastructure to support distance education (24 percent), and lack of perceived need (22 percent).

The full text of the report is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pqeqis/publications/2003017>. A paper copy can be ordered by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

For more information about distance learning, visit www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/technology/distance.html or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

*If a student was enrolled in multiple distance education courses, institutions were instructed to count the student once for each course in which he or she was enrolled. Thus, enrollments may include duplicate counts of students. **Detail does not sum to totals because of rounding.