

## Principals Speak Out

### Legal action pending after five Newark principals suspended for voicing concern over Superintendent Cami Anderson's One Newark plan

Five principals from schools across the city of Newark, N.J., received formal letters suspending them on Jan. 17 for an "incident" that allegedly took place two days prior.

The "incident" appeared to be related to four of the principals attending community meetings held to speak out against upcoming school changes and closures due to state-appointed Superintendent Cami Anderson's proposed One Newark plan. These principals included H. Grady James of Hawthorne Avenue School, Tony Motley of Bragaw Avenue School, Dorothy Handfield of Belmont Runyan School and Deneen Washington of Maple Avenue School.

The fifth principal, Lisa Brown of Ivy Hill School, was suspended for allegedly allowing a parent leader, Daryn Martin, to enter her school after she was instructed not to allow him in the building. Martin was banned from the school after an altercation with the school system's assistant superintendent, who attempted to take down Martin's fliers addressing issues and concerns with the One Newark plan.

All suspended principals are members of the City Association of Supervisors and Administrators (CASA), AFSA Local 20. When news of the suspensions broke, CASA received support from community leaders, labor organizations and parents. Because of this pressure and the advocacy of Local 20, the suspensions were lifted on all five of the principals.

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*AFT and AFSA have collaborated on an ad campaign to publicize Superintendent Cami Anderson's actions, which jeopardized the careers of five Newark principals. Many other groups have signed on with their support for this campaign, including CASA and the Coalition for Effective Newark Schools.*

## The Sacred Trust of Serving Homeless Students

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*See page 5*

## BASAS Members Protect Their Right to Testify

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## Technology in the Classroom: The Growing BYOD Trend

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# The Worst of Times and the Best of Times

Flying into San Juan, P.R., recently, I literally bore witness to a tale of two cities whose fates may currently be worse than yours. Their challenges offer evidence that "the worst of times" may be yet to come for other cities throughout the country, unless we combat efforts to blame public employees for the financial stresses created by Wall Street and political corruption.

Arriving in San Juan was like landing in a parallel universe, only tropical. The island was amazingly similar to my hometown of Detroit, which now is struggling with the worst municipal bankruptcy in the nation's history.

Signs of decay and declining population were evident in boarded-up and graffiti-sprinkled buildings throughout the island. Like Detroit, San Juan finds itself suffering from high unemployment and depressed wages caused by political irresponsibility and corruption over time.

Puerto Rico now has entered its "worst of times." It is from this perspective that I came to speak about the benefits of union membership to members of AFSA's Educadores Puertorriqueños en Acción Inc. (EPA), Local 105.

Flashbacks of a better time rolled around in my mind as I stood prepared to give a speech that was meant to uplift and motivate members to go back into their ranks and recruit others to join them.

Why these recollections? Because in challenging times like these, we often forget the benefits we have that are directly attributable to labor unions. Corporations, Wall Street bankers and self-serving politicians would have you think public employees are responsible for the demise of the cities because of "lavish wages and benefits." We are greedy, they say, and think only of ourselves because

we want decent wages and to have our pension savings protected.

But are we really any different than our corporate critics? Think about this. How many CEOs have contracts that protect their salaries and pensions and give them all types of lavish perks? They expect these, but seem to think workers should expect nothing for helping them build their wealth. Challenging this sort of double standard is what brought about unions in the first place.

Standing up and challenging these double standards is also what gives workers in both the private and public sector a fighting chance to give our families a decent quality of life. The union has brought us many things: the 40-hour workweek, weekends, and health and safety regulations. But more importantly, the right to have a union has brought us the courage to unite, to stand and fight to win for our families against insurmountable odds.

Puerto Rico is facing the challenges that brought down my hometown of Detroit. The question I posed to our members there is: Will you stand together against those who would make you the scapegoat for their failings?

EPA members answered that question by the significant number of them who attended the meeting, and by standing with other unions as EPA did recently in a two-day protest against wage cuts and school closings. They took the first steps necessary to protect their rights, their pensions and their families. They joined a coalition of groups that banned together to work for the greater good. They have gotten their first taste of the power of being active.

To build on that power they now not only must remain in coalition, but each member must answer when their union



AFSA President Diann Woodard

calls them to rallies or protests. They must demonstrate. Write letters. Make calls. Replicate the model of community involvement our members used in Chicago and Newark, where they have challenged school closings and unjust suspensions.

We must fight back together. We must double our ranks and prevent the employer from trampling our rights. It is that sort of solidarity that built the movement to give workers a decent life, and only that kind of solidarity will sustain us in times like these.

It's the unity in the face of hard times that is described in the old labor song, "Solidarity Forever," a song whose words ring true to this day:

*"We can break their haughty power,  
Gain our freedom when we learn  
That the union makes us strong."*

So our union takes encouragement from the willingness of our members in EPA to get active and engage in building coalitions in their communities, as our members did in Newark and Chicago.

It is that willingness to stand ready to defend our hard-earned rights and benefits and to build power by building coalitions with our supporters within the community that will sustain us against the assault on our rights as school leaders.

I urge each of you to make that choice in solidarity with your sisters and brothers and the supportive members within your community. Not only to protect your hard-earned rights and benefits, but for the sake of the children and families who share our commitment to education for all. ■

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# GEB Holds Inaugural 2014 Meeting in D.C.

Armed with a busy itinerary and with AFSA's upcoming triennial convention as its top priority, the General Executive Board (GEB) held its inaugural meeting of 2014 on Jan. 18 and 19 in Washington, D.C.

The Program Committee held a spirited discussion and chose "Engaged Leadership for a Brighter Future" as the theme of the convention, scheduled for July 23–27, 2015, in New Orleans. The committee also discussed potential speakers, vendors and exhibitors, as well as training and workshop topics. Suggestions from members are welcome and can be sent to [AFSAnational@AFSAadmin.org](mailto:AFSAnational@AFSAadmin.org).

The GEB also is planning a series of webinars and training tools for locals. Details for these events will be coming soon.

## **GEB Welcomes New Member**

To fill the vacancy of outgoing member Charles Whelan, president of the Federation of New York State Retired School Administrators, AFSA Local 8C, the GEB welcomed Steve Murphy, president of the Yonkers Council of Administrators, AFSA Local 8.

## **Legislative Committee**

The Legislative Committee reviewed the 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which would restore most of the sequestration cuts to education and includes investments for early education. The committee also discussed AFSA's recommendations regarding the major aspects of Sen. Tom Harkin's (D-Iowa) ESEA bill, the Strengthening America's Schools Act. The recommendations were mailed to the full Senate last December and were well received. AFSA will continue to work with Senate offices that agree input from school leaders is essential to the success of ESEA. ■



*GEB members at the inaugural meeting of 2014 show their support for the #StrongStart campaign, which works to expand early learning opportunities for students across the nation. Left to right: Domingo Madera, James Dierke, Gary Maynard, Sandra Inga, Dwayne Jones, Diann Woodard, Peter McNally, Wendi Caporicci, Steve Murphy, Ernest Logan.*



# Legislation Restores Education Cuts, Fails to Restore Cuts to School Leadership Program



Stock photo

On Jan. 17, 2014, President Obama signed the Fiscal Year 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act into law. This bipartisan legislation goes a long way toward reversing the recent torrent of education cuts, caps, freezes, sequesters and shutdowns that have inflicted serious harm on schools and the children they serve.

Important highlights of the legislation include:

- \$1.6 billion in sequestration cuts restored for Department of Education programs;
- Title I grants, which help districts educate poor children, financed at \$14.4 billion. This is a \$624 million increase over sequestration levels, but does not quite restore the grants to their previous high of \$14.5 billion in fiscal year 2012, before the sequestration cuts hit;
- A \$1 billion increase to Head Start. Much of the increase—\$500 million—will bolster Early Head Start, serving children ages birth through 3. The bill includes \$2.4 billion for child care and development block grants, which help states offer child care assistance to needy families. This is an increase of \$154 million over last year's levels (AFSA sent a letter to the Senate in December calling for

funding to be restored to these critical programs);

- A \$250 million increase for state pre-school grants; however, these grants are through Race to the Top, leaving a lot of the decisions to the administration; and
- A \$28 million increase for school safety programs. In total, the bill provides nearly \$140 million for school safety, up from \$111 million in fiscal year 2013.

## Other Changes

Additionally, the legislation includes new language for school improvement grants (SIG). Under the new law, schools no longer have to choose from one of the administration's four controversial turnaround models that AFSA adamantly opposes, as they either require the immediate dismissal of the principal, converting the school to a charter or closing the school altogether. The new law:

- allows funds to be used to implement a research-proven, whole school reform model;
- enables state educational agencies, with the approval of the secretary of education, to establish an alternative state-determined school improvement strategy that may be used by local education agencies (LEAs); and

- provides flexibility to LEAs eligible to receive services under the Rural Education Achievement program.

The bill also includes new language to allow states to make five-year awards under the SIG program, which "will allow schools additional time to plan, effectively implement and sustain their turnaround efforts."

While the new act provides many positive changes for public education funding, the measure does not relieve the School Leadership Program, the only federal initiative dedicated to recruiting and training principals, from the harmful sequestration cuts. Before the Senate's vote on the bill, AFSA President Diann Woodard sent a letter stating, "As the instructional leader of the school, the principal plays a unique and important role in implementing reform and creating a climate that fosters excellence in teaching and learning. Failing to restore the cuts to this program hampers progress on school reform, severely limiting states and districts from recruiting school leaders and providing sufficient leadership training." ■

# The Sacred Trust of Serving Homeless Students

By Ernest Logan

Every day, we pass homeless children on our subways and streets, and few of us see them as they are. They're usually not recognizable as homeless unless desperate-eyed parents pushing battered metal shopping carts accompany them. On their own, children are just children, circumstances unknown, like the "Invisible Child" in *The New York Times* series: an 11-year-old girl named Dasani who lived in a hellish city shelter in Fort Greene.

Most people see Dasani and children like her in the literal sense, but they don't see them in the context of their sometimes horrific existence. Those few

who do see them in context are probably the people who educate them.

When I was the principal at IS 55 in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, most of my homeless children came from the Amboy Street shelter. Today, 20 years later, Principal Beverly Logan at nearby PS 156 has homeless children from Amboy, as well as four other shelters and several domestic violence sites. Miraculously, she has one of the few schools in her district that hasn't been short-listed for closure. During the holiday season, it is not unusual to find her and her staff at a nonprofit on Church Avenue and Flatbush gathering food

after school to deliver to their children in temporary housing.

Longtime school leaders serving high-poverty neighborhoods will tell you the homeless child situation is much more extensive today than it was before 2002, their unofficial responsibilities are greater and so are their chances of seeing their schools close down. They and their staffs often serve as the only stable adult figures for children from families that are caught up in a cycle of addiction and incarceration.

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Stock photo

*Schools can be sanctuaries  
for homeless students.*

# War on Poverty's 50th Anniversary: Where Are We?

In the 50 years since then-President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a War on Poverty during his State of the Union address, strategy for strengthening America's lower and middle classes has been an issue of ongoing debate in the United States.

Recently, in honor of this anniversary, both the Children's Defense Fund and the Council of Economic Advisers released reports looking at how the landscape has changed for education and poverty in the United States over the past 50 years.

## ***Children's Defense Fund Study Finds Gains, Losses in War on Poverty***

Evaluating poverty rates and opportunities for children in the United States, the Children's Defense Fund took a close look at how America's children have fared through its recent report, "The State of America's Children® 2014."

The study found that, in 2012, child poverty was 5 percent lower than at the beginning of the war on poverty, but 64 percent higher than the lowest recorded level—14 percent in 1969—and 21 percent higher than before the most recent economic recession.

Children in single-parent homes, those living in the South and children of color are disproportionately affected by poverty.

The Children's Defense Fund also found income inequality has increased dramatically: the top 1 percent of earners received more than 22 percent of the nation's income in 2012. This is more than double their share in 1964 and

equal to levels last seen during the 1920s. The federal minimum wage also now is worth 22 percent less in inflation-adjusted terms than in 1964, and in no state can an individual working full time at the minimum wage afford the fair market rent for a two-bedroom rental and also afford food, utilities and other necessities.

Government safety nets, such as the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, lifted 9 million children out of poverty in 2012. Without these tax credits, food and housing benefits, child poverty would have been 57 percent higher.

While the United States has made great strides in reducing the number

of children living in poverty across the nation, Congress has proposed and approved a number of dangerous cuts to benefits supporting children living in poverty, including cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in January 2014 and Head Start in 2013. Child poverty creates unacceptable child homelessness and hunger. In an average month in 2011, 1.2 million households with children had no cash income and depended on SNAP to stave off hunger.

It is imperative for Congress to recognize the important role these supplemental programs play in giving our nation's children a leg up out of poverty later in life.

The entire Children's Defense Fund study can be found here: <http://ow.ly/tB1NZ>.

## ***Council of Economic Advisers Report Shows Decrease in Overall Poverty***

Focusing heavily on the War on Poverty's original programming created to decrease senior poverty levels, the Council of Economic Advisers released "The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report" in January, comparing today's poverty statistics with those of 50 years ago.

The study compared data from the 1959–1960 census with today's numbers to evaluate the rate of poverty in the United States. Poverty rates among the elderly have decreased significantly since 1959. In 2012, only 14.8 percent of the elderly were living in poverty, compared with 36.9 percent in 1959. Both Social Security Old Age and Survivor's Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance have successfully kept retired, injured, unemployed

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and disabled seniors out of poverty. Programs like Medicare and Medicaid that cover out-of-pocket medical expenses also largely are credited for the lowered rate of poverty for senior citizens. Without these Social Security programs, 54.7 percent of seniors would be living in poverty. The effect of these programs goes beyond seniors: the poverty rate among all individuals was decreased by 8.5 percent because of Social Security programming.

The progress report also focused on college degrees, high school retention and preschool programs such as Head Start, created during the War on Poverty to

support low-income children. Education directly affects economic mobility, as those who graduate from high school have higher incomes and are less likely to become involved in crime. According to Garces, et al. (2002), which was cited in the report, "Head Start participants are about 8.5 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school, 6 percentage points more likely to have attempted at least one year of college, 7 percentage points less likely to be idle, and 7 percentage points less likely to be in poor health." Participants in Head Start and other preschool programs also are more likely to graduate from high school and obtain college degrees.

President Obama released a statement in honor of the 50th anniversary, noting, "if we hadn't declared 'unconditional war on poverty in America,' millions more Americans would be living in poverty today." The president added that "for all that has changed in the 50 years since President Johnson dedicated us to this economic and moral mission, one constant of our character has not: we are one nation and one people, and we rise or fall together."

The entire report can be found here: <http://1.usa.gov/1aHnGvN>. ■

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## THE SACRED TRUST OF SERVING HOMELESS STUDENTS

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They are the unofficial providers of basic needs for these children, as well as others from "good" families that plunged into homelessness after 2008. Sometimes, they are also their muses, like Dasani's teacher, Faith Hester, or guardian angels, like her principal, Paula Holmes at the McKinney School. Dasani's love for Ms. Holmes is fierce and immutable. It's a love that approaches the holy.

In light of all they do for their dispossessed students, these educators should be recognized, revered and provided much more support than they get. But they can't take anything for granted. In the aftermath of the *Times* story, Paula Holmes received not a word of thanks from her city; instead, she received a couple of petty reprimands for revelations in the story. The fact is, when we multiply Dasani by 22,000—the estimated number of our city's homeless children—there is no doubt there are thousands of educators who are bursting out of the confines of what's expected and required and thus treating homeless children as a sacred trust.

Even in a smaller and prestigious public school in a low-income neighborhood, the fact of homelessness is almost inescapable today. Now that Mott Hall 5 has moved to the west side of the Bronx, Principal Peter Oroszlany has

transient students who struggle to preserve self-esteem by keeping their homelessness secret. Their obvious hunger and hygiene problems give them away. Some are afraid to open their backpacks because their clothing will fall out. Winning their trust can mean giving them extra food without breaking the rules, allowing a clean uniform shirt to appear mysteriously in a locker, accepting high fives and hugs, even if it's against regulations. Mr. Oroszlany tries to keep on top of their attendance, sometimes by visiting them where they live.

While most principals acknowledge the number of children in temporary housing is increasing, some say the relationship between most shelters and schools is improving. Kim Hill, principal of PS 95 in Jamaica, has seen a strong bond develop between shelter social workers, guidance counselors and parent coordinators, and so has Ingrid Mason at PS/MS 174 in East New York, where 20 percent of students are homeless. Both are particularly vigilant about the children's sense of self worth. The damage sometimes is hidden, until revealed in student writing. Genevieve Stanislaus, principal of Life and Sciences in Manhattan, has discovered in student essays that families have fallen silently into homelessness, living in church basements to avoid the shelter system.

As city policies have eroded living wages and affordable housing and given rise to former Mayor Bloomberg's perverse "tough love" attitude toward the homeless, the punishment has fallen increasingly upon the children. Twenty-two thousand homeless children should leave us with no question that we face a social crisis that eventually may destroy our city unless we stop it.

Stopping it includes standing tall for the schools that provide the young homeless with their only real community. New York City's new administration signals it will end the habit of inadvertently judging schools by the disadvantage into which their students were born. It is urgent that we hold them to that, and to curtailing the data mania that has allowed the city to slash school budgets based on artificial formulas and to inflate the importance of tests. It is even more urgent to curtail school closures, which frequently cause more damage to already fragile students and give them nothing better in exchange.

My hope is that strengthening instead of eliminating these schools will become the rule of the day, now that the invisible child named Dasani has shined the brightest light on the sanctuary that schools can be. ■

# New York Local Helps to Spearhead ASD Program

The Nest program, which supports students living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), is growing steadily in New York schools. Until recently this program was available only to elementary students, but now in response to demands from parents and educators, the program is gaining ground for students continuing to higher grades.

Jessica Jackson, assistant principal of Staten Island's Paulo Intermediate School and a member of the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA), AFSA Local 1, was one of the first school leaders to implement this program at a middle school.

The Nest program was started in September 2003 by New York's Department of Education as an inclusive program for higher-functioning children with ASD at Samuel Mills Spole in Brooklyn. The first program had nine children. Today there are more than 50 programs available throughout New York serving more than 750 children.

The majority of these programs are located at elementary schools, but this is slowly changing to include middle schools and high schools such as Paulo Intermediate.

The process of implementing the program into Paulo Intermediate School began in the spring of 2010, when parents from Maurice Wollen Elementary School wanted their children to have the opportunity to continue the Nest program as they moved forward into middle school.

"They (the parents) were very involved in selecting this school for the Nest program," said Jackson. "Paulo Intermediate School, which was already recognized for its special ed program, was the parents' top choice." After much hard work and dedication from parents, the Nest program was approved for Paulo Intermediate school by former Principal Mark Cannizzaro, who is currently CSA executive vice president and a member of the New York City Board of Education. That summer, teachers began training, and from there, the program took off.

"We were excited to embrace the challenges of creating this program," said Jackson. "We had to think about how we were going to take on this program and effectively train our teachers."

The program places five Nest program students in a class with 20 general education students and provides teachers with summer training and ongoing professional development for how to implement the program successfully.

"Students in the program learn skills necessary to function socially, academically and behaviorally," Jackson said in a January interview with the *Staten Island Advance*. "We started this program three years ago, and it's been amazing to me to watch how far these students have come."

"Students with autism now have the opportunity to express themselves and say, this is who we are and we are proud of who we are," Jackson said.

Paulo Intermediate's Nest program continues to gain attention for its excellence and on National Autism Awareness Day, April 2, students from Paulo Intermediate's Nest program were invited to the United Nations headquarters in New York to participate in a panel discussion called, "Opening Doors to Inclusive Education." Panelists included representatives from all over the world and Ron Suskind, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *Life, Animated*, a book about his family's experience with autism. Paulo Intermediate's Nest program was the only student group invited to the panel discussion. ■



Nest students at Paulo Intermediate perform in "Pumpkin Soup" on the school's first Autism Awareness Night. The play was written by Nest student Christopher Delgado and his mom, Holly Pepe.



Photos by Jessica Jackson



# PANOPSI Receives Favorable Appeals Court Ruling

In a unanimous decision on Jan. 15, a five-judge panel of the Louisiana Court of Appeal for the 4th Circuit ruled that approximately 7,500 former New Orleans public school employees fired after Hurricane Katrina “were deprived of the constitutionally protected property right to be recalled to employment without due process of the law.”

During the appeals process, lawyers said the damages—for principals, teachers, coaches, bus drivers, secretaries, social workers, counselors, security officers, business managers, custodians, paraprofessionals, librarians, nurses, etc.—could amount to \$1.5 billion.

The panel ordered the New Orleans school board to pay two years of back pay and benefits and required the state to pay an additional year of pay and benefits to school employees who meet certain requirements. Many teachers and principals had the right to be rehired as jobs opened up in the first years after the storm, the court said.

Affected employees were tenured as of Aug. 25, 2005, the date Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana-Mississippi border and the New Orleans levees failed, flooding much of the city. The 7,500-plus educators and staff initially were placed on “disaster leave without pay,” then terminated, a decision made final on March 24, 2006.

“Never in the history of our country has an entire school system workforce been terminated *en masse*—until now. Katrina didn’t wipe out New Orleans Public Schools—the state of Louisiana did,” said Florida L. Woods, former president of the Professional Administrators of New Orleans Public Schools Inc. (PANOPSI), AFSA Local 17, and AFSA program director.

“We will not let the state use a terrible tragedy like Katrina to advance a political agenda that it was previously unable to advance,” she said. “We will not stop fighting until this injustice has been made right. Let’s also remember to thank the supporters of PANOPSI, AFSA, AFT and UTNO and many others who never gave up the fight for what was always known to be so very wrong.”

**“We will not let the state use a terrible tragedy like Katrina to advance a political agenda that it was previously unable to advance.”**

—Florida L. Woods  
former PANOPSI president

This ruling does not end the case and does not entitle anyone to immediate compensation. The school board and the state have the right to ask the Louisiana Supreme Court to review the case. Even after a potential review by that court, there still are other steps that may need to occur prior to any compensation becoming available.

Attorney Willie M. Zanders Sr., the class members’ lead counsel, issued a statement on Jan. 15 regarding the ruling:

*“We are both humbled and grateful that a unanimous, five-judge panel of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeal upheld key rulings in the June 20, 2012, judgment rendered by District Court Judge Ethel Simms Julien. This is a true victory for our clients. This case has been a difficult and extremely stressful experience for 7,000 employees and their families who suffered after Hurricane Katrina. We pause to pay respect to all former employees who did not live to see this important victory, like Class Representative Gwendolyn Ridgley, who passed in October 2012. Other Class Representatives and thousands of employees continue to suffer physically, emotionally, and financially. I am thankful for the patience and prayers of former School Board employees and their families, and encourage them to STAY STRONG!”*

As of Feb. 14, the New Orleans Parish School Board and the state defendants filed papers asking the Louisiana Supreme Court to review the appeals court’s decision and to rule in its favor. Additionally, the Legal Committee representing the terminated educators has asked the Louisiana Supreme Court to reinstate Judge Ethel Simms Julien’s ruling with respect to five years of salary and other legal issues. The next step in the case is for the Louisiana Supreme Court to act on those matters. ■

# BASAS Members Protect Their Right to Testify

When former Superintendent of Boston Public Schools Carol Johnson designated multiple schools as under-performing based on low student test scores, she declared the schools would operate an extra hour per day and that all employees would be compensated for their extra work. However, members of the Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors (BASAS), AFSA Local 6, at these "Superintendent Schools" never received compensation.

On Dec. 13, 2013, BASAS entered into arbitration with the Boston School Committee and the Department of Labor Relations at a meeting that turned into a conflict of its own.

Before the arbitration began, miscommunication about the number of witnesses allowed in the room

led to conflict between BASAS and the School Committee. BASAS called six witnesses from the various "Superintendent Schools," but School Committee officials wanted only two present, arguing that administrators were needed at their schools to supervise classrooms and ensure school buildings were secure.

The Department of Labor Relations ruled that limiting the number of administrators in the room was not a violation of the law, but that the School Committee did violate the law when it ordered the witnesses to return to school.

The School Committee was ordered to "cease and desist from making statements that would tend to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under

Section 2 of the Law," and was further directed not to "order employees to leave an arbitration in a manner that would tend to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights under Section 2 of the Law."

The School Committee will post these findings so employees clearly understand the arbitration agreement. Additionally, BASAS members who worked more than seven hours a day were compensated approximately \$17,000 for their two years at "Superintendent Schools."

"We are very proud to have once again led the fight to protect the rights of our members and we thank those members who courageously testified at the Labor Board," said BASAS President Dom Sachetti. ■

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## CSO Local 4 Members Earn Georgetown Master's Degrees

This past December, 23 principals in D.C. Public Schools graduated from the Georgetown Executive Master's in Leadership Program. Of the 23 graduates of Cohort 1, 16 were members of the Council of School Officers (CSO), AFSA Local 4. The program is run in collaboration with Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business and D.C. Public Schools. It is designed to enable D.C. Public School leaders to face the opportunities and challenges of leadership in a large urban public school system. All D.C. Public School principals were eligible to apply.

CSO members from Cohort 1 included Rahman Branch, Janece Docal,

Tracy Foster, Natalie Gordon, Azalia Hunt-Speight, Rikki Hunt-Taylor, Kim Jackson, Dale Mann, Dana Neremberg, Gwendolyn Payton, Grace Reid, Vielka Scott-Marcus, Kwame' Simmons, Darrin Slade, Mary Ann Green Stinson and Richard Trogisch.

Winston Cox, Clarence Humes Jr., Soncyree Lee, Izabela Miller, Michael Moss, Ian Roberts and Tui Roper also were members of Cohort 1.

Of the 13 principals selected for Cohort 2, currently in session, seven are CSO members, including Anita Berger, Natalie Hubbard, Tanya Roane, Rembert Seaward Jr., Carmen Shepherd, Tynika Young and Abdullah Zaki. Additionally,

Zaki was honored by the D.C. City Council for being named DCPS 2013 Principal of the Year.

Other members of Cohort 2 include Kim Burke, Carol Campbell-Fullard, Carolyn Cobbs, Sean Davis, Norah Lycknell and Elizabeth Whisnant.

Finally, CSO member Rachel Skerritt, principal of Eastern High School, is one of three principals selected to the inaugural 2013–2014 class of the U.S. Department of Education Campus Principal Ambassador Fellows program.

Congratulations to our outstanding leaders! ■

# Technology in the Classroom: The Growing BYOD Trend

According to *USA Today*, the United States has more Internet-connected gadgets than people, meaning about 90 percent of Americans own a computerized gadget. A new movement gaining mixed reviews from educators and parents is embracing mobile technology through smartphones, laptops and tablets that students already own.

The approach is called bring your own device (BYOD), a term coined by Intel in 2009, when the company noticed a majority of employees were using their own devices in the workplace. The trend is seen in colleges and universities, and typically is introduced somewhere between 8th and 10th grade in school districts. Now this trend is gaining favor in elementary and middle schools across the country.

Through the BYOD method, students have access to the same devices at school as they do at home, extending learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Multiple schools in the

United States, such as those in the Cheshire Public Schools in Connecticut, the Katy Independent School District in Texas and also Robert Gray Middle School in Oregon, have developed and launched BYOD programs that strategically incorporate technology into academics through the New Media Consortium Horizon Project (NMC).

Launched in 2002, the NMC Horizon Project charts the landscape of emerging technologies for teaching, learning, research, creative inquiry and information management. The NMC Horizon Project notes in its 2013 K–12 edition that both school districts in Connecticut

and Texas, as well as the Robert Gray Middle School, show evidence that the method can increase productivity and engagement in the classroom, saying, “A growing number of schools are launching BYOD programs partly because of how BYOD impacts budget. Schools can spend less money on technology overall if students use their own, while funneling the funds they do spend to help students afford their own devices.”

Educators in favor of the BYOD movement agree that it promotes a greater percentage of participation in the classroom setting. Concordia University in Portland, Ore., found that when new technologies are incorporated into everyday learning at schools, students become more engaged and interested in the material, increasing opportunities for students to succeed. Supporters of BYOD also point out that 21st century education requires a specific set of digital skills that traditional methods of teaching cannot facilitate. By providing their own technology, supporters say, BYOD can help students and educators acquire these skills and increase the engagement and motivation essential for increased learning outcomes.

Some parents, educators, and district and school-level IT personnel say the presence of devices will serve as a distraction for students and that not all students can afford these devices, potentially increasing the divide between students from high- and low-income families. If school districts want to go forth with the BYOD movement, opponents argue, there must be a financial assistance program in place for families to help cover the cost and maintenance of school-owned devices.

As technology continues to become an integrated part of our everyday life, handling the integration of technology in the classroom is sure to affect more schools across the country. Calling on our local legislatures to put policy into place now, ensuring our students receive an equal opportunity when it comes to technology, is key; taking this first step opens doors for positive change rather than adding more variables into the challenge of closing the achievement gap. ■





# AFSA Seeks Improvements in Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013

In December 2013, AFSA delivered a letter to the full Senate outlining the union's general position on the major provisions of the Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013 (SASA), legislation that would reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The letter also included more detailed recommendations for principal evaluation and training.

While voicing support for many of the initiatives included in the Senate's Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013, the letter expressed concern over the legislation's lack of input from school leaders.

"We feel strongly that greater input from principals is a must if this law is going to reach its intended goals," said AFSA President Diann Woodard. "In the past, ESEA has relied heavily on teacher and superintendent input, while essentially ignoring the input of principals who are the instructional and operational leaders of our schools. If we want to see progress in our public schools, this needs to change."

Included with the letter were AFSA's recommendations for effective principal evaluation and training and a call for an increase in evidence-based assessments and clearly defined rubrics for principal evaluations.

Although SASA does not appear to be scheduled for a vote in the Senate imminently, more input from school leaders is critical for successful legislation. When SASA was passed out of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions last June, it was adopted with the caveat that if and when the bill reaches the floor of the Senate for a vote, there would be an open amendment process.

AFSA is hopeful Senate offices sharing a commitment to making SASA work will consider our positions and recommendations.

The initial response from Senate offices has been positive; the union has received several responses indicating that its input and recommendations will be considered. AFSA continues to be in contact with these offices and will continue to work toward implementing the potential amendments and recommendations for the bill.

The letter and recommendations can be read at <http://AFSAadmin.org/afsa-recommendations-for-principal-evaluation-and-principal-training/>. ■

*AFSA recommends considering principals' voices when reauthorizing ESEA.*



# AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting Focuses on Women, Young Workers

The AFL-CIO's Executive Council met on Feb. 18 in Houston, where AFSA President Diann Woodard, vice chair of the Committee on Women Workers, actively engaged in a discussion on economic security, paid sick days, family leave and pay equity. The committee emphasized the importance of women's leadership and of the labor movement increasing its public role in women's issues.

The committee also discussed its collaboration with the White House, which will host a conference on working families in June to foster a national dialogue on improving economic security and workplace policies for women. The committee offered the Executive Council the following action items:

- revive the Ask a Working Woman survey to ensure accurate representation;
- form a subcommittee on women's leadership development in unions; and
- engage in the White House Conference on Working Families and urge affiliate involvement to carry the message that women's rights are workers' rights.

Council members were updated on progress since the passage by delegates to the September 2013 AFL-CIO Convention of Resolution 19, "Investing in Our Future: Young Workers and Youth Engagement," which was sponsored by the Civil and Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Women Workers and the Executive Council.

In accordance with Resolution 19, the AFL-CIO's Next Up program and the Young Workers Advisory Council (YWAC) have focused on increasing the number of young worker groups and creating a new appointment and election process.

The YWAC currently is working toward:

- engaging with Next Up and other affiliates, sharing best practices and encouraging activism among all young workers;
- partnering with the AFL-CIO and its State Federation and CLC Advisory Committee to fold young worker development into those groups' strategic plans, with the goal of tripling the number of young workers' organizations over the next four years;
- devising a process of electing young workers to the YWAC prior to assuming a seat on the AFL-CIO's General Board; and
- ensuring accountability of YWAC leaders.

In other action, the Executive Council discussed its support for Volkswagen workers in Chattanooga, Tenn. Workers at the plant sought UAW representation, but the voting situation involved interference from politicians and other special interest groups, leading to a vote against unionization. AFL-CIO's message to the Volkswagen workers encourages action in the future: "When you stand up for yourselves, you stand up for everyone who works and you will never be alone."

The Executive Council also awarded the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) with the 2014 Meany-Kirkland Human Rights Award. BWI advocated for migrant workers during construction for the Sochi Olympic Games in Russia and continues to advocate for workers in Brazil during ongoing construction for the 2014 World Cup. BWI organizes agreements between hundreds of unions to get workers fair pay despite international borders. ■



*Women march at the AFL-CIO Heritage Foundation Raise the Wage rally on March 31, 2014, in Washington, D.C.*



# Adopt-a-School Awards

Last year, AFSA endorsed the AFL-CIO's Adopt-a-School program, designed to award 20 public schools across the nation with a one-time grant of \$5,000 in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 2013.

To qualify, schools committed to having a labor activist or union member engage in conversations with students at least once a year for a four-year period to discuss worker and civil rights.

The program is designed to support teaching staff and classrooms to help educate young people on the vital connection between workers' rights and civil rights, as well as other initiatives that connect union workers to students. The award can be used to pay for field trips, technology, curriculum involving unions and labor rights, books and school supplies.

AFSA, AFT and AFSCME selected the winners collaboratively.

The AFL-CIO awarded the following schools with AFSA members serving as principals:

- Western International High School – Detroit. Principal: Rudy Diaz
- Singleton Charter School – New Orleans. Principal: Debra Robertson

The AFL-CIO also awarded the following schools with AFSA members serving in administrator roles:

- Curtis High School, New York City
- William Penn Elementary School, Chicago
- Miller Street Elementary School, Newark, N.J.
- Anne Beers Elementary School, Washington, D.C.
- Edmondson-Westside High School, Baltimore

Upon receiving the award, Anne Beers Elementary School Principal Gwendolyn Payton said, "The funds will be used to instruct our students on the importance of labor unions and how labor unions have supported civil rights. Most of the staff here are members of unions and/or have family members who are union workers. We view this as an honor to have been selected to provide our students with this extra opportunity to learn about the world around them."

Congratulations to all Adopt-a-School winners. ■



Photo courtesy of AFL-CIO and AFT

*Gwendolyn Payton, principal of Anne Beers Elementary School and member of AFSA Local 4, the Council of School Officers in Washington, D.C., receives a \$5,000 grant from the AFL-CIO in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Left to right: Joslyn N. Williams, president of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO; Gwendolyn Payton; Elizabeth Davis, president of the Washington (D.C.) Teachers Union.*

## *Schools receiving an award through the program:*

### MIDWESTERN SCHOOLS

William Penn Elementary School, Chicago  
Adams Elementary School, Wichita, Kan.  
Western International High School, Detroit  
Woodward Career Technical High School, Cincinnati

### NORTHEASTERN SCHOOLS

Edmondson-Westside High School, Baltimore  
Miller Street Elementary School, Newark, N.J.  
Curtis High School, New York City  
Warren G. Harding Middle School, Philadelphia  
Anne Beers Elementary School, Washington, D.C.

### SOUTHERN SCHOOLS

Miami Northwestern Senior High School, Miami  
Paul L. Dunbar Elementary School, Atlanta  
Foster Traditional Elementary, Louisville, Ky.  
Singleton Charter School (PK-8), New Orleans  
Chrysalis Alternative High School, Taos, N.M.  
Phillis Wheatley Middle School, San Antonio  
Ridgemont Elementary School, Fort Bend, Texas

### WESTERN SCHOOLS

Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, Los Angeles  
Dorsey High School, Los Angeles  
Sitton Elementary School, Portland, Ore.  
Clackamas County Children's Commission Head Start, Clackamas County, Ore.  
Memorial Preparatory for Scholars and Athletes, San Diego



## PRINCIPALS SPEAK OUT

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Three of the principals were permitted to return to their schools, while two were reassigned to the district's central office.

"CASA will not rest until all principals are returned to their schools and all five principals are made whole," said Dr. Len Pugliese, AFSA general executive board member and CASA executive director. "CASA instituted action against the district and is currently exploring additional charges against the district. Oppression has no place in a democratic public school system."

Brown, one of the reassigned principals who has not been allowed to return to her school, has been fully supported by her community's parents. Her school's parent leader, Martin, told *The (Newark) Star-Ledger*, "If this is really about the kids, you'd keep the best leader you can get at the school, and that would be Lisa Brown."

Pledging full support for Newark's recently suspended principals, AFSA President Diann Woodard was briefed on Jan. 23 along with the CASA leadership team, CASA legal counsel and four of the five principals.

During the meeting, Woodard praised the CASA leadership for building community support and coalitions in support of its members.

"These principals did nothing wrong," said Woodard. "They were suspended for having a voice, which is a basic right

**"The state-appointed superintendent claims that her plan will assure all students access to an excellent school, but the reality is that there are failing charter schools and failing public schools."**

—Ras Baraka  
Newark councilman and mayoral candidate

of every American and an essential responsibility for school leaders committed to doing what is best for our children."

Both CASA and Woodard have stated unwavering support for the principals. In December 2013, Superintendent Cami Anderson announced plans to restructure Newark Public Schools. The restructuring would close many schools, replacing them with charter schools and opening "renew" schools, with new leadership in place, forcing educators to reapply for their jobs. Many have questioned the effectiveness of the One Newark plan and the strategy used to select schools for closure and redesign.

An independent and unfavorable report titled "An Empirical Critique of 'One Newark'" was published Jan. 24 by doctoral student Mark Weber and Prof. Bruce D. Baker of the Rutgers School of Education. "Schools slated for charter takeover or closure specifically serve higher shares of black children than do

schools facing no consequential classification," the report stated. "Schools classified under 'renew' status serve higher shares of low-income children.

"Our analyses suggest the district's own classifications are arbitrary and capricious, yielding racially and economically disparate effects," the report concluded.

Newark, N.J., councilman and mayoral candidate Ras Baraka told the Newark Patch, "The plans were developed behind closed doors without meaningful community input. The state-appointed superintendent claims that her plan will assure all students access to an excellent school, but the reality is that there are failing charter schools and failing public schools." Baraka served as principal at Central High School in Newark from 2007 until 2013, when he began a leave of absence to join the 2014 mayoral race.

"Superintendent Anderson has seemingly plowed forward blindly, ignoring school leaders and disregarding our input as the people most responsible for running the public schools," said Woodard. "And now, in this case, our school leaders have been punished for their input. We cannot afford to sit in our offices with our doors closed and think everything is going to be all right. We must take action." ■

**"We cannot afford to sit in our offices with our doors closed and think everything is going to be all right. We must take action."**

—Diann Woodard  
AFSA president



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 28–May 1	<b>Alliance for Retired Americans National Membership Convention, Las Vegas</b>
May 2–3	<b>AFSA General Executive Board Meeting, Washington, D.C.</b>
July 10–12	<b>NAESP Annual Conference, Nashville, Tenn.</b>
July 30–31	<b>AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Washington, D.C.</b>
Aug. 4–7	<b>California School Employees Association Annual Convention, Sacramento, Calif.</b>
Sept. 14–17	<b>Missouri AFL-CIO 27th Biennial Convention, St. Louis</b>
Oct. 1–2	<b>Illinois AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention, Rosemont, Ill.</b>
Nov. 7	<b>AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting, Washington, D.C.</b>

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