

THE Leader


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School Administrators
AFSA, AFL-CIO

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

From the Principal's Office to the Mayor's Office

**An interview with Newark, New Jersey, Mayor
Ras J. Baraka, who will be speaking at AFSA's
14th Triennial Constitutional Convention**

By Dr. Leonard P. Pugliese

May 13, 2014, was a memorable day in Newark, New Jersey, as on that day City Association of Supervisors and Administrators (CASA), AFSA Local 20 member and high school Principal Ras J. Baraka was elected mayor of Newark, the largest city in New Jersey. With strong union and educator support, and with broad-based grass-roots community support, the mayor swept to victory over an opponent who heavily outspent him—an opponent bankrolled by Wall Street financiers who poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into his opponent's campaign.

In spite of being outspent 5–1, the mayor was victorious. Although the mayor has no formal or direct control over Newark Public Schools, his influence as mayor can be significant. His victory is seen as a victory for the children in a school system that has been under state control for 20 years. His victory also has been seen as a win for public school advocates across the country.

Following is an AFSA interview with Mayor Ras J. Baraka conducted in the mayor's office on April 6, 2015, by AFSA General Vice President and CASA AFSA Local 20 Executive Director Dr. Leonard P. Pugliese.

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Dr. Leonard Pugliese (left) and Mayor Ras J. Baraka (right) conversing in the mayor's office in Newark, New Jersey.

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AFSA Stands with Workers in Labor Movement

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And the Winners Are...

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A Bevy of Challenges in a Changing World



AFSA President Diann Woodard

Graduations, proms and promotions make spring the happiest time of the year for schools. Each graduation speech will project a promising future for graduates as they begin to embark on a job, military service, college, vocational training or travel. AFSA rewards family member high school graduates by providing a \$2,500 scholarship.

This year's recipients were selected from a very formidable group of young people. It was difficult to make the decision, and even more difficult to not be able to award all who applied.

I had the pleasure of meeting the scholarship recipient from St. Croix, U.S.V.I. Like all of the winners, she is everything a parent could ask for. She is intelligent, humble, hardworking and understands the value of giving back to the community. As a matter of fact, like the other scholarship awardees, she is involved in many community projects, including tutoring, youth counseling, volunteering for the triathlon, and serving as junior senator and hospital student intern. She has done and contributed more than most people will do in a lifetime.

Meeting her caused me to wonder what kind of world will be waiting for her and others as they venture off to college—in her case, in hopes of becoming a doctor. The fact that she is graduating from a public school may not be an option in the future unless we can convince the public this young lady isn't the exception, but can be the norm if schools receive adequate funding and resources,

and if the perception of educators changes from obstructive and bad to qualified, well-trained and respected.

She will be challenged to pay her student loans. The average debt for students leaving the university is \$25,000. While college or some type of post-secondary training is vital, many will not be able to shoulder the rising cost of tuition.

Then, there is the matter of wages. Will they continue to be low and inadequate? The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, if passed, surely will change the landscape of job availability and wages, as NAFTA and the Korean trade agreement

already have. It will allow major corporations to move their operations overseas, pay substandard wages, and allow for the sheltering of money so they may avoid paying taxes.

Surely the landscape of the country will change to the detriment of today's graduating students unless we band together to understand the significance of labor's fight to raise wages and garner support and respect for all work.

Of course, that will necessitate educators becoming engaged in community and civic affairs, as Newark (New Jersey) Mayor Ras J. Baraka makes so eloquently clear in his interview in this newsletter. We cannot, we must not, bury our heads in the sand and pretend the pressing issues facing today's students don't affect school leaders.

To improve the future for the children we value so much, we must become engaged leaders beyond the walls of the schools in which we serve. ■

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**American Federation of School
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Countdown for New Orleans Begins as GEB Prepares for 14th Triennial Constitutional Convention

The AFSA General Executive Board (GEB) convened for its final meeting in April before the AFSA 14th Triennial Constitutional Convention on July 23–26 in New Orleans.

Among other actions, the AFSA Program Committee confirmed its final list of speakers and held a productive and robust discussion on the most critical topics, trainings, workshops and other items of importance to AFSA members attending the convention.

The AFSA Rules, Constitution and Resolutions committees also met to review several items relevant to the business of the AFSA Convention. The Resolutions Committee produced a number of relevant education and labor topics for consideration by convention delegates; if adopted, these will help guide and direct AFSA on crucial issues over the next three years.

AFSA's PAC Committee agreed to stand in solidarity with the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions by freezing all PAC contributions until after Fast Track has

been decided to help underscore the importance of this fight for working people. The committee also approved a raffle for the PAC luncheon at the convention, with prizes valued up to \$100. The committee also strongly encourages all AFSA locals to form state and federal PACs if they have not already done so.

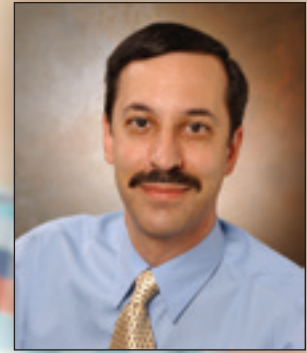
The AFSA Legislative Committee reported on the latest issues and activities, including the Every Child Achieves Act in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP). AFSA was very pleased to see several of the recommendations submitted in collaboration with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in the bill. Highlights include:

- A new definition that clarifies a "School Leader" is a principal, assistant principal or other individual who is responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary or secondary school building.

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*AFSA GEB members in Naples, Florida.
Left to Right: AFSA General Counsel Bruce Bryant,
AFSA General Vice Presidents Cynthia Warren,
Sandra Inga, Carver Farrow and Aona Jefferson.*



David Schonfeld, MD, FAAP

What Do We Say to the Children?

In the midst of the recent violent events occurring across the nation, Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement David Schonfeld, MD, FAAP, shares his expertise on dealing with grieving students.

When children and adolescents hear in the news about deaths of individuals, such as the recent death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore or the shooting of nine churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, they may be reminded of any personal losses in their own lives. When children experience a death, they face the challenge of mourning not only for the profound loss of the person they knew, but frequently a wide range of secondary losses that follow.

Secondary losses manifest themselves at different stages after a loved one has died, and can delay or interfere with the bereavement process. Adults who are providing support to these students can help by addressing these secondary losses, which affect not only the children but also their families and communities. Common secondary losses for students may include a decreased sense of security and safety; changes in relationship; loss of special recognition and support; financial challenges; adjustments in lifestyle; disruptions in

peer group or status; loss of shared memories; and changes in future plans.

Communities that face high rates of violence and socioeconomic issues may have many students who have experienced the death of multiple peers and family members. Adults too often assume these students somehow have become accustomed to these cumulative losses. They may fail to recognize students' many acute expressions of grief that have not been fully processed. Students here may have personal resiliency, but often lack sufficient external support to cope effectively with death. With each subsequent death, they emerge more vulnerable to the impact of future loss.

Traumatic experiences accentuate the feelings of sadness, anxiety and stress that they naturally feel. These cumulative losses are neither protective nor desensitizing. Students do not get used to the death of their peers or family members. Students in these communities may come to believe that adults are unable to provide support after a death has occurred.

They may view adults in their lives as also unable to establish a safe environment. They may appear to dismiss concerns after a death or show no reaction. Their failure to ask for support often is not because they don't need it, but because they believe it is futile to ask.

These frightened students may turn to peers for support. They might engage in a range of risky behaviors to challenge their fears about their own mortality. Vulnerable students afraid of dying from community violence may join gangs if they think that is their sole option for finding protection.

Students generally want and need to talk about important and meaningful experiences in their lives. It's hard to imagine anything that fits this description more than the frequent violent deaths of family members, friends and peers.

Students will benefit from adult guidance about how to express their thoughts and feelings, and how to cope best under these frightening circumstances. They also will benefit from being reminded of their personal resiliency and the support system they still have. School personnel can achieve a great deal by providing opportunities for grieving students to express themselves and be heard by concerned, caring and competent adults. While this is true in all settings, it is perhaps even more critical in settings of cumulative loss. ■

Dr. Schonfeld will be speaking at the AFSA 14th Constitutional Convention for the plenary session and panel "Supporting Grieving Students." For resources on student grief in school communities, visit www.grievingstudents.com.

Recognizing the Value of Principals

CSA President Ernest Logan shares his thoughts on the challenges NYC schools face with the shortage of school leaders.

For the past few years, New York City has lost 60 to 70 principals to retirement annually—and that trend holds for this year as well. Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA) AFSA Local 1 President Ernest Logan notes the city will lose double that number, at least 150 principals, to retirement by this summer, which will lead to challenges in hiring highly qualified replacements.

Contrary to media reports that the cause of the increase in retiring principals is CSA's contract, Logan believes that "we're falling short in developing existing candidates, encouraging them to rise and placing them where they're needed the most."

An increase in incentives would draw more qualified school leaders. They need financial motivation, prestige and a reward of improving student learning. Additionally, there

needs to be a significant improvement in principal and professional development. "We're not in a crisis of numbers, but of neglect," Logan explains.

Congress needs to recognize the role principals play in education in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), with provisions to advance the recruitment, preparation and retention of school leaders in the neediest schools. This will allow states to reserve up to 3 percent of Title II funds for principal training.

Sens. Al Franken (D-Minn.) and Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) have introduced a bill to open training academies for school leaders to lead reform efforts in low-achieving schools. AFSA supports the measure, and will continue to work toward the passage of legislation to help principals excel in their profession. ■

COUNTDOWN FOR NEW ORLEANS BEGINS AS GEB PREPARES FOR 14TH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

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- Inclusion of funds in Title II for a "School Leader Residency Program."
- Updated school leadership-focused activities to improve the recruitment, preparation, placement, support, and retention of effective principals and other school leaders in high-need schools.
- Allowable use of local Title II funds to develop induction and mentoring programs designed to improve school leadership and provide opportunities for mentor principals and other educators who are experienced, effective and who have demonstrated an ability to work with adult learners, as well as provide "personalized" professional development for educators.
- Use of Title II funds to provide programs and activities to increase the knowledge base of teachers and

principals on instruction in the early grades, which may include joint professional learning activities for principals leading preschool programs and early childhood educators focusing on transition issues for young children.

- Improved language for principal evaluation systems, so that states and districts must include multiple measures, and provide timely feedback and professional learning opportunities for principals in such systems.
- The elimination of Adequate Yearly Progress measures and the 100 percent proficiency requirements.
- The removal of a one-size-fits-all federal accountability system.
- The absence of a provision to transform Title I funding—which is designed to assist public schools with high concentrations of poverty and high-need students—into a public or private school voucher through "portability."

AFSA's Scholarship Committee also reviewed more than 30 very competitive applications from children of AFSA members who are attending college for the first time in the fall of 2015. The five winners selected by the committee were:

- Alex Battaglia, AFSA Local 25, Public School Administrators & Supervisors Association of Baltimore City
- Bria James, AFSA Local 100, St. Croix Educational Administrators' Association
- Sharim Jones, AFSA Local 101, St. Thomas/St. John Educational Administrators' Association
- Jozie Schroder, AFSA Local 1, Council of School Supervisors & Administrators
- James Weimer, AFSA Local 10, Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators

Each winner receives a check for \$2,500 for tuition, books, fees, supplies and equipment. For more on the winners, see page 8. ■



AFSA General Executive Board finalizing convention details at the meeting.

AFSA Stands with Workers in Labor Movement

Agenda for Raising Wages

AFSA Director of Operations and Government Affairs Nicholas Spina attended a speech by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka challenging 2016 presidential candidates on wage issues. During his remarks on April 28, 2015, President Trumka outlined the AFL-CIO's Raising Wages agenda, declaring "The labor movement's doors are open to any candidate who is serious about transforming our economy with high and rising wages."

The Raising Wages agenda is based on the principle of shared prosperity, and is grounded in the concept that the United States can become a high-wage society in which workers who do the actual work can share in the wealth they generate. This will be the barometer the AFL-CIO uses to evaluate presidential candidates.

Trumka pointed out that a majority of voters are filled with skepticism, and that "since the 1980s, the growing political power of the wealthiest among us has rewritten our labor laws, our trade laws, our monetary policies, our fiscal policies, our financial regulations...all to push wages down and to increase corporate profits, to put speculation over private investment and tax cuts over public investment." The results, he concluded, are rising inequality and unemployment, declining wages, less economic security, crumbling infrastructure and threats to national competitiveness.

The Raising Wages agenda is a comprehensive vision that is built on earned sick leave, full employment, fair overtime rules for workers, collective bargaining rights, good wages, better benefits and freedom from employer retaliation. It calls on Wall Street to pay for needed investments in infrastructure and education so that Wall Street serves Main Street, not the other way around.

To read more about the Raising Wages agenda, visit www.aflcio.org/Issues/Jobs-and-Economy/Wages-and-Income.

Rejecting Fast Track

Fast Track is a process used to negotiate massive trade deals behind closed doors and without transparency that will ship jobs overseas to Asia, Central America and other low-wage regions of the world. This results in lower wages for U.S. workers, weakened food safety regulations and poor financial oversight.

Trade agreements include far-reaching policy provisions that affect such critical issues as labor rights, food safety, foreign investments and the environment, and should never be made behind closed doors for the benefit of the already rich and powerful.

The AFL-CIO supports a new trade negotiating authority that:

- ensures Congress approves trade agreement partners before negotiations begin;
- increases access to U.S. trade policy making, trade proposals and negotiating text for Congress, congressional staff and the public; and
- ensures Congress has effective opportunities to strip expedited consideration from trade deals that fail to meet congressional objectives or fail to incorporate congressional and public participation.

In addition, the AFL-CIO has committed to:

- continuing to educate our members—and all workers—about the negative effects of Fast Track trade deals;
- demanding greater transparency and inclusiveness in creating U.S. international economic policies, consistent with democratic principles;

- expanding our fair trade coalition to include civil rights leaders, people of faith, small business people, seniors and veterans;
- fighting to defeat any trade agreement that fails to prioritize the needs of working families and advance shared prosperity in a global economy; and
- holding elected representatives accountable for their trade policy positions and votes.

To see the full list of AFL-CIO commitments and to read more about Fast Track, visit www.aflcio.org/Issues/Trade.

On June 15 the House of Representatives shot down a proposal



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka addressing the Raising Wages agenda.

that would have granted President Obama Fast Track authority for a Pacific trade deal. However, the fight is not over. House lawmakers actually approved Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) for the president, by a vote of 219–211, but the measure ultimately failed because it was tied to a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) package, which was defeated 302–126. Although TAA would provide some benefits to workers displaced by trade, many were concerned with a potential lack of funding, and cuts to Medicare. Further, it would have led to the adoption of TPA, which would be devastating for workers and the American economy.

Following the vote in the House, AFL-CIO President Trumka stated, “The conversation now should turn to putting a raising wages agenda in motion. Let’s discard the old ways of arranging corporate trade entitlements, and open a path to revitalizing our economy on the basis of real growth, worker rights, higher wages and shared prosperity. We look forward to working with any Democrat or Republican committed to a raising wages agenda, including pro-worker trade deals that will transform the American economy and lift up all workers.”

AFSA stands in solidarity with the AFL-CIO and our brothers and sisters in affiliated unions by freezing all PAC contributions until after Fast Track* has been decided to help underscore the importance of this fight for working people. AFSA and the AFL-CIO support a trade deal that provides for fair wages, safe working conditions and

a real opportunity to compete in the global economy.

Revitalizing Education

At its February Executive Council meeting, the AFL-CIO adopted a statement emphasizing the importance of a high-quality public education for our children, our families, our communities and our democracy. The statement also addressed the achievement gap and supported the attainment of the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to compete in today’s economy.

“The good news is that pretty much everyone agrees NCLB has to go,” the statement declared. “The law allowed high-stakes testing to eclipse all else. It failed to close the achievement gap or reach its intended goals, and it must be fixed. The central question today is how to fix and improve the law so it realizes its original promise and maintains its historical focus on helping disadvantaged children.”

The statement urges lawmakers to re-emphasize accountability of schools and districts, retain annual testing, provide struggling schools and students with modern technology, invest in early education and to end the federal mandate on teacher and principal evaluation.

Rejecting the ACA Excise Tax

As part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), beginning in 2018, there will be a 40 percent excise tax on the dollar amount of any employee premiums that exceed annual limits of \$10,200 for

individual plans and \$27,500 for family coverage. The original intent of the provision was to slow the rate of growth of health costs and finance the expansion of coverage. However, even though this tax is not scheduled to take place for another three years, many companies and employers already are scaling back their health benefit offerings, or increasing workers’ deductibles and co-pays to avoid paying the tax.

This is particularly troubling for public-sector workers, who have historically earned increased benefits at the expense of increased wages. In addition, the high cost of health care plans that would be subjected to the excise tax does not entirely result from “generous benefits.” Other reasons could include where a worker lives, his or her health status, age, gender or occupation.

The AFL-CIO adopted a resolution on the Affordable Care Act at its 2013 Convention rejecting the idea that workers be penalized for negotiating good health care benefits by having them subjected to special taxation—particularly so long as the tax system as a whole is tilted so severely in the direction of the very rich. The resolution further asserted that the excise tax, reinsurance fee and other fees would drive the costs of collectively bargained, union-administered plans, and other plans that cover unionized workers, to unsupportable levels, and would result in pressure to shift costs to workers, cut wages and to agree to unacceptable high-deductible plans.

Recently, Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) introduced the Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act, which would repeal the excise tax, which he said was “a poorly designed penalty that will put a dent in the pocketbooks of many families and businesses with health insurance plans that do not resemble the ‘Cadillac’ plans originally targeted when this policy was adopted.”

AFSA applauds Courtney and supports this legislation. ■

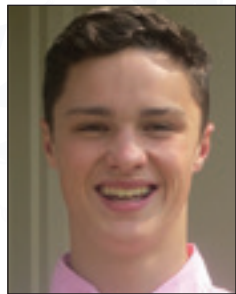
*Fast Track has now been passed into law.

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And the Winners Are...

Every year, AFSA awards members' students with \$2,500 toward college tuition. The General Executive Board selects five winners of this competitive scholarship based on the demonstration of an exceptional academic record, a passion toward their education and community involvement.

"There is such a bright future ahead for these outstanding students. We are so proud to award them with this opportunity and help them succeed in reaching their goals," said President Diann Woodard.



James Weimer

AFSA member: James Weimer Jr., Local 10 Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators

James graduated from Canisius High School in Buffalo, New York, where he demonstrated impressive success. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Model United Nations and Peer Educators/SADD, where he served as co-president and acted as a student ambassador. James also was a member of the varsity cross country, track and tennis teams, and was recognized as the Fall 2014 Letterman of the Season for cross country and honorable mention as a scholar-athlete in Western New York. Throughout all of this, he was able to maintain a grade point average above 90.

In addition to his studies and athletic pursuits, James participated at a Habitat for Humanity worksite and provided services to the homeless in New Orleans. At home, he serves as a Eucharistic minister at his church.

This fall, he will attend Siena College in Albany, New York, as a member of the Standish Honors Program. There he plans to study economics and aspires to become a physician.



Bria James

AFSA member: Avion James, Local 100 St. Croix Educational Administrators' Association

Bria attended St. Croix Central High School, where she received numerous honors and awards, such as the Principal's and the Presidential Scholar Awards. She won the Laws of Life essay contest for two consecutive years, and became a Poetry Out Loud finalist. She received individual awards in such areas of study as language, mathematics, history, science and social studies.

Bria played a major role in her school and community; she was the captain of the St. Croix Central High School's Academic Quiz Bowl Team, secretary of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, captain of the SCCHS Science Quiz Bowl Team, secretary of the National Honor Society and a Science Research Academy participant. She is also a faithful member of the First Assembly of God Church, where she performs with the Faithful Angels of God Pantomime Group and is a member of the church's Worship Team.

Bria completed an early admissions online course at Hampton University, where she will study this fall in the hope of becoming an obstetrician. She is joining an online obstetrician club, where helpful information is provided to update and educate her on relevant information.

"I do plan on coming back to the Virgin Islands to give back to my people," she says.



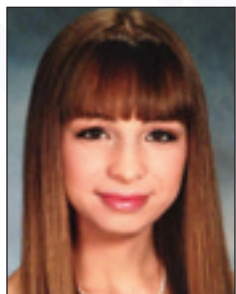
Alex Battaglia

*AFSA member: Chris Battaglia,
Local 25 Public School Administrators &
Supervisors Association of Baltimore City*

Alex graduated from C. Milton Wright High School with a cumulative GPA of 3.9. He was a member of the National Honor Society and played varsity basketball and soccer, along with the trumpet in the school's marching band.

He will be majoring in mathematics at the University of Mississippi as part of the Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program, which recruits no more than 10 students nationally who commit to teaching mathematics in the state of Mississippi upon receiving a degree.

"By committing to a career in education," says Alex, "I will be fulfilling my goal of seeking a profession that will enable me to contribute to society in a way that improves the lives of others."



Jozie Schroder

*AFSA member: Lisa Mazzarisi,
Local 1 Council of School Supervisors &
Administrators*

Jozie attended Tottenville High School in Staten Island, New York, where she earned an Advanced Regents Diploma with Honors and Mastery in Mathematics.

During her time at Tottenville, she was a member of the Classics Institute Program and a certified peer mediator. She also served on the Anti-Defamation League "No Place for Hate" committee and promoted unity and respect throughout the school. Jozie was a member of the National Honor Society and served the school as a teacher's assistant, guidance assistant and as an orientation leader. She also served as varsity cheerleading captain and designed and distributed official cheerleader practice/performance wear to promote school spirit, danced in annual school productions and traveled extensively in Europe as president of the Passport Club.

Jozie assisted in the St. George Theater's (Staten Island) Restoration Project by becoming a Richmondette and serving the community at its annual Christmas shows. She represented her school at multiple community events, including March of Dimes Walks, Cure for Diabetes Walks, Jeans for Teens and Breast Cancer Awareness Walks, among others. She is an executive editor/photographer for CelebSecrets4U LLC.

In the fall, Jozie will be attending the University of Miami, working toward a bachelor of business administration degree in finance.



Sharim Jones

*AFSA member: Marlene Jones,
Local 101 St. Thomas/St. John Educational
Administrators' Association*

Sharim graduated from the All Saints Cathedral School in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. He has displayed great intellect, winning awards for the highest grades in numerous classes, as well as being a high honor student throughout his high school years.

Sharim participated in various clubs and activities, including Academic Quiz Bowl, junior varsity and varsity basketball, Poetry Out Loud, Moot Court, Law & You Quiz Bowl and STEM Fair. He served the student body in multiple capacities, including being a member of the chapel committee and president of the National Honor Society.

Helping others is one of Sharim's great passions. He is often a participant in various community service events, such as the First Wesleyan Holiness Church Soup Kitchen, with members of "Project Homeless," the STEP Program's Business Exposition, ANS Pediatrics and the All Saints Cathedral School. Recently, he gave the sermon at the Cathedral Church of All Saints.

In the fall, Sharim will be attending Haverford College in Pennsylvania, where he intends to study psychology, philosophy or humanities.

Cheryl Ault-Barker: A Principal Wearing Many Hats

A mother, pastor and a principal, Cheryl Ault-Barker can do it all. She is currently the principal of Thaddeus Stevens P.S. 81 in Brooklyn, New York, and a member of Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, AFSA Local 1. While serving 11 years as a school leader and assistant principal, she has created a learning environment that supports adult development, which in turn results in students achieving academically and socially. Her colleagues describe her educational philosophy as one founded on the core belief that every child can learn, grow and achieve.

"As an instructional leader, her fundamental principles are that high expectations and excellence permeate all areas of our professional learning community," says P.S. 81 teacher Cicely Lewis. "She continues to provide differentiated professional development and analysis to drive instruction."

Ault-Barker is an inductee of the Kingsborough Community College Wall of Fame in Brooklyn, in recognition of outstanding achievement in education. She remains committed to exemplary, action-evidenced service. Also, she is the recipient of Brooklyn College's Joseph G. Cohen Memorial award for excellence in education. Ault-Barker

served as one of the distinguished 2008 Cahn Fellows participants. During the past year, she was a mentor for new assistant principals affiliated with the NYC Leadership Academy.

This past March, Ault-Barker was recognized by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams as a 2015 nominee of women who have made distinguished contributions at the Women's History Month celebration. She is continuing to work beyond the walls of P.S. 81 through her church, Consuming Fire Ministries International Inc., of which she is the founder and leader, focusing her efforts in the community at large.

AFSA applauds all of Ault-Barker's outstanding accomplishments. ■

AFSA is excited to present The Leader's first "AFSA Member Spotlight." Thank you to all participants who sent in nominations for AFSA members who have a significant impact in their school communities. We are delighted to see school leaders across the nation accomplishing so much. If you would like to nominate an AFSA member for our next newsletter, please email nspina@AFSAadmin.org.



Cheryl Ault-Barker

Photo courtesy of Cicely Morris



Membership Has Its Benefits

Being an AFSA member has a variety of benefits. Whether it is union liability insurance, legal defense protection or health coverage and discounts, AFSA will always be there for our members. We take pride in our union when members show their appreciation toward us. Our organization will continue to stand in solidarity and advocate for our nation's public schools and school leaders.

"My name is Dwight Jefferson, and I have been a member of AFSA for two years. I recently went through a legal matter that cost \$25,000. After my acquittal, I was informed that AFSA had a legal benefit for its members who paid out of pocket for their legal fees that provides reimbursement of a certain amount of the legal fees if acquitted. AFSA was true to its word! I want to say thank you to AFSA and my local union, ASASP! You all are the best!" ■

AFSA Legislative Update

For the last few months, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has been vigorously debated in Congress, with such contentious issues as testing, accountability and school choice coming to the fore. At the same time, a slew of other issues, including privacy, school leadership and early education, are moving to the front burner in Washington. The next few months could see major legislative action on a host of key AFSA issues.

While the House moved first on ESEA, passing its version of reauthorization out of committee in February, forward momentum on its bill—the Student Success Act (H.R. 5)—stalled abruptly when House leaders realized after a few days of debate they lacked the votes to pass it. AFSA welcomed the slowdown, as H.R. 5 would consolidate most individual funding programs into block grants and strip the accountability measures designed to ensure all students are well supported.

A Senate-passed ESEA reauthorization bill may arrive in the House by the 4th of July. The Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 (ECAA) passed the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions on a 22–0 vote in March and appears headed to full Senate passage in June. This bill is extraordinary, as it represents a bipartisan compromise between Committee Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) that steers clear of controversial issues, maintains annual testing requirements and preserves some level of state accountability for improving failing schools.

For AFSA, the Senate bill also is far preferable to the House bill, as it incorporates an amendment by Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) that would direct 40

percent of Title II funds to improve the recruitment, preparation, and retention of principals and other school leaders in high-need schools. It also would allow states to reserve up to 3 percent of Title II funds for principals, but only if Congress appropriates more funds to states than in the previous fiscal years. In addition to its efforts on ESEA, AFSA also has worked closely with allies on stand-alone legislation that would improve the workplace for principals. For example, AFSA worked with and endorsed the School Principal Recruitment and Training Act of 2015, introduced by Franken and Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.), which aims to help recruit, prepare and support principals through capacity-building measures that will improve student academic achievement in high-need schools. AFSA also endorsed Murray's Strong Start for America's Children Act, which would expand and improve early learning opportunities for children from birth to age 5 through a 10-year innovative federal-state partnership.

Meanwhile, the question of whether and how to protect student data continues to percolate on Capitol Hill. Two efforts to update the 40-year-old Federal Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA) for the digital age already have commenced: Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) introduced a bill that aims to prevent companies from targeting ads to students, while House Education and the Workforce Chairman Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.) and the committee's ranking member, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), have circulated a discussion draft that would rewrite the law completely.

The Kline/Scott draft has some positive points but it would establish a penalty regime through which schools could be fined up to \$500,000 for student

privacy violations. Also potentially problematic is the fact that the Kline/Scott draft would allow parents to opt out of educational research studies, potentially undermining the ability to conduct rigorous academic research.

Beyond FERPA, two members of the House—Reps. Luke Messer (R-Ind.) and Jared Polis (D-Colo.)—have teamed up to introduce legislation that would subject companies (and potentially nonprofits) to Federal Trade Commission enforcement sanctions for inappropriate use of student data by school service operators. The violations under this provision include selling student data, using it for targeted advertising and building student profiles.

AFSA joined with a number of education organizations in endorsing this bill, praising it for providing “appropriate and much-needed student data protections without discouraging school service operators (including state or locally operated virtual schools) from creating digital educational products that improve teaching and learning.” ■

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE TO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

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AFSA: Thank you, Mayor, for taking time out of your busy schedule. It is greatly appreciated. I wonder if you can talk to us about some of the challenges you are facing as mayor.

Mayor Ras J. Baraka: The greatest challenge is the budget deficit we inherited. We need to be as creative as possible to raise the revenue we need and to cut some spending here and there. We have to be innovative to increase the revenues. Although people often talk about austerity, you can't cut your way out of this problem. We have to do what we can to strike a balance. That's our biggest challenge.

AFSA: If you had the fiscal resources, where would you put those resources?

MRB: I would invest more in things like summer jobs for kids, more opportunities for after-school programs for young people. I would also invest in job training and work readiness for adults in Newark to prepare them for the jobs that currently exist in the city and for jobs that will be coming to Newark. We need significant levels of investment in the neighborhoods, on infrastructure. We need to target expenditures on education in programs that are proven to work. These are the kinds of real things we need in the city to help bring it back. We are going to continue to work with the citizens of Newark to make that happen.

AFSA: You say you would invest resources in education. The public educational system in Newark has been under state control for the past 20 years. Do you believe public education can improve in Newark under state control?

MRB: No. The history is clear. We are now seeing data that show that student achievement has actually decreased over the last three or four years, high school graduation rates are flat, and

other markers are equally discouraging. I believe that the people who are most affected have to have the most input. People must have a say about what is happening in their families' lives, in their schools and in all the institutions that affect them. People should have a direct say-so in what is happening in their communities. I think we need people to control what is going on in their schools. That is not happening under state control. You can't have any effective and sustainable change without meaningful involvement of the people being affected by that change. That just doesn't work. Anyone who is in charge of any organization knows that you need buy in, some level of consensus, with people fighting for what they believe in. We need a return to local control. We need to undo this Cami Anderson project, which I think needs serious undoing, and the undoing does not need to be gradual. *[Cami Anderson is the former state-appointed superintendent of the Newark Public Schools.]*

AFSA: Two years ago, when you were chairman of the city council's Education Committee, you sponsored a resolution that was unanimously adopted by the full Newark City Council. Your resolution called for a moratorium on all new state attempts at school reform until existing reform attempts could be evaluated for effectiveness. Do you still feel that way?

MRB: Absolutely. Nothing has changed. These attempts at school reform are going forward with no evidence of



Mayor Ras J. Baraka

success and with no statistical evaluation. Really, it is just someone's idea that is being imposed on everybody else. We are just going forward with destroying a public school system by a superintendent who is not going to even be here for the long haul with us. The superintendent has even chosen not to live in Newark. At the end of the day, all that she is doing is setting us back.

AFSA: You often talk about the importance of building strong communities. What exactly does community building look like, and are public schools an important component of strong communities?

"With all the problems we have in the city, my staff members look at me and say, 'Wow, you look so calm.' And I say, 'Well you haven't been a school principal.' They say, 'You don't look stressed.' And I tell them, 'Once you've been a school principal, there is not much more they can throw at you.'"

MRB: Community building is a grass-roots, ground-up endeavor. It begins at block levels, getting people involved in what is going on in their communities. A stable community fosters a stable city in general. The city needs to foster programs that support the development of people and their communities. And when it comes to the relationship between public schools and strong communities, public schools are not only important components of strong communities, they are essential components of strong communities. I believe public schools are anchors of communities, so public schools are critical to successful community building. Schools should be multipurpose centers when used correctly. In addition to educating kids during the day, there should be opportunity for after-school recreation, adult learning, block association meetings, public safety meetings and various other meetings that focus on the needs of that particular community. Community public schools should be the glue that keeps us together.

AFSA: We now have a superintendent of schools who is shutting down public schools and shifting kids and staff around the city. What impact do these tactics have on community building?

MRB: Closing public schools has a devastating impact on the community. It actually deteriorates the community. When you destroy community schools, when you lift people's anchors; when you take away the historical fabric of a community, its memory, its history, you destroy that community. Kids should not be forced to walk to distant schools. Look, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, people fought so they could keep their community schools, so they would not have to be bused to schools outside their neighborhoods. If people want to go to school in their neighborhood, they should have the right to do so. It's hypocritical to say people should have choice, but you don't give them the choice to go to school in their neighborhood. So to close neighborhood schools and to force people to go across town to other schools of someone else's choosing is not right, it is fundamentally

incorrect. It works to destroy community and family. What we should be doing is trying to strengthen feeder schools and build community schools in those neighborhoods. We need to strengthen public schools, not close them. I think public schools are probably the last democratic institution that America has.

AFSA: Back in 2010, when you were the principal at Central High School in Newark, you were involved in a reform effort that was called the Global Village Zone. Was the Global Village Zone based on the community school concept?

MRB: Yes. The Global Village was based on the community school model. We see they are having success with community schooling in places like Cincinnati and in Paterson, New Jersey. Community schools are beginning to pop up all over the country. This model takes services and wraps them around the entire school and those kids, from social work to health clinics, to after-school programs, to job placement and to all these things that can ensure the success of our young people. We want to take every institution we have in the city and target them on the schools. We are getting ready to try and push that in Newark heavily. We are going to identify schools and wrap our services around these schools. We are going to ensure that success happens. Of course we have to deal with this Cami Anderson, but we need to let people know that we can reform our own schools, that we can wrap services around them. The problem has been that there has been the Newark Public Schools and then there has been the city of Newark. It should not be separate. The Newark Public Schools are part of the city of Newark and vice versa. It is my job to make sure the neighborhoods around the schools are strong, people are employed. I must deal with crime, make sure there are social and cultural events in the neighborhoods. The schools are critical to this. The kids make the schools stronger, the parents make the school stronger, the institutions make the school stronger. You just can't throw one person in there and say

you have to change the schools and the whole neighborhood.

AFSA: Why do you think the superintendent terminated and dismantled the Global Village program so quickly, without explanation, after she became superintendent?

MRB: Well, it did not fit in her toolbox. She has her own toolbox, which consists of whatever she got from the Broad Foundation and other similar organizations—things like the dismantling of public schools, the dismantling of unions, pushing for the elimination of tenure and the elimination of other job protections for educators. The concept of community schools with wraparound services doesn't fit her philosophical view of where we should go. So she just began to shut that down and began to turn our public schools over to private interests or charters.

AFSA: Dr. Lauren Wells was involved in the Global Village project before the program was disbanded. Once you were elected mayor, you appointed Dr. Wells as chief education officer in your administration. This is novel, is it not, to have a separate education office in the city of Newark's administration?

MRB: Well, the previous administration had an education liaison. We have taken it a bit further. We want to actually work on policy. We are doing more and more with community schooling. We are really trying to influence what is happening in our schools. We want to develop relationships with our young people. Dr. Wells is helping us with that.

AFSA: Your passion for education and the public schools is evident. Much of that passion is probably based on the fact that prior to your election in 2014, you were a successful principal at a comprehensive high school in Newark. Are any of the skills that you learned, that you used, that you refined as a high school principal transferable to the job that you have now as mayor?

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MRB: Sure. Absolutely. An administrator is an administrator. One must be able to manage, to negotiate, to deal with people's personalities. One must get buy-in from staff to make projects happen. I think one of the key things is that during these difficult times, principals have a lot of pressure on them, in this era of standardized testing and all the other things thrown at us as school principals. Besides, in a school between 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m., the whole thing can go haywire in a matter of seconds. A principal has to be prepared to deal with almost anything. Principals operate under serious levels of pressure. With all the problems we have in the city, my staff members look at me and say, 'Wow, you look so calm.' And I say, 'well, you haven't been a school principal.' (*laughter*) They say, 'You don't look stressed.' And I tell them once you've been a school principal, there is not much more they can throw at you. I tell them you should come into a school building at 7:30 in the morning and you may see a window is broken, there is a flood in the building, the custodians didn't clean up last night, and you need four substitute teachers immediately, and it's not even 8 a.m. yet (*more laughter*).

AFSA: What you are almost saying is that being a school principal or school leader could be a training ground for other leadership positions. Are you saying that if you can do it there, you can do it anywhere?

MRB: Absolutely. A principal is really dealing with a self-contained community called a school. A principal is dealing with hundreds of personalities, teachers and other staff members, parents, students, political leaders, members of the religious community—each with his or her own legitimate needs and these individuals want their needs met, and they want their needs met immediately, right now. And you have to deal with mandates from the Board of Education. You also have to deal with your own school based on the culture of your school, the history of it and what you see from the ground. I can't think of any job other than school principal where a person comes into contact with more personalities in a

given day. And a successful principal needs many skills. A principal wears so many hats. You are a social worker, a teacher, a cop, guidance counselor, a friend, a referee, a parent. You are all of these things.

AFSA: With your election here and with the election of Bill de Blasio over in New York City, with the two of you as progressives, some are suggesting that the pendulum may be ready to swing the other way, away from the closing of public schools and away from the privatization of schools. Do you believe the pendulum is beginning its swing back the other way?

MRB: Yes I do. You can't keep beating people up over and over again without having them respond to this nonsense that is happening, isolating them. Rahm Emanuel closed 50 schools in Chicago; you can't do that without affecting people's lives. People are going to respond to that. To come into a neighborhood and to say we are going to close your schools down because it's better for you, to tell people you don't know but I know, is really bizarre. That kind of attitude is ridiculous and people are responding to that. These communities are hurting to begin with. The poverty rate for children is increasing, unemployment is increasing. Then when you come in and shut down their schools, there is a backlash and there will continue to be a backlash. People are just not going to take it any longer. We now have people who are organizing more, which I think is good. Around the country we now have a lot of working people and unions coming together around important issues. This alliance is what we need to get what we need for our people. And we need this alliance more than ever.

AFSA: You mention the unions. How important is the labor movement in terms of economic equality, in terms of moving this country in the right direction?

MRB: Well we already know that the labor movement is instrumental. Look, every country that has a strong labor movement has a higher quality of life than other places. Now here in this country the labor movement is not as

strong as it used to be. The private-sector unions have been crushed, and now they are trying to do the same with the public-sector unions. We can't allow that to happen. We have to increase people's wages and provide good jobs for all working people. Unions do that. Without unions we would not have the 40-hour workweek, minimum wages, occupational safety laws, worker protections, and on and on. All these things that people benefit from are the result of a strong labor movement in this country. And when a labor movement, and the unions, organize with community organizations, grassroots organizations and progressive groups, we all become that much stronger. We are beginning to see now that it is the unity of these forces that helps make positive changes and gives us what we need.

AFSA: How about educators and the political process? On a national level AFSA endorsed your candidacy for mayor, and here locally CASA endorsed your candidacy. Sometimes, however, educators have been reluctant to mix politics and education. What is your view on an educator's role in the political process?

MRB: I believe it is extremely important that educators be involved politically. I always thought that in order to be an effective educator, you have to know what is going on in your neighborhood and community. On a micro level that is civic engagement, that's politics. The first thing that helped me understand this is when some students came to school and they may not have had anything to eat, may not have been properly clothed, so if you care about that you begin to make calls. You begin to get engaged. You then begin to be concerned about the world that exists when you turn these kids out. What is out there for them? Where are the jobs going to be once I graduate this kid? Even my views on immigration have been shaped by my role as principal at Central High School. Where do these kids go after high school? What is out there for young people who have recently arrived from other countries? So, all the things that are happening in the country and the world cannot be divorced from what educators do. Educators prepare people

for that world, either to transform it or to continue it. To be a good educator, you need to be abreast and engaged in the political process.

AFSA: Mr. Mayor, as you know in this interview you are speaking to public school administrators and supervisors across the country, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They are getting beaten up pretty good almost every day in the media. Many of them are tired, but they just keep on giving it all they have. As we end this interview, do you have any words for them directly, any words of encouragement?

MRB: Public educators should not be consumed by this minority of people who are beating down on public education. Public educators have been the ones who have moved this country further and further, and it is important for people to understand that. Look, most Americans go to public schools. They always have and they always will. The public educational system is what

built this country. The public school system is responsible for turning out the great people we have in our society today. Public schools work. Public schools have been and will continue to be the foundation of democracy in this country. Ex-slaves fought for public schools in the South during reconstruction. This is what American democracy should be about. You can't talk about democracy without talking about public schools. When immigrants first come to this country, they go through public schools. Often they are fed and clothed in a public school. Health needs are first identified and treated in a public school. It has always been that way. I see that there may be a threat to public education, but if we stay united, public education will prevail. It will prevail precisely because of all the good work being done by public school educators.

AFSA: Mayor, thank you for your time. And please know that your brothers and sisters in AFSA thank you for all your efforts.

MRB: And I thank AFSA for all it does on a daily basis for the benefit of those who work with young people. There is no higher calling. ■

UPDATE: Cami Anderson, state-appointed Newark Public Schools superintendent, who has one year left on her contract, was released from her post on July 8, 2015. She will be replaced by former New Jersey Education Commissioner Christopher Cerf until a permanent superintendent is appointed.

Mayor Ras J. Baraka has made the following statement: "The resignation of Superintendent Anderson is the first of many steps needed to regain local control of Newark Public Schools. Our ultimate objective is local control of our schools, and we will continue to work diligently and fervently towards this end. This is an opportunity for transition and we want to be able to return control to parents to make decisions affecting their children's education."

UPCOMING EVENTS • 2015

July 23–26
**AFSA 14th
Triennial
Constitutional
Convention**
New Orleans

July 26–31
**AFL-CIO
Bonnie Ladin
Union Skills (BLUS)
Training Program:
Presentation and
Teaching Techniques I**
Linthicum Heights, Maryland

July 29–30
**AFL-CIO Executive
Council Meeting**
Silver Spring, Maryland

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