

President Aims for Reauthorization In Annual Address

No Child Left Behind: Key Focus in State of the Union

In his State of the Union address to the U.S. Congress on Jan. 23, President Bush spoke about the importance of reauthorizing the *No Child Left Behind Act* among his domestic policy proposals for ensuring a more prosperous nation.

"Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools to give children the knowledge and character they need in life," he said. "Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the *No Child Left Behind Act*, preserving local control, raising standards and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap."



White House Photo by Eric Draper

"Now the task is to build on the success, without watering down standards, without taking control from local communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform."

The president unveiled the administration's plan for reauthorizing the legislation, titled *Building on Results*, which seeks to:

- > Encourage higher academic standards and further increase the quality of available information on student performance;
- > Strengthen public schools with incentives for school reform and empower parents with options for students to receive after-school tutoring and attend higher-performing schools;
- > Provide effective teachers greater incentives for raising achievement and teaching in

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A Shining Example

Using Mix of Strategies, Stanton Elementary Moves From Bottom to Top of Philadelphia's Promising Schools

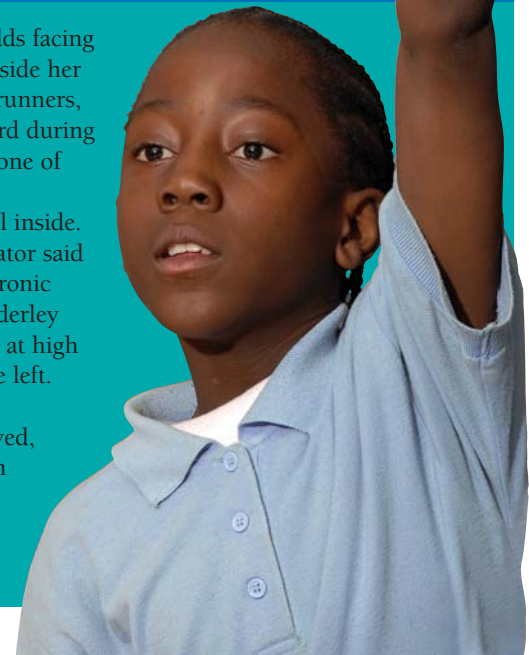
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Principal Barbara Adderley doesn't have to look far to see the odds facing the 436 children at M. Hall Stanton Elementary School. Just outside her office window is the disturbing reality of boarded houses, drug runners, and trash. Even more unsettling are the sounds of gunshots heard during the day in this Philadelphia neighborhood infamous for having one of the highest crime rates in the city.

For quite some time, life outside the school was taking its toll inside. When Adderley came to Stanton in 2002, the veteran administrator said it was the worst school she had ever seen. Constant fighting, chronic tardiness and persistent apathy marked the atmosphere. Yet, Adderley felt she was up to the challenge. "I believe all children can learn at high levels," she explained. "If I had thought differently, I would have left. I would have retired."

Although in the first year of her tenure test scores barely moved, the following year showed a slight increase in performance, with 13 percent and 20 percent of fifth-graders meeting reading and

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hard-to-fill positions;

- > Incorporate the education components of the American Competitiveness Initiative to prepare students for a global economy; and
- > Measure individual student progress and focus interventions on students who have not

reached grade level.

No Child Left Behind is the bipartisan legislation signed into law by President Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, to reform America's public schools. The law is based on four principles:

- 1) stronger accountability for results;
- 2) greater flexibility for states and communities;
- 3) proven education methods; and
- 4) more choices for parents.

For a copy of *Building on Results, the policy plan for reauthorization*, visit <http://www.ed.gov> and select "No Child Left Behind."

Spellings Celebrates Law's Fifth Anniversary, Displays New Logo

On Jan. 8, in celebration of the fifth anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings gave a speech to education and business leaders at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. Following is an excerpt from her remarks.

... Anniversaries remind us that every day, we have to recommit ourselves to the things that are important to us.

And when it comes to education policy, this is a critical moment. With *No Child Left Behind*, we set the goal to have every student reading and doing math at grade level by 2014.

And it's working! The Nation's Report Card showed that our younger students made more reading progress in five years than in the previous 28 combined. Reading and math scores are reaching all-time highs for younger students. ...

Everybody here knows that before this act became law, kids often moved from grade to grade, and nobody knew whether or not they had learned to read, write, add or subtract. We invested billions of dollars and basically just hoped for the best. The lack of accountability helped create an achievement gap where poor and minority students lagged far behind their peers.

So when President Bush first came to Washington, D.C., back in 2001, the nation was ready for reform. The President made *No Child Left Behind* his first priority—liter-

ally from his first day and his first week in office. And so did members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. ...

I'm counting on you to be on the front lines as we head into the process of renewing this law. There are a lot of myths and misconceptions out there, and we must set them straight.

We've heard it all before ... we're testing too much. We're teaching to the test. We're narrowing the curriculum. The law is unfunded. It's punitive. It unfairly labels schools as "failing." And its goal of having all students [performing at] grade level by 2014 is simply not possible.

But as I've traveled around the country, I've met thousands of parents who are grateful to have more information on how their students are doing. ... Not once in all my travels have I met a parent who didn't want their child learning at grade level now—let alone by 2014. ...

Of course we know that there are a few students who may need additional time or



Photo by Leslie Williams



The U.S. Department of Education is accepting nominations for its 2007 American Stars of Teaching awards, which recognize superior teachers with a track record of improving student achievement, using innovative instructional strategies, and making a difference in the lives of their students. Nomination forms, due April 1, are available at <http://www.ed.gov/teacherinitiative>.

accommodations to reach grade level—such as those with significant disabilities, or those who have just arrived in our country and are still learning English. And we at the Education Department have already made changes to help states and schools factor that into their measuring systems. ...

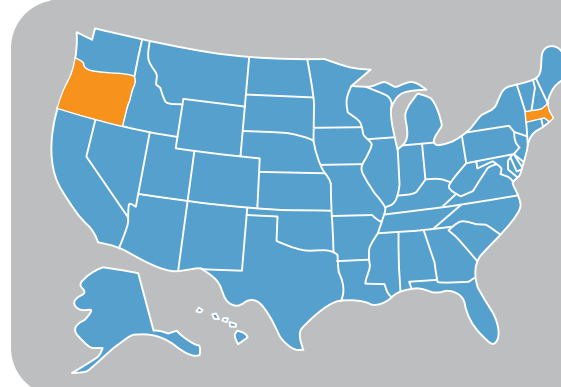
To help schools in need of improvement, *No Child Left Behind* provides resources—including free tutoring for struggling students. And President Bush and the Congress have increased federal K-12 spending by 41 percent over the last five years. ...

The truth is, *No Child Left Behind* helps kids by measuring their progress and holding schools accountable for helping them improve. It helps teachers by providing them with information to better manage their classrooms, and resources to improve and enrich their teaching. And it helps businesses by helping students gain the skills they need to succeed. ...

As we move forward with reauthorization, we must preserve these principles while improving the law. I look forward to working with the Congress to get this very important job done. ...

For the full Jan. 8, 2007, remarks, visit <http://www.ed.gov> and select "Speeches."

AROUND THE COUNTRY



MASSACHUSETTS—Beginning with the class of 2010, the 2006-07 school year's freshmen, students in Massachusetts will have to pass a Science and Technology/Engineering exam in order to graduate from high school. Ninth-graders enrolled in biology, chemistry, introductory physics or technology/engineering will be

math standards, respectively. The dramatic turnaround came in the third year, when the number of students performing at grade level skyrocketed to a whopping 71 percent in reading and 47 percent in math in 2004, with most scoring at the advanced level. The growth was so extreme that the school district retested the students but found virtually no discrepancy.

The next two years confirmed the sweeping reform taking place. Huge gains were made in math as the proficiency rate swelled to 83 percent in 2006, while the reading rate remained steady at about 70 percent.

The difference in the children's performances reflected a change in their attitudes toward learning, and parents noticed. "The kids can't wait to get to school now," said parent volunteer Theresa Addison, a former Stanton student whose daughter is a fifth-grader there. "They don't really want to stay out when we have vacation time. They come to school extra early. They don't want to go home when their day has ended."

Considering the conditions surrounding Stanton—which serves a predominantly disadvantaged, African-American population—the staff work hard to make the school an

"oasis" for the children, said Adderley, who brought in her doll collection to display near the front office. In addition, classrooms upgraded with Smartboards, hallways decorated with student art, and a huge fish tank in the foyer helped to breathe life into the 50-year-old building.

By proving all children can learn—regardless of language or disability or, in this case, race or family income—Stanton stands as a shining example of the bright-line principles of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. It's a model that U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings praised when she recently visited the school, and a "symbol of educational promise" that the Education Trust recognized when it honored Stanton with a 2006 Dispelling the Myth Award as one of five schools from across the country successfully educating students of color and students from low-income families.

According to the Education Trust, several common practices account for the honorees' successes: having high expectations for all students; analyzing student data to track progress; identifying individual student

needs and improving instruction; providing a rich curriculum aligned with state standards; and using professional development to improve teachers' skills.

At Stanton, systemic change began with the implementation of the district's new core curriculum. In the 2003–04 school year, as part of a citywide restructuring plan, Philadelphia Public Schools introduced a reading and math program that got everyone working from the same page. So, if a child transfers from one school to the next, which Adderley said is especially common in inner cities, "there is no loss of instruction."

Then, to shore up the curriculum, classes were rescheduled in the younger grades to provide an uninterrupted two-hour reading block each morning and a 90-minute math block each afternoon, allowing teachers additional time to address diverse student needs. With more time being spent on task, classrooms began running much more productively.

"When children are engaged at high levels," said literacy leader Kathleen Shallow, "a lot of the behavior problems disappear."

While the district's reforms raised academic standards across the board, what truly accelerated Stanton's progress were the initiatives Principal Adderley



M. Hall St

eligible to take one of these four high-stakes tests this June. Along with the English and math assessments, the new graduation requirement is another step toward meeting a 1993 state statute that requires students to pass ultimately five high school exit exams, the remainder of which are expected to be phased in over time.

OREGON—Public schools in Portland, Beaverton and Hillsboro, will receive \$9 million over the next five years, thanks to a contribution from Nike, Inc., the company announced last month. Created to support innovation in school districts neighboring the company's headquarters near Beaverton, the Nike School Innovation Fund will provide grants in the first year for three initiatives at Portland

Public Schools: the creation of a summer kindergarten program to prepare children for first grade; the development of leadership and coaching teams at elementary and middle schools to improve instruction; and the expansion of a pilot project that puts business managers in high schools to allow principals more time to focus on education.

put into place when she arrived.

One of the first things Adderley did was assemble a team of instruction experts to improve teacher quality. She appointed as curriculum leaders two teachers who she thought had a passion for teaching as well as a thorough knowledge of their subject matter: Kathleen Shallow for reading instruction, and Christina Taylor for math instruction. Both women provide full-time support for teachers—modeling and planning lessons, looking at data, and intervening with struggling students—which has proven vital to sustaining Stanton's relatively young and fledgling staff.

"It's extremely important that teachers be professionally developed all the time," stressed Adderley, who recently introduced a monthly breakfast meeting that focuses on innovative teaching practices. Currently, a book about educating young, black males is the topic of discussion.

Another of Adderley's measures sought to improve the actual environment for learning. For a more personal setting where teachers can better connect with their students, Adderley

reorganized the school into three K-6 academies based on distinctive themes, in which children are taught by the same team of teachers throughout their enrollment. Named after famous living African-Americans—the Ben Carson Academy of Health and Allied Sciences, the Bill and Camille Cosby Academy of Literacy and

Clockwise: Parent volunteer Theresa Addison with second-grader Jada; Robert and his classmates listen to a lesson from literacy leader Kathleen Shallow; Shallow teaches a kindergarten class; and Principal Barbara Adderley with second-graders Jamila, Marque and Deja. On the cover, fifth-grader Aaron. Photos by Jerry Jackson.

the Fine Arts, and the Ruby Bridges Academy of Social Change—these small learning communities share the same curriculum, but their titles serve as the subjects of research assignments.

However, of all her efforts geared toward improving student learning, Adderley credits the analysis of test score data as the most critical part: "I believe the data [analysis] is the piece that has moved our school from 'below basic' to 'proficient' and above."

An ardent advocate of data-driven instruction, Adderley uses a series of assessments year-round that include teacher-developed "checkpoint" tests every two weeks and districtwide benchmark tests every six weeks to measure how well children are learning and teachers are instructing. The results from the tests become the center of dialogue in the school, as they are posted in conference rooms and even in classrooms. Adderley believes everyone should know how students are doing—particularly the children themselves. For instance, a group of second-graders recently "made leaps and

bounds on their reading levels," she said, "because they knew where they were and that they wanted to get better, so they remained more focused on the instructional practices during guided reading time."

For educators, the data has helped them to develop individualized learning plans for each child. Much of this planning occurs in daily grade-level group meetings in which Adderley, the curriculum leaders and teachers discuss data, student work, instructional practices and state standards. Also, to hone instruction more keenly on students' needs, this school year Adderley had each faculty member develop a "diagnostic tool kit." It is a portable file case of student data with a

checklist of teaching strategies that follows each child to the next grade so teachers, "can immediately remediate students' weaknesses or, if they are already at or above grade level, start there and give them enrichment," she said.

Even with the strides Stanton has made in the past few years, Adderley sees more ground to gain. "What about the group of kids who haven't met proficient or advanced?" she questioned. "Until all children meet proficiency, we can't be satisfied."

—BY NICOLE ASHBY

Stanton Elementary School

- > **Grade Span:** K-6
- > **Locale:** Urban
- > **Total Students:** 436
- > **Race/Ethnicity Enrollment:** 99% African-American, 1% Hispanic
- > **Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible:** 99%
- > **English Language Learners:** 1%
- > **Special Education Students:** 5%
- > **Percentage Proficient:** In reading, 65%; in math, 80% (based on third- and fifth-graders assessed on the 2006 state exam)
- > **Interesting Fact:** After just a few years of sweeping reform, Stanton's fifth-graders improved in reading—from 13 percent in 2003 to 70 percent in 2006; and in math—from 20 percent to 83 percent.



February**Black History Month,**

a national celebration of the heritage of African-Americans. The Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) Web site offers more than 60 teaching and learning resources about black history that cover many topics, including emancipation and reconstruction, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Harlem Renaissance, Jackie Robinson and Martin Luther King, Jr. Visit <http://free.ed.gov>.

Feb. 7-22**Supplemental Educational Services Regional Workshops,**

sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. This workshop series will provide free technical assistance for organizations interested in becoming approved providers of supplemental educational services for disadvantaged students. Locations and dates include: Feb. 7, Arlington, Texas; Feb. 8, St. Louis; Feb. 13, Baton Rouge, La.; and Feb. 22, Charleston, S.C. Visit <http://www.ed.gov> or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Feb. 18-24**National Engineers Week,**

a celebration sponsored by the National Engineers Week Foundation to highlight the importance of having high levels of math and science literacy. Among the events is Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day on Feb. 22, which seeks to mobilize thousands of female engineers to mentor more than 1 million girls. Visit <http://www.eweek.org> or call 703-684-2852.

Q&A

What is the State Scholars Initiative?

The State Scholars Initiative is a national program that motivates students to complete a rigorous course of study in high school—one that will give them a boost in college and their careers. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the initiative operates through business and education partnerships formed at the state level. As an increasingly competitive global economy calls for a more skilled and knowledgeable labor force, the State Scholars Initiative brings business leaders into the nation's classrooms to talk directly to middle and high school students about the value of challenging studies for the students themselves and employees in the workplace. Part of this ongoing support, funded by the program's partners, includes tutoring sessions and "power breakfasts" as well as college scholarships in some states.

In addition, high school students eligible for federal Pell grants who complete a rigorous curriculum like the State Scholars Core Course of Study will qualify for Academic Competitiveness grants, which provide up to \$750 for the first year of college and up to \$1,300 for the second year.

The program's Core Course of Study includes at least: four years of English, three years of math (algebra I and II and geometry); three years of lab science (biology, chemistry and physics); three-and-a-half years of social studies (U.S. and world history, geography, economics and government); and two years of the same foreign language. Around this academic core the states design their own program to meet their particular needs. Currently, 22 states are actively involved in the initiative, each enlisting the participation of a number of their school districts.

To learn more about the program's availability in your area, visit www.wiche.edu and select "Programs" for the "State Scholar Initiative," or call 303-541-0210.

News Show Focuses on Math, Science Literacy

The critical role math and science education play in equipping students with the skills to succeed in the 21st century will be the focus of the February edition of *Education News Parents Can Use*, the U.S. Department of Education's monthly television program.

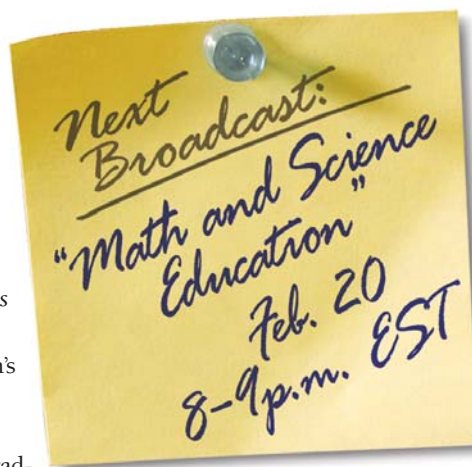
Today's high school graduates need to have solid math and science skills—whether they are going directly to college or entering the workforce. Employers are seeking critical thinkers and practical problem-solvers who understand today's technology. February's show will spotlight what the Department and other key partners are doing to promote math and science literacy, including: the recommendations from the National

Mathematics Advisory Panel; new support for strengthening math and science education from the President's American Competitiveness Initiative; and high-performing schools from around the country that are excelling in math and science education.

Each month,

Education News Parents Can Use showcases: schools and school districts from across the country; conversations with school officials, parents and education experts; and advice and free resources for parents and educators.

To learn about viewing options, including webcasts, visit <http://www.ed.gov> and click on "Parents," then "News Parents Can Use," or call toll-free 1-800-USA-LEARN.



Closing the Gap in Charter High Schools

The U.S. Department of Education recently published a new guide that focuses on eight charter high schools that are raising the achievement levels of traditionally underserved student populations.

The guide, *Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap*, reveals how these schools are using innovative instructional approaches to close the gap between the highest-performing students and those lagging behind. As independent public

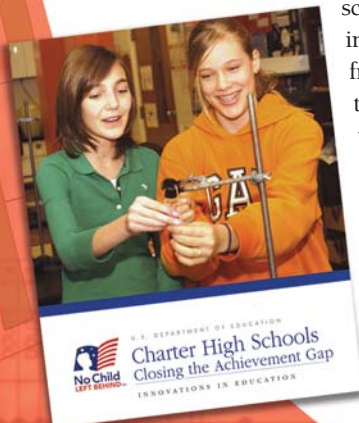
schools operating with more freedom than their traditional counterparts, charter schools promise greater academic results by

developing creative solutions to the problems faced by many public high schools.

The schools profiled in the guide are distinctively diverse but share six characteristics. They: are mission-driven; focus on college preparation; teach for mastery; provide support to students; value professional learning; and hold themselves accountable.

The schools were chosen from over 400 charter high schools that are meeting academic targets under the *No Child Left Behind Act* and are closing achievement gaps by holding students to high academic standards. They are: Gateway High School (Calif.); Media and Technology Charter High School (Mass.); Minnesota New Country School; North Star Academy Charter School of Newark (N.J.); The Preuss School (Calif.); The SEED Public Charter School (District of Columbia); Toledo School for the Arts (Ohio); and YES College Preparatory School (Texas).

For a free copy of the guide, call 1-877-4ED-PUBS with identification number ED002720P, while supplies last, or visit <http://www.edpubs.org>.



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