



The class of Maryland

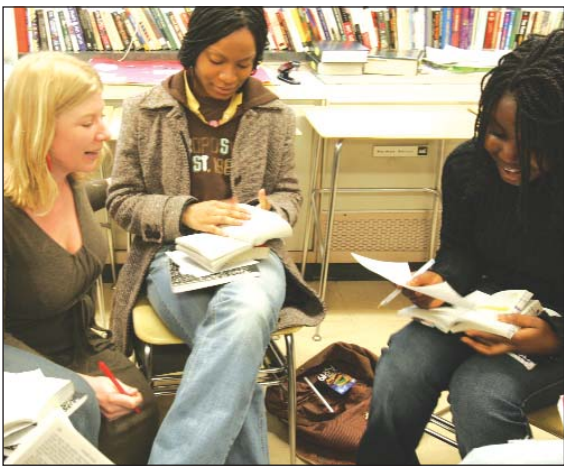
The Baltimore City Public School System continues to earn the respect and praise of the Maryland State Department of Education, as the George Washington Elementary School became the sixth BCPSS school to be awarded Blue Ribbon status by the state, thanks to hard-working students such as Darell Singleton and Briona Church, above. That's one of the many positive developments in the BCPSS that are highlighted in this edition of *The Baltimore City Educator*. You will read about the new Master Plan, formulated with the assistance of the Stupski Foundation. You will be introduced to the award-winning choir at City College High, Poly students learning to take flight and state-championship football squads. The BCPSS has a great story to tell.

PHOTOS: REBA SALDANHA



NOTABLE HISTORY

Olanrele Fadrora dressed as Ray Charles during an African-American history celebration at Hazelwood School. Pages 12-13.



From left, Western college prep teacher Stephanie Novak with students Ashley Fitzgerald and Ines Gouri.

100% success rate

Western High girls hit their target: college

BY RICH FAHEY

For 163 years, it has been training young women to be leaders. Among its notable alumnae are Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, state education superintendent, and new Baltimore City Council President Stephanie Rawlings Blake.

Eleanor Matthews, principal of Western High School, the oldest all-girls public school in the country, sees no reason to change course now. "It's not a matter of denying programs, opportunity or access to males," she said. "We don't have anything here that male students can't get somewhere else. Traditionally, it's been an all-female school."

Western High School is an all-female school whose Class of 2006 had

See WESTERN Page 18



Paquin School Director Dr. Rosetta Stith, left, CEO Dr. Charlene C. Boston, leaning over, and City Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke, rear, visit children in the Paquin pre-school program.

'CRIB TO COLLEGE'



Senior Sydney Richardson with her son, Kyron, who is in pre-school at Paquin.

Paquin offers an alternative for mothers and their children

By RICH FAHEY

It is a place where young women can get an education of a different sort. It is where, while they are taking Algebra and English, they can also learn how to be a mother.

It is a place where their children are learning at the same time they are, in a specially-designed program that begins at the age of six weeks.

"I like to call it 'crib to college' learning," said Dr. Rosetta Stith, director of the Laurence G. Paquin Middle/High School, a comprehensive alternative middle and high school.

The school, located on Sinclair Lane in East Baltimore, was established in 1966 to serve students who were also mothers and expectant mothers. Since its inception, it has served 28,000 young mothers and their children.

In Baltimore, the teen pregnancy rate has declined in recent years but remains high. According to the city Health Department, 1,686 babies were born to mothers under age 20 in 2004, the most recent data available, compared with 2,228 in 1999 – a 24-percent decrease.

Stith, who has been at the school for 25 years, said the school serves about 450 students in grades 6-12, not only from the city of Baltimore, but surrounding Maryland counties and other states. Enrollment fluctuates as students arrive from and return to their former schools.

The school's programs have been well-documented on TV, radio, in newspapers and magazines. In just the last two years, 25 educational correspondents have visited from such places as

England, France, Japan, Australia, Switzerland and Northern Ireland.

The school has formed important partnerships for the welfare of its students. Maryland General Hospital is the school's medical partner, ensuring quality prenatal care. The partnership provides prenatal care and other medical services at the school's health center, allowing students to obtain healthcare services on-site and miss fewer classes.

Hospital staff provide not only prenatal, pregnancy and postpartum care and pediatric services, but a 24-hour physician on-call when the school is closed; immunization for students and babies; free childbirth classes and nutritional services; and birth control counseling. The prenatal care system results in a high percentage of the babies being born on time and at normal weights.

Baltimore City Community College and its president, Dr. Carolane Williams, is another important ally when it comes to Paquin graduates going on to college.

Paquin also has its own WIC (Woman, Infants and Children) nutrition program, the federal initiative that promotes healthy eating

for mothers and their children.

Stith said she believes strongly in models, when it comes to parenting and for life in general. That's why women from all walks of life and graduates of the Paquin program who have gone to success are frequent visitors to the campus.

"You don't know what you don't know, so we try and expose the girls to positive role models," said Stith. "We have graduates who come back and tell the girls 'I did it. You can do it, too.'"

But the Paquin school is not an island, she admits. Healthy behaviors are learned and life lessons are taught, but she knows it is up to the young women themselves to follow through once they leave the school.

"I only have them for seven hours a day, the community has them for the other 17," said Stith.

Stith is proud of The Paquin University, which consists of: the Little School, the early learning continuum programs for the children of Paquin students, which usually has about 45 children; the Baby Signs program begins with babies six weeks old and goes up to children two years old; the Wolf's Trap Baby Arts Play Programs is for boys two years old, who learn social skills, and is run in conjunction with the Martin Luther King Head Start program; the Environmental Print and Reading program involves children 3-5 and exposes them to electronic equipment such as computers and sparks an interest in reading.

Pre-school staff member Sue Trainor with students from left, Myles Walton, Dimarco Yarrell, Shawn Dickerson, Kaedon Jenkins, and Kyron Kelly.



Youth center nurtures the 'best of the best'

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Imagine a room filled with above-grade-level students sharing ideas, participating in unique and challenging educational programs and learning the skills needed to become future scholars and world leaders.

Now imagine nearly 25,000 gifted students are doing just that, thanks to Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth (CTY). The program, founded in 1979, identifies top academic students in grades 2-8, and provides an array of academic services and programs to help develop their talents through grade 12.

CTY operates at 11 sites, including Baltimore, New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. Last year, 24,149 students were enrolled in CTY academic programs, and to date, more than 1.3 million have participated.

Representatives for Baltimore — the home of Johns Hopkins — show added commitment to recruiting local students.

"Our goal is to find the best of the best," said Neetu Dhawan-Gray, CTY Baltimore area coordinator. "Maybe they'll be the future Einstein or find a cure for cancer, but unless we find them, we may not benefit."

Dhawan-Gray is active in the Baltimore community, reaching out to parents, students, teachers, churches, community



Great things are happening at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth, thanks in part to Neetu Dhawan-Gray, right, Baltimore area coordinator, and Karen Bond, the center's director of talent identification.

agencies and the BCPSS CEO's office.

"We hold informational meetings across the city and help students and their families start thinking about their individual education plans," said Dhawan-Gray.

"You need the best and the brightest to be guided in the right direction," said Karen

Bond, CTY director of talent identification.

CTY's Talent Search identifies, assesses and recognizes students with exceptional math and/or verbal reasoning abilities. They take a test designed for older students which reveals more about their advanced academic abilities. Program participants in grades 2-6

are required to take the SCAT test, while students in grades 7-8 take the SAT or ACT tests.

"They gain experience taking the tests — especially the SATs and ACTs — and are able to figure out their gaps and fix them several years before they're required to take them for college admissions," said Dhawan-Gray.

CTY's summer programs are offered at more than 25 sites. Intensive, fast-paced courses ranging from Latin to biotechnology, writing to cryptology and ethics to neuroscience attract 10,000 annually. Family academic programs, created as an opportunity for children and their parents to learn together, range from one-day conferences to week-long seminars and field trips to destinations such as the rain forests of Costa Rica, the Yucatan in Mexico, or Tanzania on safari. CTY also offers distance education programs that enroll students in their homes and schools, throughout the U.S. and abroad, in math, writing and Advanced Placement courses.

"We're proud of the quality of our programs," said Dhawan-Gray. "When we have as many 10-year 'lifers' coming back every year, we know we have to be doing something right."

Baltimore elementary schools spring into fitness mode

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

Nearly 500 students at three of Baltimore's elementary schools — Westside, Bentalou, and Frederick — spent the first, chilly weeks of spring working fitness and nutrition into daily routines as part of Get Fit Kids.

As part of the 12-week program, students wear pedometers from the time they get up in the morning until they go to sleep at night to track the number of steps they take each day. They are encouraged to take at least 13,000 steps per day. In addition, teachers give lessons about nutrition and healthy food choices. Ultimately, the program aims to get children to make small changes in their levels of daily activity that will have a cumulative impact in the long run.

Get Fit Kids developed out of Get Fit Maryland, a wellness program centered around walking, which a team of researchers and professionals from the University of Maryland Medical Center, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Merritt Athletic Clubs crafted in 2005 to raise awareness about the dangers of obesity and cardiovascular disease.

Westside Elementary School Principal Havanah Kenlaw heard about the program over the winter and decided to get third-

through fifth-graders at her school involved.

"It sounded like a good program that would really benefit our students. The kids get excited about tracking their progress in their workbooks, and the information and skills they are learning about nutrition and making healthier choices when it comes to food is really important," said Kenlaw.

The Westside School kicked off the program at an assembly, handing out backpacks that contained a pedometer, logbooks, and a water bottle. As part of the introduction to the program, teachers led students through an exercise where they categorized nutritious and non-nutritious foods and beverages, participated in calisthenics, and tested their pedometers.

The students started out recording the number of steps counted on the pedometer and have been encouraged to increase that amount if they can. Once a month teachers take record of progress and hand out rewards, which have included pencils and wristbands.

Using the pedometer gives students a concrete way to think about their activity levels, and recording their steps daily also keeps them focused on exercise and physical activity over the course of 12 weeks. The program's goal is to show kids that exercise is

an important part of leading a healthy life and that increasing activity can be fun and easy to incorporate into daily routines.

With childhood obesity rates rising, accompanied by an increased incidence of Type II diabetes in younger people, getting kids to incorporate physical activity and exercise into their daily lives has become a major goal of educators and health professionals throughout

the country.

"There has been a lot of collaboration to get this program going at Westside," said Kenlaw. "It's a partnership between the physical education teacher, the health teacher, and the classroom teachers, as well as between the University of Maryland and Baltimore schools. It's worth it. Students are learning and are engaged."



Kendrick Sharpe, foreground, and others in Ms. Shena Thomas' third-grade class participates in the Johns Hopkins-sponsored fitness program at Westside Elementary School.

THE EDUCATOR

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Dr. Charlene C. Boston

Facing promises and challenges

The Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) represents both the promise and challenges faced by urban school districts. The fourth largest district in Maryland, the BCPSS currently enrolls more than 82,000 students. In 2004-05, the BCPSS was ranked the 32nd largest school district in the nation, and ranked 15th among large central city districts. Currently, there are 193 schools in the BCPSS including 16 charter schools and a cohort of “new and innovative” schools, which include Gates Foundation-supported small high schools.

The BCPSS has enjoyed a decade of steadily increasing academic achievements. It is home to some of the top high schools in the state (including the top performing high school) and has posted increases in the graduation rate and student performance on both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced standardized tests. This year, 78 percent of all graduates took the SAT test, eclipsing the national participation rate of 48 percent. The June 2006 graduating class earned \$47,000,000 in scholarships.

The district is committed to increasing the pace of acceleration of this achievement to ensure that Baltimore City students meet the standards set for 2013-2014, as outlined in our Master Plan. Improving the performance of all student groups on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and High School Assessment (HSA) tests as well as increasing the graduation rate is critical to the overall improvement of the BCPSS.

Since 1997, the BCPSS has operated under the “City-State Partnership,” which established a Board of School Commissioners whose nine members are jointly appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City and the Governor of the State of Maryland. As Interim Chief Executive Officer, I am honored to work with BCPSS stakeholders to continue our district’s focus on accelerating student achievement.

Charlene C. Boston
Interim Chief Executive Officer

MEET THE CHIEF OFFICERS



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Elizabeth Williams
Area Academic Officer Elementary School Area 3



Deborah Wortham
Area Academic Officer High School Area 6

Letter to the Editor



The inaugural edition of *The Baltimore City Educator* drew rave reviews.

Dear Dr. Charlene Boston,

Congratulations on the inaugural edition of *The Baltimore City Educator* — a publication of the Baltimore City Public School System. The Maryland State Department of Education appreciates your commitment to the academic achievement of all Baltimore City public schools students.

Please place me on the mailing list so that I may continue to enjoy your publications. I look forward to reading many more positive stories showcasing the accomplishments of Baltimore City’s wonderful students, dedicated educators, and community members.

Again, congratulations on your informative publication. It speaks volumes about your service, vision, and mission to student achievement.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

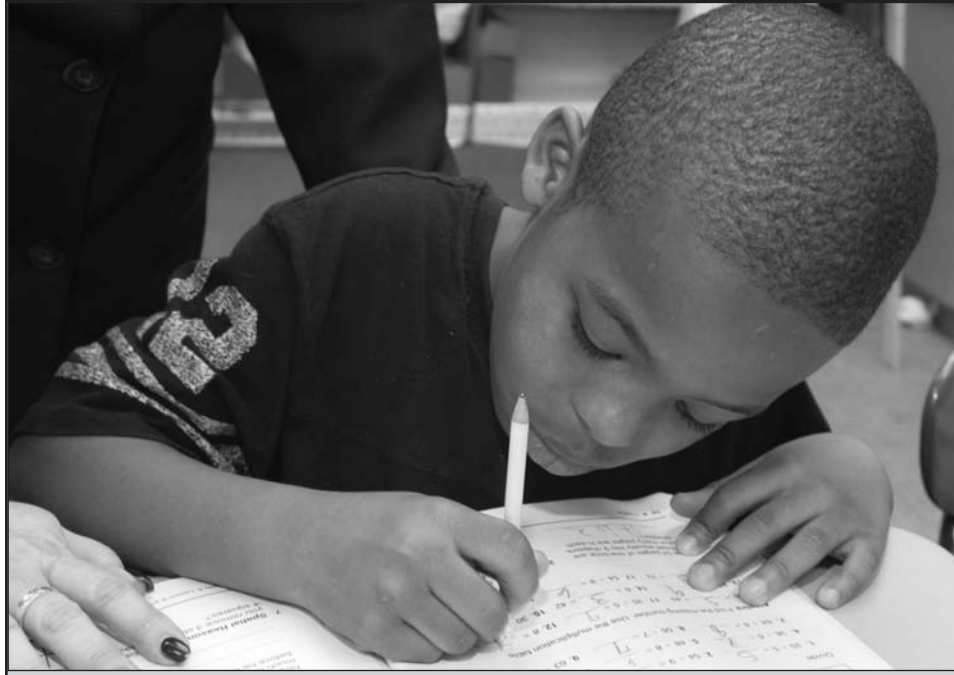
**Baltimore
by the
numbers:**

**Students - 82,381
Teachers and paraprofessionals: 7,501
Administrators: 701**

* Area Academic Officer positions for Elementary School Area 1 and Charter Schools are currently vacant and will be filled.

Master Plan in place for Baltimore schools

The BCPSS Master Plan 2006-2008



Fourth-grader Montorey Meredith works on his math at George Washington Elementary School.

Goal 1: By 2013-14, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts, and mathematics.

Goal 2: All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Goal 3: By 2005-2006, all core academic subject classes (CAS) will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

Goal 4: All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.

Goal 5: All students will graduate from high school.

Goal 6 (Local Goal): Effective management of systems will support student achievement.

Smaller schools lead to greater achievement

BY RICH FAHEY

The foundation has been built.

Five years after it began, the report card is in for the Baltimore City Public School System's high-school reform efforts. And the marks are good.

In 2001, the BCPSS released its "Blueprint for Baltimore's Neighborhood High Schools" outlining a dramatic reshaping of the high-school experience for students. It called for an unprecedented coalition of community members, local and national foundations, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Baltimore Teachers' Union, and the Fund for Educational Excellence, the non-profit, local education fund serving as BCPSS' main high-school reform partner.

One of the centerpieces of the reform effort has been the move away from the larger comprehensive high schools to the smaller, themed models, with concentrations in math and science, the arts, or technology. Five of the nine original neighborhood high schools have been fully reconfigured into 12 new, small, theme-based schools. Six Innovation high schools are now open.

All have one thing in common: no entrance criteria. The idea was to give every student a choice, and last year 88 percent of eighth-graders participated in the choice program.

"We now have a district-wide choice of quality high schools with no competitive entrance criteria," said Lisa Wright, executive director of the Fund for Educational Excellence. "There are more opportunities for every student."

The reform effort has focused on three goals

- ◆ establishing academic rigor for all students;
- ◆ creating small supportive school structures; and
- ◆ ensuring effective and accountable leadership and teaching in every school and classroom.

Improvement has shown itself in many ways, from increases in standardized test scores, to a sharp jump in the number of students taking the PSAT and SAT tests, to a higher graduation rate and better attendance.

Some of the highlights:

In 2006, students in Baltimore City saw the largest single year gain on the state's High School Assessment (HSA) exams. Scores on the Algebra HSA were up 15 percentage points, Biology was up 18.6 percentage points and Government was up 12.2 percentage points. On a percentage basis, the city outperformed the overall state average increases.

There was a dramatic increase in SAT/PSAT test taking. The number of seniors taking the SAT rose 57 percent from 2002 to 2006, with 650 more students taking the exam in 2006 than 2002. PSAT participation jumped 31 percent for sophomores and 34 percent for juniors. 2006 scholarship awards totaled \$47 million, an all-time high.

Wright said the work done to date has created a stable foundation that the BCPSS can build upon each year.

Stupski provides foundation for Baltimore City schools

BY RICH FAHEY

As with any plan, the devil is in the details.

Last December, after rejecting two previous plans, the state school board unanimously approved a new two-year master plan for school reform in Baltimore. Under Maryland's Bridge to Excellence legislation, all 24 school systems in the state must develop master plans and update them annually. The state, in return, by 2008 will provide an additional \$1.3 billion a year in public education spending in exchange for documentation of how that money is being spent.

The city's plan lists six specific goals (see box); five are off-shoots of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The master plan must conform to federal and state laws. The BCPSS plan added a sixth goal: Effective management of systems to support student achievement.

Two of the city's point persons in the development of the master plan, monitoring its progress and efforts to make sure the goals are reached, are Linda Chinnia, the system's chief academic officer, and Dr. Patti Abernethy, the deputy chief of staff. State education officials reacted with enthusiasm to the new educational blueprint.

In the past, the state has ordered corrective actions to be taken in the schools in the absence of an accepted plan from the city. Those corrective actions were woven into the new plan which the state approved.

One of the important elements is the SchoolStat team, which meets weekly to update Chinnia and Abernethy on the schools' progress in meeting the plan's goals, and to identify compliance rates and possible problem areas.

While the state requires annual progress reports, the city is charting its progress on a quarterly basis, trying to detect problems early and take corrective action.

One of the BCPSS' priorities is recruiting, training and then retaining highly-qualified teachers so that 100 percent of teachers in the BCPSS system meet the definition of "highly-qualified" - that is, teachers who are certified and teaching in the area in which they are certified.

The city has offered a variety of incentives to new teachers,

including signing bonuses, tuition reimbursement, and free laptop computers with curriculum requirements already installed. New teachers are also eligible for paid two-week induction periods in which they can meet their principals and become familiar with their schools.

The schools are also moving forward in restructuring the large comprehensive high schools into smaller models, and getting away from the traditional middle school concept.

"We have determined that K-8 schools are more successful," said Chinnia, who noted that 16 more schools will become K-8 next fall.

Individual learning plans are being drawn up for lagging students and special-education students are being integrated into regular classrooms wherever possible.

While Chinnia has taken the lead in the areas of academic reforms and student support, Abernethy has focused on ancillary services to students, including improvements in transportation, nutrition, information systems and technology management.

She also got involved in those aspects of the blueprint that called for improved communication between the schools and other stakeholders, including parents, community groups, business groups and foundations; and the accurate tracking of inventory and assets. Abernethy also developed workshops to help her officers to disseminate the master plan to everyone in the school system.

A key partner in the master plan effort has been the California-based Stupski Foundation, which works to improve education for poor and minority children. The foundation announced a partnership with the Baltimore City school system last August to strengthen the schools' leadership.

After the departure of CEO Dr. Bonnie Copeland and other senior school officials last summer, the foundation, which encourages strong, stable leadership, re-evaluated its commitment, then re-affirmed it after talks with interim CEO Dr. Charlene C. Boston.

Stupski paid for a consultant to work with Boston and her staff to improve the master plan as it was being prepared.

The Baltimore City Public School System and the Fund for Educational Excellence would like to thank the local and national foundations that have contributed dollars, expertise and ongoing guidance to the high-school reform effort. Their nearly unprecedented partnership and unyielding focus on the needs of Baltimore's high-school students have been the key underlying strengths of high-school reform.

The participating foundations include:

Abell Foundation; American Trading and Production Corp. (Atapco); Baltimore Community Foundation; Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation; Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation; Annie E. Casey Foundation; Clayton Baker Trust; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Lockhart Vaughan Foundation; Open Society Institute - Baltimore; Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation; and Alvin and Fanny B. Thalheimer Foundation.

Learning is truly an art form at Booker T. Washington

BY AMANDA WEBER

For students and teachers at the Booker T. Washington Middle School, art is both an extracurricular activity and a subject to be studied and explored in every classroom, from science to social studies. Based on a curriculum structured around art integration and infusion, Booker T. Washington has been using creative ways to keep kids involved and interested in a variety of academic subjects.

For 15 years, Booker T. Washington Middle built a reputation for its vibrant arts culture, but last year, faculty and staff agreed that it was time to re-energize the program, again making student exposure to artistic learning a priority.

As a way to jump-start the program, last July, literary arts teacher Kate Braxton, science/special education teacher Maria Habacon, and social studies teacher Gina Roberts attended the Maryland Artist/Teacher Institute (MATI), an intensive weeklong professional-development program for elementary and middle-school teachers and administrators at the University of Maryland's College Park campus. Other Baltimore City schools participating in the program included Calverton Community, Canton Middle, Mt. Royal Middle and Roland Park Elementary/Middle.

"It parallels a six-week college summer program crammed into one week," said Braxton. "We worked all day and frequently at night completing the requirements."

MATI is a collaboration of the Maryland State Department of Education, University System of Maryland, the Maryland State Arts Council, and Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance. Established in 1994, MATI enables teachers to become more creative and skillful in using the arts to engage children in active learning and helps them understand the role of art as a positive force in a child's academic development.

Dr. Ray Zeigler, fine arts specialist and co-director of MATI, says that educators who participate in the program learn the impact of arts integration on student achievement, self-esteem, school climate, student attendance and teacher retention.

"Integration also recognizes the diversity of learning styles in children," he said. "The arts can open new pathways that correspond to individual learning styles and make it possible for the teacher



Aaliyah Tyler works with art teacher Rebecca Wagner at Booker T. Washington School.

to engage every child in active learning."

During the MATI program, dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and creative writing are examined as separate content areas.

"Teachers learn to teach across curriculum," said Braxton. "Incorporating the arts into lessons can help motivate and stimulate students who typically may not respond well to traditional classroom teaching and learning."

This year, Braxton's eighth-grade literary arts class read the "Diary of Anne Frank" and organized a performance based on the book, incorporating aspects of theater, dance, visual art and music. During that time, those same students were studying World War II in Roberts' social studies class and took a field trip to the Holocaust museum to get a visual sense of the history that they were learning about in both classes.

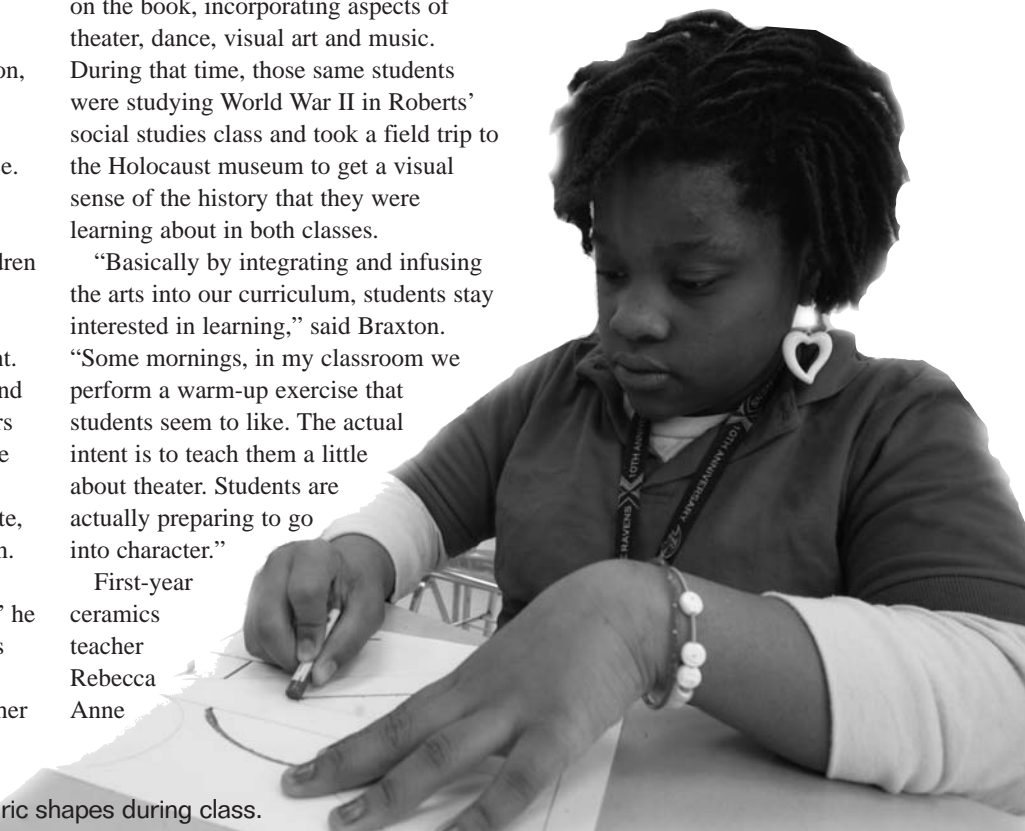
"Basically by integrating and infusing the arts into our curriculum, students stay interested in learning," said Braxton. "Some mornings, in my classroom we perform a warm-up exercise that students seem to like. The actual intent is to teach them a little about theater. Students are actually preparing to go into character."

First-year ceramics teacher Rebecca Anne

Wagner also feels strongly about the arts integration program and her opportunity to teach across curriculum.

"If my students are studying Egypt in their social studies class, and mummification in science class, I will look at the curriculum and link my ceramics project to that same time period," said Wagner. "It forces students to be more accountable."

Last year, MATI had 176 participants, and had to turn down approximately 40 applicants due to lack of space, according to Zeigler.



Student Janae Moye draws geometric shapes during class.

Search for CEO moves forward

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In its search for the next permanent leader of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners remains dedicated to recruiting the most qualified candidates, while engaging the public in the selection process.

"The board is committed to using public voice to inform its decision making," said Chair Brian D. Morris. "Our goal is to solicit the assistance of the BCPSS stakeholders in completing the most critical aspect of the selection process – identifying the most desirable and important attributes of the next permanent CEO."

In December, the Board selected PROACT Search, Inc., a full-service executive search and management-consulting firm headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisc. From mid-February through March 9, search consultants convened four community forums and sought out input through surveys, focus groups, individual interviews and message boards. Overall, they reached 245 individuals in person, and received 2,100 survey responses.

Respondents indicated the next CEO should have the following attributes, listed in stated order of importance: a strong record in improving student achievement; deep personal commitment to public education; strong record of motivating teachers, administrators and staff; up-to-date knowledge of educational reform and improvement strategies; experience developing and enhancing leadership among school principals; experience in turning around low-profile schools; experience hiring high-quality staff and building a performance team; and ability to advocate for school funding.

The data are being used to define the profile that the search firm will use to select candidates.

The board anticipates that the permanent CEO will be in place by July. Dr. Charlene C. Boston is serving as interim CEO of the school system. The former superintendent of the Wicomico County Public Schools in Salisbury, Maryland, Boston assumed the BCPSS position last July, replacing Dr. Bonnie Copeland.

Community members can access the CEO Search page at www.baltimorecityschools.org/School_Board/CEO_Main_Search.asp.

Poly grad engineers a bright future at MIT

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Nahathai Srivali is not your average teenager.

Boasting a perfect score of 800 on her math SAT, she is currently completing her freshman year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and intends to apply her scientific knowledge to innovate technology for the betterment of the world population.

Last year, she presented the findings of her research at the Carnegie Institute on gene expression in real time at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, where she competed with more than 1,500 students worldwide. Her research was published in the March 2007 issue of *Genetics*.

She is also a product of the Baltimore City Public School System and a 2006 scholarship recipient in the Northrop Grumman Engineering Scholars program.

Developed to encourage students such as Srivali in the pursuit of engineering-related careers, the Engineering Scholars program provides a total of \$240,000 annually to one high school senior from each Maryland county and Baltimore City.

"Northrop Grumman is pleased to sponsor this unique engineering scholarship effort, which is intended to motivate some of the state's best and brightest students — with a background and interest in math and science — to pursue the engineering professions," said James F. Pitts, corporate vice president and president of the company's Baltimore-based Electronic Systems sector.

"It was an extraordinary

weekend when I found out that I won," said Srivali. "Even when I calmed down, I still could not believe that it was \$10,000. The company kept coming out with more and more surprises for the scholarship recipients, such as the awards dinner where representatives from the company were there to talk with us. It was heartwarming and a great networking experience. It touched me and has consistently reminded me to be goal-oriented."

Srivali, a graduate of Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, participated in the school's Mathematics Club, Physics Olympics Team and the Women Serious about Science Club. She was enrolled in Poly's Ingenuity Program, which aims to prepare students to achieve at nationally competitive levels in math and science. She was one of 13 Ingenuity students to qualify for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination and served as the chair of the program committee for the Ingenuity Math, Science and Research Symposium. She also volunteered

as an English-Tai translator for the BCPSS and the Education Department of Thailand.

"Poly offered me many great opportunities for both

education and personal development," said Srivali.

"The school prepared me to be a hard-working student and, being in the research practicum program, I gained hands-on experience in the science field of my interest."

At MIT, Srivali is majoring in chemical biological engineering and is continuing her research, working on optimizing protein production in the department's cell culturing lab. She also earned a competitive internship with the biopharmaceutical company CombinatoRx.

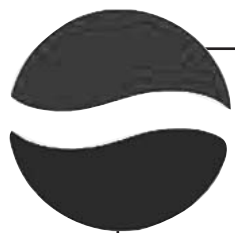
Srivali was part of the fourth group of Engineering Scholars. As one of the state's largest private employers, Northrop Grumman is a strong supporter of the state's education efforts and is a major sponsor of the Maryland Teacher of the Year competition. The Electronics Systems sector sponsors the Discover "E" program throughout Maryland, in which volunteer engineers at the company work to excite student interest in engineering, math and science.

The company also sponsors Worthwhile to Help High School Youth (WORTHY) — a mentoring program that teams employees with Baltimore City high school students to help them achieve their dreams of pursuing technical and business careers.

Each year, 10 Baltimore City high school students are selected for the program and each works with two Northrop Grumman mentors during the school year. The company collaborates with the University of Maryland Baltimore County to provide part-time summer employment to the students. Upon graduation, qualified participants receive multi-year partial scholarships from the company at an accredited college or university.



Corporate Vice President and President of Northrop Grumman's Electronic Systems sector James F. Pitts and State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick congratulated Nahathai Srivali for receiving the Engineering Scholars award.



Pepsi's got a lot to give

Baltimore City students beneficiaries of \$100,000 in scholarships

In 1969, the slogan "You've Got a Lot to Live, Pepsi's Got a Lot to Give" was born.

Nearly 40 years later, those words could not ring truer for 10 Baltimore City high school seniors.

Thanks to the generosity of the Pepsi Bottling Group Inc., those 10 students will be awarded \$10,000 each to offset expenses at a Maryland college of their choice. The company announced it will award \$100,000 annually to deserving, college-bound seniors.

"The Pepsi Bottling Group is proud to

sponsor these scholarships," said Vaughn Dickinson, vice president and general manager of Pepsi's Chesapeake Market Unit. "Everyone deserves a chance to pursue their dreams. We hope this funding will help many worthy students do just that."

"We are excited about this wonderful opportunity to increase the number of college-bound students from Baltimore City," said Dr. Charlene C. Boston, interim CEO for the Baltimore City Public School System. "Too often students are faced with financial obstacles

that overshadow their dreams of pursuing higher education. I am proud to count Pepsi among a growing list of corporate partners who are committed to eliminating financial barriers to higher education."

To be eligible, students must be graduating from a Baltimore City public high school in the same year as the award; have a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.5; have verifiable community service; and be accepted to attend a community college, four-year institution or technical school within the

state of Maryland.

This year's award winners are De'Ja' Addison, Doris M. Johnson High; Zachary Epps, Baltimore Polytechnic Institute; James Houston, Carver Vocational-Technical High; Chanelle Johnson, Forest Park Senior High; Joseph LoGrande, W.E.B. DuBois Senior High; Kneisha McClinton, Baltimore Polytechnic Institute; Loren Patterson, Western High; Jasmine Pitts, Baltimore Freedom Academy; Samantha Porter, Doris M. Johnson High; and Stephon Smith, W.E.B. DuBois High.

A decade of dominance

Roland Park's National Academic League win streak hits 109

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Capping off an impressive 109-game winning streak against other Baltimore City schools, Roland Park Middle School's National Academic League (NAL) team celebrated its 10th straight Baltimore City championship in March.

Founded in 1992, the NAL consists of middle-school teams from across the U.S. Baltimore City has been part of the league since 1993, represented by teams from 30 middle schools. Roland Park has not lost a

game locally since 1996.

"The team's biggest strength is their determination to be the very best they can be," said Marty Sharrow, Roland Park business manager, social studies department head and NAL coach. "In the beginning of the season, I set high goals and they thrive on striving for them. Most, if not all, are voracious readers, and in a game that's focused on academics, that's a real plus."

Students credit their success to team unity, commitment to practice and love of

the game.

"We're very fast on the buzzer, and we all actually enjoy this," said Roland Park eighth-grader Jimmy Fulwiler.

Supported by the Abell Foundation, the Baltimore City NAL program aims to honor academic accomplishments; increase the public awareness of academic achievements; promote learning; increase real-world use of the Internet and distance learning; and provide academic athletes the same recognition as other athletes.

Each NAL game incorporates questions from all academic disciplines and is divided into four quarters. Throughout the game, players engage in fast-paced, quick-answer contests, learn teamwork as they huddle to answer complex questions and cooperatively solve problems.

Roland Park seventh-grade student Hannah Freedman, who is involved in the third quarter of the program, loves the opportunity to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills through problem solving. During her round, up to 10 players from each team solve a real-world problem and present a final, collaborative response in a three- to five-minute presentation. Teams are rewarded for the most creative and thorough approaches.



National Academic League winners for the 100th straight competition from Roland Park pose with their 2007 trophy.



Roland Park students M.P. Randolph, left, and Niko Suyemoto are all smiles about their 109th straight National Academic League championship.

"I like the debating," said Freedman. "During practices we research a topic and present mock debates. The first, second and fourth quarter team members are usually drilled on random facts."

As the winner of the Baltimore City championship game, defeating Midtown Academy, Roland Park earned a seed in the NAL's national competition. Last year, the team finished as the top-ranked middle school in the entire NAL. This year, the team defeated Wilbur Middle School of Wichita, Kansas, in the Sweet 16 round of the tournament.

Students take center stage in BCPSS annual Dance Symposium

BY GRETCHEN WEBER

More than 100 high school dancers performed their best modern, jazz, ballet, and African moves for close to 900 guests at Coppin State University in the culminating performance of the Baltimore City Public School System's Dance Symposium.

Now in its 30th year, the Dance Symposium is a program offered at the high-school level featuring six weeks of intensive, after-school dance for students and teachers. Participants learn various dance styles and techniques as well as important stage presence and choreography skills, and then they have the opportunity to present all they have learned to their families, friends, and the public in a professional setting at Coppin State. This year 15 schools participated in Dance Symposium, a number almost double that of last year.

Curriculum Specialist Jessica Ivey runs the program, and two professional dancers, Andrew Dove and Yvette Shipley-Perkins, help facilitate the program in their roles as dance consultants. Among other things, the dance consultants train teachers at each participating high school to become dance directors, who then train the students.

Some dance directors already have training in dance, such as Lori Goodman-Joyner of Western High School, who helps Ivey coordinate the other dance directors and serves as chairperson of the Symposium. However, many dance directors have very little dance background, but all share an interest in learning more about various dance methods and styles, as well as choreography.

This year the dance consultants offered master classes to the dance directors in modern dance, jazz, ballet, stage presence, costuming, and how to present work in a semi-professional manner. These workshops give the new dance directors not only the tools to train students in these areas, but they also allow the teachers to improve upon their own dance knowledge and skills.

Once the program begins in November, students practice five days a week after school for two to three hours each day. During that time students get to learn a variety of dance styles from their dance directors while forming new friendships in a healthy, safe, creative atmosphere.

"It's an outstanding program," said Ivey. "It actually gives the students an opportunity to experience and learn a variety of techniques

and skills. They get to observe a variety of dance styles through the consultants; they get to intermingle and feel a camaraderie with other students; and, when they are performing at Coppin State University, they get to feel a real theater atmosphere. They also improve their dance technique, increase their knowledge of dance, and learn new choreography and staging skills."

The theme of this year's performance was "Dancing with Things." Schools were allowed to dance in whatever style they chose, but they had to use props in their choreography. Three judges from outside the school district with backgrounds in dance and the arts adjudicated the dancers according to various categories.

Trophies were awarded in five categories: Best Stage Presence — Edmondson High School; Best Costumes — Reginald Lewis High School; Most Creative — Mergenthaler High School; Best Props — Polytechnic High School; Best Overall — Western High School.

This year's performance was particularly exciting, said Dove, because it was the first time the dance directors performed on stage in the program. "When they get so involved and excited, it really encourages the students to be even more involved and excited," said Dove.



One of the participants in this year's Dance Symposium.

BCPSS provides safer, more efficient transportation

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

Over the past three years the Baltimore City Public School System's Department of Transportation has been implementing a series of technologies allowing it to provide safer, more efficient, and more dependable transport services to and from the city's 195 public and non-public schools for the 35,000 eligible students in the city.

The primary technology is a GPS Vehicle-Student Tracking System, installed on each bus, which allows department staff to monitor the exact coordinate location of all buses, as well as all students on board, whose bar code is swiped upon entry.

"Safety of students has always been of utmost importance to the Transportation Department," explained Don Swift, BCPSS director of transportation. "GPS technology is a powerful tool that can help us to respond to concerns or inquiries that come from parents, schools, or even police departments by locating busses and students riding them."

Because the GPS technology integrates with the BCPSS Trapeze routing software and staff in the department can know actual bus locations as opposed to scheduled locations, management can react more quickly to routing



BCPSS bus takes students to and from school safely.

problems identified by parents and administrators and thereby increase efficiency. Transportation headquarters is nearing completion of system-wide integration, which will allow electronic communication between headquarters and bus operators, thus enabling real-time updates on student pick-up and drop-off activity, delays, and emergencies.

Another component to the upgrade has been a Web-based transportation request system, through which the department verifies the necessary information of each eligible student so that the student quickly receives approval and begins getting service. Prior to installation of this system the wait time between request for service and date of provision was close to

10 days. Since installation, the process takes five days and is expected to continue to decrease to three days.

Keeping the new system running are the transportation coordinators in each school, who have been trained in the process of making requests for service on behalf of eligible students, student eligibility, and service expectations. They work on behalf of students to get their transportation needs met, but they are also able to evaluate whether the bus vendors contracted by the Baltimore City Public School System are meeting the conditions of that contract.

"The school system is required to confirm that appropriate levels of transport service are being provided, especially to special-education students," said Swift. "Having trained coordinators with access to this technology in each school allows us to monitor and confirm services in a way that was not possible before. It allows local schools to maintain high accountability from vendors."

As the project evolved, the department set a target date of full implementation of the Trapeze system by May 2. It was on track to meet that goal.

The sky's the limit at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Soaring to new heights, students at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute are learning the science, technology and real-world dynamics of flight.

The school has created its own flight room in attempt to give students hands-on experience while learning about aerodynamic principles. Located in a converted machine shop, the space is ideal for the program. Students have access to work tables to build rockets and plane parts, a plasma screen programmed with WeatherBug, outdoor access for flying activities, and a computer room to run Microsoft's flight simulator program — a virtual environment catering to pilots and would-be pilots that encompasses a flying area of more than 20,000 airports.

"They'll learn about weather and the physics behind flight; they'll be designing and building model planes, shaving wings, everything," said Principal Dr. Barney Wilson. "It's the complete program. For students to get this is at the high school level is unheard of."

"This is the real thing," said Major Roger Gauert, a retired Air Force pilot in his fourth year teaching.

"We're bringing the fundamentals of engineering to heart. Sitting there listening to me talk just isn't enough. If the technology is out there, we should be using it the most and best we can."

In March, 130 students enrolled in Fundamentals of Engineering visited the new flight room. Over a two-week period, Gauert introduced them to the Fundamentals of Aviation. The room can handle 26 students at a time, and by next year, Gauert hopes to introduce 400 freshmen to the concepts of flight.

The school has also formed an aviation explorer club and is working to develop summer work-study programs. Next year, students will be part of the national program, *Build a Plane*, and will have the opportunity to assemble a real aircraft. Now in a formal partnership with the Federal Aviation Administration, *Build a Plane* has dozens of projects operating in the U.S. and several overseas.

Additionally, the school hopes to offer students the option of applying for a pilot's license.

"Our long-term goal is to have eight to 10 students graduate with a private pilot's license," said Gauert.

"We want to create the next generation of world leaders," said Wilson. "Teaching them to fly will take them to another level."

Students are just as eager for that next level.

"It's a great opportunity to prepare for the world," said sophomore Mohd

Hassan. "I really want to be a pilot, and I love engineering, too. It's pretty exciting. I can't wait until I get to fly."

The technology and materials of the flight room were funded in part through the generosity of local alumni, community members,

businesses and foundations. If any individual or organization is interested in further sponsoring or partnering with the school in this endeavor, please contact Dr. Barney Wilson at bwilson01@bcps.k12.md.us or 410-396-7026.



Baltimore Polytechnic Institute JROTC students Joshua Lee, left, and Jonathon Hanlon discuss the aerodynamic principles of helicopter flight.

DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ENGINEERS SHINE

Lab Rats make mark in national robotics competition

BY CASEY SHEEHAN

In their second year, the Dunbar High School Lab Rats are proving themselves to be true life scientists, battling the challenges of prototyping, designing, programming and testing their own robotics creations.

Building the robots to navigate independently, sense and respond to their environments, collect objects, climb chairs, fire objects and explore terrain was all part of the job as the Lab Rats — the school's robotics team. Founded in 2005, the Lab Rats capped off another successful season in the FIRST Robotics Competition.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was founded to bring together high school students, sponsors, colleges and technical professors to develop their solution to an engineering challenge in a competitive game environment. More than 33,000 students from around the world participated in this year's competitions.

"There is no better preparation for jobs in science, technology, engineering and math," said Joshua Gabrielse, physics and robotics teacher at Dunbar High School. "Students learn by doing. It's fun, and it's fascinating. FIRST provides a reason to pay attention in class and seek out opportunities beyond the classroom. It's about getting teens on track to become the pioneers of 21st century technological discovery."

Each January, FIRST teams receive a new game and have just six weeks to prepare for competition. This year's game, 'Rack 'n' Roll,' was played by two three-team alliances on a

field containing 24 spider-leg structures. To score, teams used three different types of tubes, a color vision tracking system, drivers and their constructed robots.

The Lab Rats competed in the Chesapeake Regional in March, finishing as a regional finalist. The team also received the Judges' Award for its unique efforts, performance and dynamics.

"A very young team of inexperienced students from Baltimore City built a dominant 120-pound robot, and that was all the success I'd hoped for," said Gabrielse. "Making it all the way to the finals in an international competition, dominated by veteran teams, simply highlights the students' achievement. They are preparing themselves for future successes beyond robotics."

Dunbar's team also attended the NASA/Virginia Commonwealth University Regional in Richmond, Virginia, where they placed 27 out of 66 teams. The team is sponsored by the U.S. Army Research Laboratory, Northrop Grumman Engineering Systems, NASA, Morgan State University and Maryland Space Grant Consortium. Volunteer mentor engineers devote their evening and weekend hours to assist students, teaching them the skills they need to complete their tasks.

"Our students are responsible for designing and building the robot," said Gabrielse. "The mentors provide support without making designs, writing code or touching tools. We figure that it isn't about the awards, it's about the students' journey."



Members of the Dunbar High School Lab Rats display the medals and trophy they received in the FIRST Robotics Competition. Below, team members are shown setting up their robot at the Chesapeake Regional in March.



Students were greeted by Interim CEO Dr. Charlene C. Boston, 92Q radio and Squiggly the Book Worm at the summer school registration activities kick-off at Reisterstown Road Plaza.

Summer programs keep students' minds sharp

BY JOSEPH BEETS

Everene Johnson-Turner, student support officer for the Baltimore City Public School System, has a phrase for it.

"We call it 'the summer slide,'" she said of the time period after students leave school for the summer and before they return in the fall. It's a time, she said, when students may lose some of the knowledge gained over the school year if they don't keep reading, writing and doing math problems.

The BCPSS has a variety of summer programs to help students from Grades K-12 catch up, stay with it, or even get ahead.

Last year, the BCPSS enrolled 23,000 students in summer programs and Johnson-Turner said she would hope that between 40-50,000 of the district's students would recognize the value of the programs this summer. "Even if they didn't enroll in a school program, they could join a reading club at the library. You can't turn it off completely in the

summer. Children have to continue to learn."

Students in grades K-5 are eligible for the elementary schools summer program. The middle grades program for students in grades 6-8 is held only in Title I schools. There is also a two-week summer "bridge program" for Grade 9 students transitioning to high school.

High school students can attend six-week review programs in English, Algebra and American Government, three of the four subjects in the Maryland High School Assessment Tests. There is a \$150 fee per course, with reductions in fees available for qualifying students.

There will also be a special school improvement program this summer for 12 schools in Area 9, where students will be able to enroll in a special six-week program for six hours a day.

Special-education students are eligible for the Extended School Year, or ESY program, which is an extension of school services available during the school year

through the summer months, depending on their Individual Education Plans.

Many community-based organizations also partner with local schools, planning their summer programs to begin after the school day ends.

Johnson-Turner said her office has begun an aggressive outreach program via newspapers, radio and TV in an effort to get the word out about the programs. And while the concentration in the summer programs will be on academics, there will also be cultural experiences, field trips, and entertainers from the outside sprinkled in. It's all in an effort to stop the "summer slide" that can hit even the best students.

"Even in summer, students should still be reading and writing and finding creative, fun ways of doing math programs," said Johnson-Turner.

For more information on the BCPSS summer programs, go to the Web site www.baltimorecityschools.org.

Words from the wise

Experience Corps program brings seniors and youth together

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

For Barclay School second-grade teacher Patricia Bennet, two hands are better than one, and six are even better.

Bennet is one of Baltimore City's teachers benefiting from Experience Corps – an innovative, high-impact volunteer program that trains retired adults and places them in K-3 classrooms. Administered by the Greater Homewood Community Corporation, in conjunction with Johns Hopkins Center on Aging and Health, the program began with three schools in 1998.

“At the time of its inception, three schools were in restructuring, and it was clear they needed additional academic support,” said Experience Corps Director Sylvia McGill.

Experience Corps is now in 16 of the city's public elementary schools and has 290 volunteers. The idea behind the program is that seniors are able to tap into

their vast experience and wisdom in serving as mentors to the youth. Data show improved performance on the part of the students, as well as improved health status for the volunteers.

“The true beauty of the program is that it's not only meeting the students' individual academic needs, but it's improving the overall school climate and benefiting the seniors,” said McGill. “Principals use the phrase that it's a calmer environment. Data show that it may impact teachers' sense of success and even the retention rate. Plus, it helps seniors, both physically and mentally, by developing relationships and staying active. It's a win-win for everyone.”

Volunteers are screened and interviewed and, once accepted, they participate in more than 30 hours of classroom instruction. Each volunteer then commits to a minimum of 15 hours per week for the entire academic year. They are responsible for assisting teachers in their day-to-day activities such as literacy support, behavior support, enrichment activities and community and parental outreach.

According to Bennet, the experience has been beneficial from the start. She has had volunteers in her classroom for all seven years the program has run at Barclay. This year, she has two — Beatrice Saunders and Willa Gaines.

“I love having them in the classroom,” said Bennet. “We have a great respect for one another, and it's wonderful for the kids to see and experience cooperative teaching and learning.”

“Everyone has something to offer, and from my experience, the volunteers have been such resources,” Bennet added. “They'll take the kids in small group settings, working one-on-one with them through math problems and writing and just a gamut of things. Plus, they go on field trips with us and are great with parents.”

Saunders, in her second year at Barclay, is a retired administrator for the Baltimore City Housing Authority.

“I've been retired for four years, and I became involved with this because I really wanted to give back,” said Saunders. “I'm a people person, and I wanted to do something different with my time.”

Gaines, also in her second year at Barclay, is a retired social worker and minister. Retired for 15 years, she had substituted before learning about Experience Corps.

“There's a dire need to help the young people,” said Gaines. “It's a blessing to be able to inspire them to put forth their very best.”

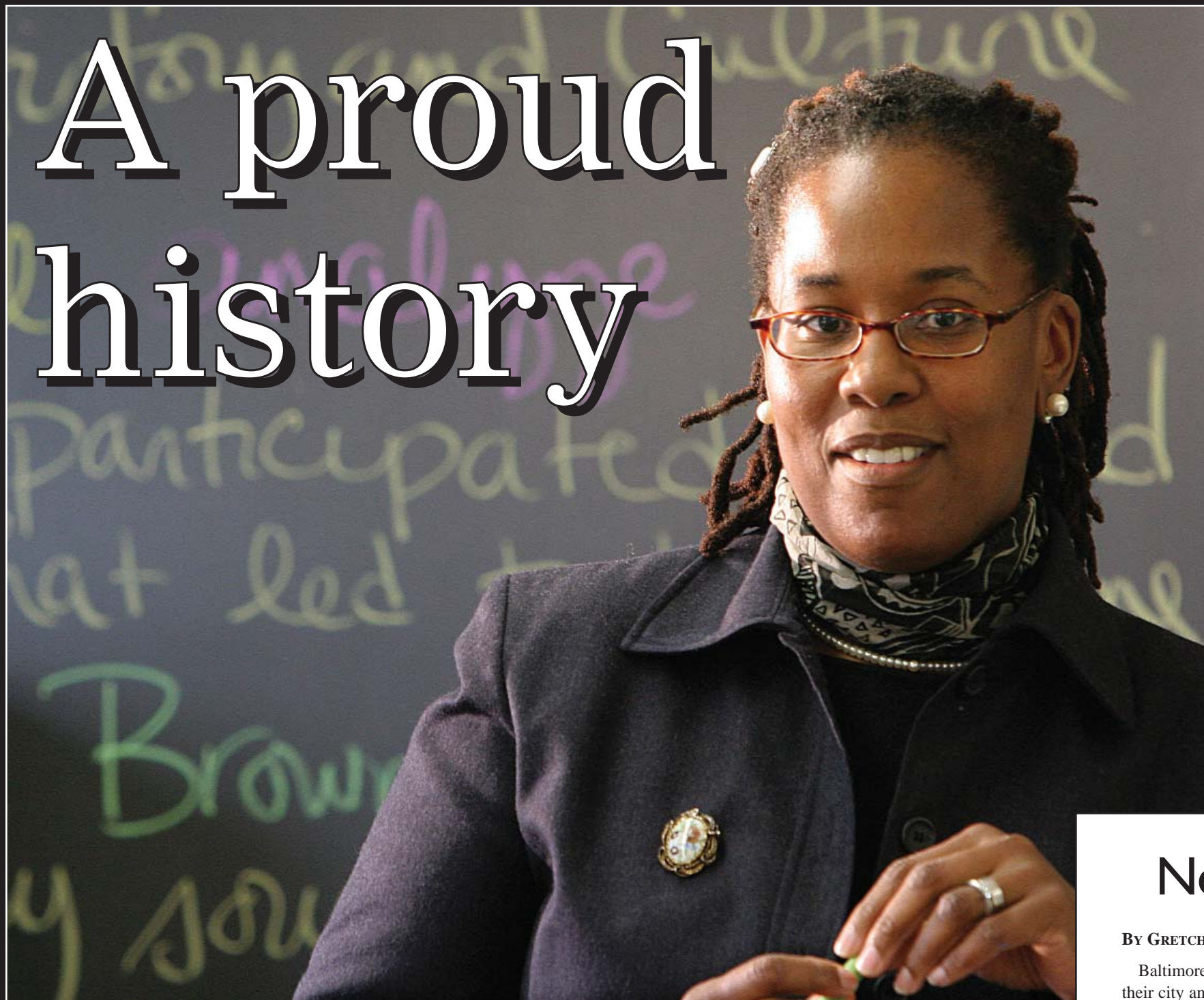
In addition to Baltimore, Experience Corps runs in 20 other cities including Chicago, New York, Boston and Washington, D.C. Baltimore hopes to expand the program by putting volunteers in 30 schools by 2010.

For more information contact Sylvia McGill at 410-261-0021.

Experience Corps volunteer Willa Gaines checks the work of Daynece Jones, right.

PHOTO: REBA SALDANHA





Helen Brown's third-grade class at Hazelwood Elementary dresses as African-American history leaders throughout history.

PHOTOS: REBA SALDANHA

For Black History Month, Helen Brown's third-grade class at the Hazelwood Elementary had to research an influential African-American in history and dress as that person in school. Students from left, Alexander Bazemor as Guion Bluford, Jacquetta Heriot as Ella Fitzgerald, Benga Amo and Victoria Waddell as Nelson and Winnie Mandela and Antonio Casey as Willie Mays.

Left photo: Kay Whitehead.



New African-American curriculum helps students realize cultural pride

BY GRETCHEN WEBER

Baltimore students are experiencing the history of their city and state in a whole new light thanks to an ambitious new African-American history project. The program, made possible by a partnership between the Baltimore City Public School System, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum and area businesses, involves a new 43-lesson curriculum focused on local African-American history and field trips to area museums. Students are able to make connections between the classroom and the outside world.

"With this program, the students learn that people who look like them made incredible contributions to this state. This realization creates a kind of cultural pride that the regular social-studies curriculum does not," said Kaye Whitehead, a Baltimore middle-school teacher and Gilder/Lehrman History Teacher of the Year.

Whitehead was one of the teachers who teamed with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum to pilot the elementary and middle-school African-American curriculum three years ago, and she is currently writing lesson plans for a similar high-school program that will be piloted next year.

This new curriculum makes it possible for teachers

without a background in local African-American history to teach this important piece of Maryland history. Written for grades 4-8, all of the lessons were created by Maryland teachers and align with state assessment standards. In all of the lessons, students practice a variety of academic skills while being exposed to various perspectives in history. Many of the lessons utilize primary source documents, providing students the invaluable experience of reading and viewing history through the eyes of those who lived in earlier times. In addition to readings and photographs, many lessons include audio components, video clips, and activities that target a variety of learning styles.

It was the Reginald F. Lewis Museum that compiled the lessons into a complete curriculum for Maryland's teachers, and the museum continues to actively work to help teachers get the most out of these lessons. In addition to sending out free copies of the curriculum to all Maryland teachers of grades 4-8, the museum also helps teachers implement these lessons by offering professional development workshops.

Tracy Elfiki, the Maryland State Department of Education liaison to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum,

said hundreds of teachers have taken advantage of these training opportunities since the curriculum was made available two years ago.

The second crucial aspect of the program is the field trips, which allow the students to see their history lessons come alive. During the last two school years more than 1,400 students have visited the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, the Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park, and the Great Blacks in Wax Museum.

At Hazelwood Elementary School, third grade students — dressed in costume — presented the lives of African-American leaders throughout U.S. history and pop culture. Choices ranged from current athletes, such as Tiger Woods, to Civil Rights heroes, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.

"It's important for kids to come to school, and not only learn about their culture, but act it out in a positive manner," said Principal Sidney Twiggs.

"As part of our district's implementation of the African-American history curriculum, we embrace opportunities to expand our academic programs beyond the classroom, to create teachable moments that present living history and provide great resources for our students," said BCPSS interim

CEO Dr. Charlene C. Boston.

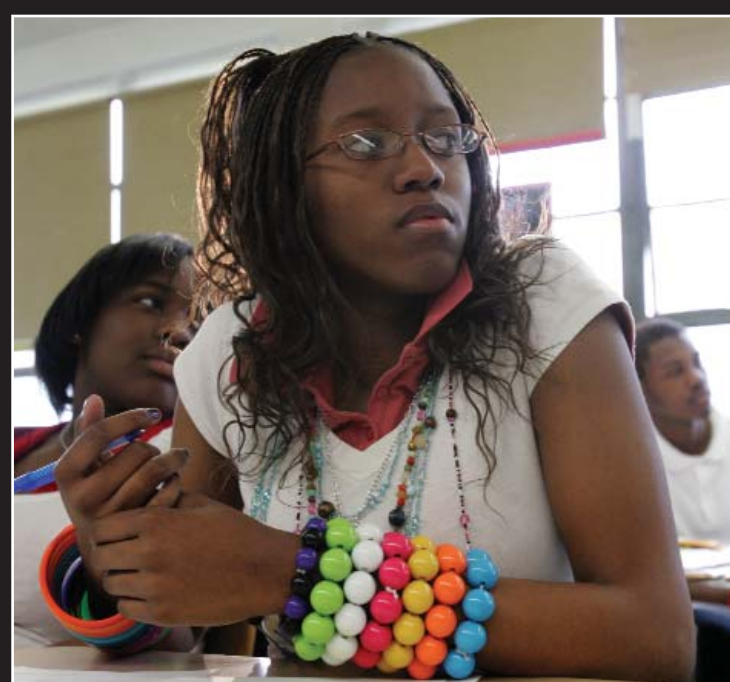
Wendy Gordon of the BCPSS public relations office said each museum offers students a different view into African-American history. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History presents the contributions of Marylanders, while the Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park Museum explores the nautical contributions of African-American mariners to the shipping industry. From the shores of Africa, to the civil-rights movement, to space, the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum is the only one of its kind to exhibit wax figures of African-American history makers.

"These field trips support and enhance the classroom instruction and extend teachable opportunities," Gordon said.

The trips were sponsored by the Pepsi Bottling Company, with the cooperation of WERQ, 92Q Radio. The students received museum admission, guided tours, lunch, transportation and souvenirs. They also enjoyed meeting WERQ personalities who helped welcome them to the museum and participated with them in the follow-up discussions following the tours.



A. Skipp Sanders, deputy state superintendent of instruction, visits with Tamica Constantino during Kay Whitehead's African History course.



Shakia Stokes listens during Kay Whitehead's African History course at West Baltimore Middle School.

Mellifluous melodies

City College High Choir continues to make sweet music

By RICH FAHEY

It is indeed a beautiful noise when as many as 135 voices rise and sing as one. But Linda R. Hall, director of the Baltimore City College High Choir, also finds the sweet sounds of success just as exhilarating.

She is happy for what the choir accomplishes in concerts and competition but also what the choir's alumni go on to accomplish after they leave the school.

For the 167 years that Baltimore City College has stood as the "Castle on the Hill," it has also maintained a legacy of musical excellence. That legacy was celebrated again at a concert on May 12, when the choir was joined by the Alumni Choral Society in the Knight of Music Gala, and on June 9, when the City College choir family will celebrate Hall's 20 years of leadership with the group.

The school's choral program encompasses 200 students in grades 9-12, whose repertoire includes not only the classics of Handel and Praetorius, but the spirituals and works of Dawson, Hogan, Ellington and Smallwood.

The program encompasses several different groups and ensembles. The Mixed Chorus consists of 135 voices from grades 9-12 who are enrolled in chorus classes, and dedicated auxiliary members from within the student body. Its repertoire consists of spirituals, patriotic music, seasonal and gospel literature and it performs at school functions and large-scale performances.

The Concert Choir is an auditioned group of about 50 students who serve as the main performing group. The Singin'/Swingin' Knights Ensemble, consisting of 25 students with advanced levels of music training, performs literature written for small ensembles from the Renaissance period to the present. The Knights and Daze Show Choir performs jazz, pop, and show literature with choreography.

The choir often finds itself taking its show on the road. It recently returned from a trip to Ithaca College for a gospel competition, and a concert performance in Chicago. In 1999, it traveled to Italy, France and Spain. Some choir members journeyed to Italy in April 2003, performed in four cities and competed against 31 international choirs, winning the gold trophy in the sacred music category. Later that same year, the choir returned to Italy to perform at the United Nations' Climate Change Conference. The BCC choir



Baltimore City College High Choir singers, from left, Tashera Robertson, Paige Munroe and Chquitia Brown.

performed six gospel music concerts in Barcelona, Spain in 2006.

The choir has performed on television, radio and stages up and down the Eastern seaboard, at presidential inaugural balls and, in the case of the Singin'/Swingin' Knights, at the White House.

"It broadens the horizons of many of our students," said Hall. "We had some who had never flown or left the country before. They've had to learn how to communicate in another language and adapt to foreign customs."

The travel also allows the students to bond as a group and get to know each other better.

Hall does wish she had a better balance between male and female voices. "We struggle to keep the males which is ironic because this used to be an all-male school," she said.

The choir has recorded four CD's: "Vision for the Millennium," "Living the Vision: The Europe Tour," "A New Vision: Great Things" and "Live in Milan."

Choir is both a class and a co-curricular activity in the BCPSS. "We have many (National) Honor Society students as members," said Hall. "Others are members of the Tri-M Music Honor Society."

At the heart of the group's success is its adherence to Hall's "Seven C's": Commitment, Consistency, Communication, Cooperation, Confidence, Character and Conditioning.



Choral singers Leroy Smith, Thern James and Christian Midder.



Baltimore City College high school choral teacher Linda Hall.

PHOTOS: REBA SALDANHA

Parents hold keys to children's success in Baltimore schools

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

At the heart of every student success story is the helping hand of a parent. In an attempt to bridge the gap between home and school, the BCPSS Office of Parent Involvement and School, Family and Community Connections is actively working to promote the role of parents in their children's education.

"Parent involvement is the backbone and key to establishing long lasting learning for our Baltimore City students," said Luke Dillon, educational specialist for English Language Learner (ELL) families – a new position as of January. "Especially for ELL and recent immigrant families, it's essential to make them aware of expectations for graduating, homework and how they can best access and support the educational system."

Since the start of the year, Dillon has been fully engaged in facilitating a series of citywide workshops for ELL parents, school staff and leaders of community support agencies, presenting information about how ELL parents can become more involved in their children's education, both at home and at school. He has met with principals and teachers to offer ideas about increasing and encouraging ELL parent involvement at their schools. Dillon has also served as a translator for parents at school safety,

budget and CEO selection meetings, as well as school-based family nights and other forums.

This spring, along with members of the Hispanic College Fund, the Office of Parent Involvement is sponsoring citywide information sessions for Hispanic parents, school staff and leaders of community Hispanic support agencies to learn more information about the Hispanic Youth Symposium — a program that will take place this summer. Students can apply for an opportunity to stay at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County for three days and two nights, learn about applying for college and compete for college scholarships.

The office also sponsors free family literacy classes for ELL parents and non-school-age children, as well as parenting information and life skills sessions.

"I truly believe that once we can help our parents establish themselves and become more informed about their responsibilities as parents, our ELL students will also become more successful," said Dillon. "As a federal refugee resettlement site, many of our immigrants come from war-torn areas where their own formal educations were disrupted. Once parents become informed, they have a better understanding of how they can fully support their children."

Main goals of the Office of Parent Involvement

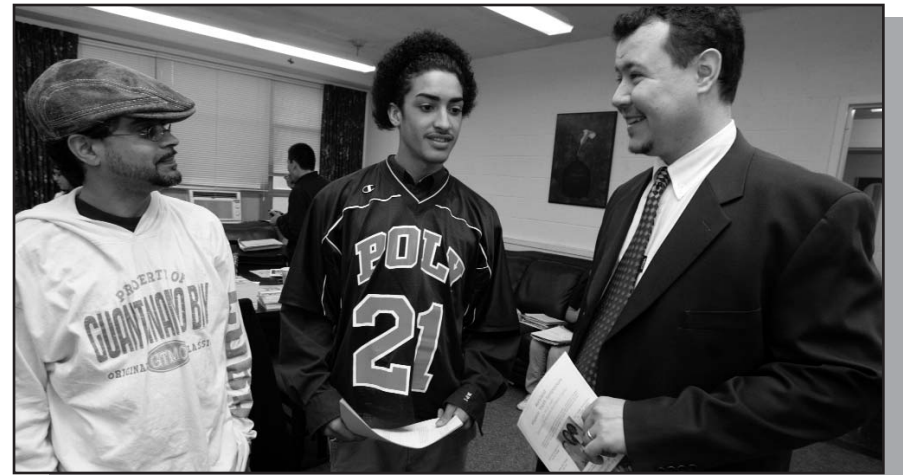
To inform parents about BCPSS School initiatives, parents rights and responsibilities.

To support parents in becoming advocates for their child's education.

To provide information for parents to help support their children's learning both at home and at school, not only during the school year, but all year long.

To identify resources by linking parents and families with support agencies which can help them find housing, jobs, adult literacy/English Language resources and health services.

To help ensure that all parents have the opportunity to become part of the decision making process at their schools.



Above, Luke Dillon of the Parent Involvement Office speaks with student Cristiano Quijano and his father Fernando Quijano during a hispanic youth activities meeting. Below, Tina Barron listens in with son Joseph during the same meeting.



Students help deliver the programming at Education Channel 77

BY JOSEPH BEETS

Baltimore City students are finding a very positive way to "channel" their energies.

The students are becoming involved in every aspect of Education Channel 77 – the BCPSS-operated channel on the Comcast cable system – making programming suggestions, acting as hosts, camera operators, editors and guests.

The channel began broadcasting last November and is now airing several shows a week.

One of the most popular new programs is "Mouth Off," produced in conjunction with Towson University. Two teams from high schools in the Baltimore Urban Debate League go at it for a half-hour in verbal combat on a topic, with judges from the debate league picking a winner at the end. The show is hosted by Marc Clarke of Radio Station 92Q FM.

"We're very excited about it," said Nate Howard, director of broadcast productions for Channel 77. He expects to have between 5-7 shows done before the end of the

school year, and then pick up the series again in the fall.

A recent two-hour special highlighted the "Dancing with Things" dance competition among dance troupes from 15 Baltimore City high schools, which was held at Coppin State in February in conjunction with Black History Month.

Howard said Channel 77 has gone on the road with the BCPSS board of school commissioners to broadcast live meetings at local schools. The first was held at Digital Harbor High, with the

second slated for May 22 at Lake Clifton High.

Channel 77 has also presented a "Parent Connection" special on Phase II of the Facility Solutions plan which has called for the closing of some city schools. Brian D. Morris, chair of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, was also featured in a "Board Talk" special about the search for a permanent CEO.

Students have become integral to everything Channel 77 does. "There are usually at least 4-5 student interns involved in each program,

and that can rise to 10-15 depending on the program," Howard said.

Student filmmakers — Howard calls them "the Stephen Spielbergs of tomorrow" — have also been submitting video profiles of students and other short films that Howard hopes to integrate into the programming.

A weekly schedule of programming on Channel 77 is available at the school website, www.bcps.k12.md.us.

Schools take steps to meet reform goals

BY RICH FAHEY

The Baltimore schools are on schedule to meet or exceed state requirements to eliminate excess capacity, an important cog in the reform process and part of the system's Master Plan for improvement.

Phase II of the Facility Solutions plan has been adopted by the BCPSS Board of School Commissioners. It calls for closing 10 schools over the next three years. By the end of the process in 2009, about 12 million square feet of excess school space will have been taken off the books, 19 school buildings closed and about 15 percent of the city's school capacity eliminated.

A continuing decrease in enrollment is one of the reasons for the consolidation. Enrollment in the BCPSS was once 125,000 students, but this year it is 82,381, and it is expected to continue to decrease to 76,500 by 2011.

The average age of city school buildings is now 38 years, and the state of Maryland is requiring the city to reduce its excess capacity by at least 12 percent before funds will be allocated under a 10-year, \$2.7 billion plan to replace and improve BCPSS facilities.

The state has also asked the city to eliminate its backlog of school capital projects and to implement an aggressive preventive maintenance program, two areas where the BCPSS has made great strides recently, according to Chief Operating Officer J. Keith Scroggins.

The BCPSS has petitioned the state to allow the city to deduct school space dedicated to community use from the total square footage, which would mean some schools slated for closure would stay open.

As with Phase I of the facility closings, the public has been heavily involved in the process.

Among the Phase II highlights:

There were some 700 participants in the process; 30 Planning Area Committee Meetings held from October-December 2006; five Citywide Steering Committee meetings held between September 2006-January 2007; and weekly meetings with Area Academic Officers and facilities staff since October.

Ten schools were recommended and approved for closure in 2007 under the Code of Maryland Regulations. Pimlico Middle School, Thomas G. Hayes Elementary School, Augusta Fells Savage Institute and the Dr. Lillie M. Jackson School are all slated to close this summer. Students from Dunbar High, which is being renovated, will move to the Thomas G. Hayes site, while the Augusta Fells Savage Institute will relocate temporarily to the Harlem Park Middle School facility.

Southeast Middle School and Thurgood Marshall Middle School will close in the summer of 2008, and Lombard, Hamilton, and Canton middle schools will close in the summer of 2009. Lafayette Elementary School will also be closed. Thurgood Marshall will stop admitting sixth- and seventh-graders for next school year; Hamilton will stop admitting sixth-graders.

As part of the move away from the traditional middle school to the K-8 model, 12 new Pre-K-grade 8 schools will add a sixth grade next fall, while 13 schools previously designated K-8 will add seventh grades next fall.

Three public hearings in compliance with COMAR were held in February. The COMAR process considers eight factors in determining which buildings should be closed, including the age and condition of the buildings, the percentage of utilization, and the racial composition of the student body. Schools are then ranked.



Alternative Options student Tacola Reeves works with teacher Dr. Agnes Taguines.

Alternative Options Program helps bring at-risk students back on track

BY CAITLIN BOWLER

In an effort to help more of its struggling students earn high-school diplomas, the Baltimore City Public School System has launched the Alternative Options Program, which targets middle- and high-school students whose educational experience has been interrupted—leaving them over-aged and under-credited.

The program, administered at 10 school-based sites throughout the city, connects students to guidance counselors who develop learning plans that allow each student to fulfill academic requirements and allow for service options that can lead to jobs or college careers after graduation. The program offers flexible scheduling to ensure that students can meet academic and family or work obligations and provides ample access to tutors in all subjects. It also includes access to other services to help students address significant issues that may be affecting their academic performance.

Florence Johnson, director of Extended Learning Programs in the BCPSS, has shepherded the program through its inaugural year and said it is filling a critical need within the Baltimore School System, and the response from students has been impressive.

“There are numbers of kids calling every day and parents calling to get their children in. Other schools are referring students each week,” said Johnson. “Many of these kids are facing tough challenges in their lives and this program is designed to give

them the resources and guidance they need to finish school and prepare themselves for the workplace. This includes tutors, but also social workers, psychologists, and advocates who can work with them to meet all their obligations.”

The program is open to all young adults age 16-24 who have left school for any number of reasons and have realized that they need to return to school in order to successfully enter the world of work or finish requirements in order to pursue post-secondary education. As of April 5, there were 1,224 students enrolled in the program and 164 students had received counseling services.

The 10 Alternative Options Program sites throughout the city all offer similar baseline services—academic programs that help students work towards a high-school diploma through direct instruction and online course work, and access to tutors. However, some of the sites are tailored to meet the needs of students at different academic levels in different life situations.

“Many of these kids are facing tough challenges in their lives and this program is designed to give them the resources and guidance they need to finish school and prepare themselves for the workplace.”

Florence Johnson
Director of Extended Learning Programs

The Career Academy offers programs for students who have met academic standards and who want to focus on workplace training. There are currently 30 students in an apprenticeship program through the Career Academy. In contrast, the Laurence G. Paquin Middle/High School provides alternative programs for expectant and parenting adolescents and, through the Alternative Options Program, has recently been expanded to include young women who are over-aged and under-credited.

The program also offers extra-curricular opportunities at different sites, such as violence-prevention workshops, self-esteem discussions for women, cultural enrichment trips, drawing instruction, and volunteer sessions at the local food bank.

An important component to the program's success has been the partnerships with established organizations in the city, including the Baltimore Urban League, Baltimore City Community College, and the Mayor's Office.

Ultimately, the goal of the Alternative Options Program is straightforward. “We want to get more young people off the streets and back in school,” said Johnson. “We have been decreasing the dropout rate over the past three to four years. We want to continue to impact students and keep them in school.”

For more information, contact the registration center at Dr. Roland Patterson Academy, 5th Floor; 4701 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore, MD, 21215, or call 410-962-1901.

Major renovation projects set to begin

BY RICH FAHEY

A large part of the BCPSS Master Plan has to do with management of facilities. Repairs and improvement to existing schools have become a BCPSS priority in recent years.

Two major renovation projects beginning in Fiscal 2008 will be the Carver Center for the Arts, which is undergoing a two-year, \$28 million makeover, and Dunbar High School, which is undergoing a two-year renovation project worth \$37 million.

Those are the largest in what Chief Operating Officer J. Keith Scroggins says are 51 systemic projects on the board for Fiscal 2008's Capital Improvement Campaign as Baltimore schools have gradually eliminated what was a backlog in the awarding of contracts for needed school improvements.

The BCPSS has already committed \$18 million towards the projects and Scroggins is hopeful of receiving between \$50-55 million from the state in what will be the first budget of Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, the former mayor of Baltimore.

The figures being mentioned at the state level would mark a healthy increase from the \$39 million the state contributed in Fiscal 2007.

"I think the increase would be a sign that we're using state funds efficiently," said Scroggins.

Scroggins said that while some of the spending will be done on schools slated to receive students as part of Phase II of the Facility Solutions plan, the spending is going on city-wide.

"I know there's a perception that we're just spending money on the receiving schools, but that's not the case," said Scroggins.

In Fiscal 2007, there was \$33.8 million spent on the 37 schools receiving students in Phase I of the Facility Solutions plan.

There have been other major improvements to the schools, such as the \$100 million spent on ESCOs, or energy services, including new faucets, lighting, boilers and windows. These improvements have generated huge savings in energy expenditures and maintenance spending in the past 18 months.



Learning environment

Mount Washington Elementary School parents, back row from left, Delilah Randolph, Jill Levin, Monika Springer-Schnell, Rebecca Bainum and Becky Redett pose with their children, from left, Alexis Randolph, Carly Redett, Denise Edwards, Julia Bainum, Eugene Schnell and Anna Levin, at the location of the school's proposed outdoor classroom.



Jordan Vonder Haar, a kindergartner at Mt. Washington Elementary School, demonstrates how pennies are being collected for the school's proposed outdoor classroom.

Mount Washington School plans outdoor classroom

BY CASEY SHEEHAN

In the empty, gravel play lot that sits at the base of the Mount Washington School, parents, teachers and administrators share a vision of creating a haven for outdoor learning.

Replacing the asphalt with grass, plants and trees, and instituting benches, climbing space, a labyrinth and an amphitheater, the Mount Washington community hopes its revitalization efforts will yield not only a more beautiful space, but a more useful one.

The Outdoor Classroom project took root in 2005 when the City of Baltimore deemed the school's old wooden play structure unfit and removed it. Inspired to take action, the Outdoor Classroom committee — a subcommittee of the PTO — formed.

"It started out small," said Outdoor Classroom Committee Chair Becky Redett. "Two years ago, we had a community artist come in to do a project with the children, and when she saw the prospects of the playground, she challenged us to come up with a plan."

Proposing an area to encourage artistic expression, academic instruction, social gatherings and free play, the committee set a goal to raise \$250,000 and complete the project for the 2007-2008 school year.

To date, the committee has raised more than \$157,000. The project has received grant support from the Mayor's Neighborhoods First Capital Grant, the Leidy Foundation, Alex. Brown and Sons Charitable Trust, the Macht Philanthropic Fund, the Mary and Kathleen Harriman Foundation, the Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, the Neighborhood Design Center and Whole Foods Market.

A community appeal has yielded more than \$55,000. At the student level, the committee set a goal to raise \$1,000 by the end of the year through a penny drive. In just the first month, the 300-member student body collected an impressive 49,000 pennies.

"It's important that the kids take part in this and feel a sense of ownership," said Monika Springer Schnell, committee treasurer.

"We got everyone involved, working together to put this together — the parents, staff, community members and students," said Principal Dr. Thomas Shepley.

Project advocates see the Outdoor Classroom as a neighborhood centerpiece and anticipate that community members will be able to take advantage of the 150-person seating area.

Mount Washington, which is also applying for Green School status, will use the Outdoor Classroom as an integral part of everyday learning.

Charting their own courses

Number of Charter Schools in Baltimore City continues to rise

BY RICH FAHEY

The number of charter schools operating under the aegis of the Baltimore City Public School System continues to expand. Pending the completion of contracts, the six new schools that will open this fall join the 16 already operating are:

The Baltimore International Academy, a Grade K-8 language immersion school, is based on the model of the Robert Goddard School in Prince George's County.

The Wolfe Street Academy, a former public school that seeks to serve students who are economically disadvantaged or have limited English-speaking ability, will be operated by the Baltimore Curriculum Project.

Independence Local I will have an innovative curriculum and be operated by the same group operating another charter school (Connexions) in the city. The model is based on the MET School in Providence R.I. that has a demonstrated record of success. The educational program is innovative and small (84 pupils in Year 1, and 112 at capacity).

Dr. Rayner Browne School, an elementary school being converted to a charter school, will be operated by the Baltimore Curriculum Project, which has been associated with the school for several years. It proposes to continue the delivery of special-education services in the current manner, using BCPSS staff and resources.

The Bluford Drew Jemison school, targeting math, science, and technology in the middle-school grades, will concentrate on African-American males; the

school building would be open from 7 a.m. -7 p.m. and on Saturdays to offer enrichment activities and remedial courses to students.

Coppin Academy, operated by Coppin State University, is currently an Innovation high school, and is converting to charter status. The academy is a college-prep high school and located on a college campus. The school currently serves grades 9 and 10, will add grade 11 next year. It will keep expanding until it serves all four grades with about 100 students per grade.

Laura Weeldreyer, interim director of new, charter and innovative schools, said the operators of the six new schools have been negotiating three-year contracts with the BCPSS Board of School Commissioners.

Charter schools are public schools open to all students and staff. The major difference from other schools is that they operate with greater flexibility when it comes to issues such as curriculum, finances, school hours and staffing. Each school must meet the state minimum of 180 days of school a year.

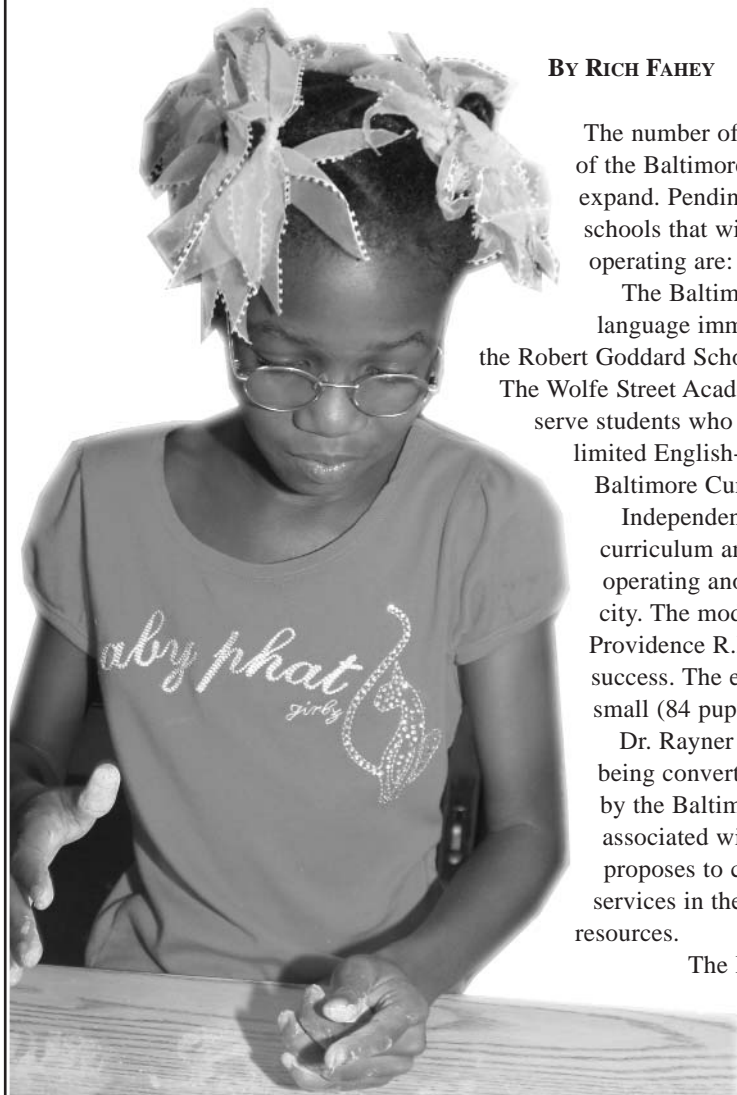
Funding for charter schools is allocated on a per-pupil basis set by state law. That law is currently the subject of litigation.

Weeldreyer said her office realizes it takes any new school time to work out the kinks and get on its feet. At the end of the year, a report on each school is made to the school board, including data on test scores, enrollment, suspensions, etc.

An annual on-site review team from the BCPSS and other external experts meet with parents, students, and teachers to review progress.

"When we're reviewing a school with a certain type of curriculum, we try and find an expert in that curriculum to be part of the review," said Weeldreyer.

The board can also take action against a school before the end of a contract if students' health or safety is threatened or the operators are guilty of neglect. "At the end of the contract, the decision to renew or not is up to the board," said Weeldreyer.



City Neighbors Charter School student Jamera Givens works on an art project.

100 percent of Western High School Class of 2006 accepted to 4-year colleges

WESTERN: from Page 1

a 100 percent college acceptance rate at four-year schools. Western also had the highest percentage of students to actually attend four-year schools.

The only single-sex school in the BCPSS has a population of 830 students, drawn from neighborhoods throughout the city and a group that is racially, ethnically and socio-economically diverse.

Matthews thinks young women tend to thrive in an atmosphere where, everywhere they turn, there are people just like them in positions of leadership and responsibility.

They had a chance to see that possibility up close recently when the 100-strong voices in the school choir performed at the inauguration ceremonies for new Mayor Sheila Dixon.

"One advantage is they're not competing with the boys for everything," said Matthews. "Here they are the end-all and be-all of everything. This is an atmosphere where the girls stand on their own."

"In an all-girls environment, you can focus," said student Ashley Fitzgerald. "There are no distractions. You feel more comfortable."

One change Western is making is to adopt a uniform policy for the next school year.

"Even though the students aren't competing for boys, we have to compete with the fashion magazines when it comes time to dress for school," said Matthews. "We're hoping the uniforms give students some guidance on how to dress when it comes to the workplace."

Students who apply to Western are evaluated on a number of factors, including standardized test scores, grades, attendance records, etc. Other students may come to the school from private or parochial schools. Matthews said the school has seen an influx of Muslim students, since some Muslims favor single-sex schools.

"We try to look at the whole child when making a decision," she said.

A liberal-arts, college-preparatory

school, Western offers two academic programs: accelerated college preparatory and honors college preparatory. The accelerated college preparatory program not only provides students an opportunity to cover four years of high school in grades 9-11, but also enables them to pursue advanced placement or college-level work. The program was organized in 1933 in cooperation with Goucher College.

The school also sponsors more than 40 clubs, organizations and athletic teams.

Matthews has been at Western since 1981; this is her first year as principal. She said a veteran and seasoned faculty is another reason for the school's continued success, as are the alumnae who serve as role models and return for Unity Day.

Western graduates of today can follow in the footsteps of Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah; Judge Sarah Tilghman Hughes, who swore in Lyndon B. Johnson as president; and award-winning actors Mildred Dummock, Trazana Beverly, and Anna Deavere Smith.



Ines Gouri of Western High School participates in a class discussion.

AROUND

Baltimore City

SCHOOLS

Early Childhood, Elementary/ K8

Abbottston Elementary

Ashley Dobson has been selected as a 2007 Carson Scholar. She will receive a \$1,000 scholarship award that will be invested for her college education, a medal and a certificate. Also, to honor her accomplishment, Abbottston will receive a trophy to proudly display.

Ashley is one of 2,800 students from across the country to be named a Carson Scholar. Their academic achievements and service to their communities are what makes them stand out as the future leaders of tomorrow.

A committee of teachers volunteered to implement six additional after-school clubs, including sports, culture dance, Hip-Hop dance, chess, Abbottston Book Club, and art and garden.

Brehms Lane Elementary School

Kevin Clash, the puppeteer behind Sesame Street's "Elmo," delivered the keynote address to Brehms Lane students during two school-wide Career Day assemblies on April 26. A Baltimore native who grew up in Turner's Station, Clash is an accomplished puppeteer whose characters also include "Clifford the Big Red Dog," and "Hoots the Owl."

Dr. Rayner Browne Elementary

Students competed in the Maryland Scholastic Team Chess Championships on March 3, emerging as Varsity Primary State Champions. They defeated the defending state champs from Montgomery County.

Cross Country Elementary/Middle

The school's chess team -- a first year team, composed of novice players -- were JV Primary Champions of the Maryland Scholastic Team Chess Championships. Third-grader Chris Johnson won an individual plaque as the top board one player in the primary JV division. Fourth-grader Devon Campbell was awarded a plaque for top board one player in the elementary JV division.

Curtis Bay Elementary

The U.S. Coast Guard members at Hawkins Point in Baltimore have come to the rescue of the students, parents, and staff of Curtis Bay Elementary School. This partnership, under the leadership of Coast Guard Cap. Paul Roden, Partner in Education (PIE) coordinator Dave Parker, and Civil Rights Officer Gloria Townes, provides tutors and mentors to work with 378 students in grades pre-K-5. The 30 Coast Guard volunteers are given hours during the school day to tutor students. Their support enables our students to improve test scores. The Coast Guard

personnel also serve as mentors to students who have absent parents, have anger management issues, or are dealing with grief due to the loss of a loved one.

These brave men and women who protect our country have giving hearts as well. They observed during their many visits to our school that many of our students arrived without the proper attire to endure a long walk to school. As a result, the Coast Guard personnel decided to provide every student who was in need a new coat, gloves, scarf and hat.

Falstaff Elementary

Under the direction of principal Dr. Faith Hibbert, Falstaff School promotes a vibrant teaching and learning community for all students and staff. The school is proud to offer the following activities and programs: Dance Club, Chess Club, School Choir and Art Club.

The school has also been involved in many projects that help other children. Students participated in the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital project for two consecutive years, collected more than \$300. They also participated in the Harvest for the Hungry for the State of Maryland. Students collected more than 20 bags of non-perishable items for needy families.

Hampstead Hill Elementary/Middle

Hampstead's chess team claimed a victory as a K-8 school in the middle school division of the state chess championships. The team was awarded JV Middle State Champions.

Alexander Hamilton Elementary

Fourth-grader Cameron Rose, whose picture appeared on the front page of the first edition of The Baltimore City Educator, fifth-grader Donche Golder (Alexander Hamilton's Carson Scholar for 2007), and fourth-grader Rose Jackson came in 10th place in the Intermediate division of the State Chess Championship at Towson University.

Harrison Larkins, a third-grader, is a hero. While shopping at the Ellicott City Walmart on March 17, Harrison's mom was feeling dizzy. By the time she got to the car, she passed out at the wheel. Harrison quickly called 911 and calmly reported that his mom had passed out at the wheel of the car. He indicated that she was probably slipping into a diabetic coma. He gave not only the location of the incident, but the row and aisle where the car was parked. He also stood outside the car and waved the ambulance and police to the car. The dispatcher, police, and ambulance driver said that Harrison remained calm and gave all the pertinent information. He also took out his mom's identification and was able to tell the emergency-room staff what medicine she takes. Harrison also knows how to administer his mom's insulin.

Hazelwood Elementary

A mock election was held by the middle school where the president of the city's Election Commission, Armstead Jones, was invited. For Uniform Day, sponsored by Foreman Mills, every student received three free uniforms. Students wrote original poems for Black History Month. More than 75 students attended the Stanford 10 Saturday program for grades 1-2.

Sinclair Lane Elementary

Sinclair Lane Elementary School will hold its third annual Spring Fair on June 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Family, friends, community, students and teachers will celebrate the learning that has taken place throughout the school year.

Northwood Elementary

Northwood Elementary School's motto is "We are Fierce about Learning." The goal is to educate the whole child, form positive partnerships, and involve parents and the community in the education of the students. Staff members provide students with opportunities to grow physically and mentally. Challenges are opportunities for students and staff members to stretch their minds to find solutions that will allow the school to move forward to reach our goals.

Pimlico Elementary

Pimlico School strives to provide a learning environment that is engaging, safe and conducive to learning. Partners include the Baltimore City Fire Dept. Engine Company #29, B-Spirit after-school program, General Motors, Pimlico Racetrack, the women of Grace Presbyterian Church, Sinai Hospital and Social Security Administration.

Students were citywide champions at the Baltimore Kids Chess League tournament, held on March 24.

Windsor Hills Elementary

On March 30, Windsor Hills students Myesha Burden, De'aja Moody, Talia Randal, Kierra Peete, Diarra Mitchell, Bryanna Barbour and Raqwell Manning were invited to a special reception at the Baltimore Public Works Museum. The students, along with library/media specialist Cindy Marcoline, were recognized for their essays about their dream for Baltimore, along with artwork that illustrated their ideas. The school was invited to participate in this activity sponsored by the Mayor's Office.

Middle School

William H. Lemmel Middle

William H. Lemmel Middle School has launched its second year of the systemic Gifted and Talented Education Program with great success. Throughout the course of this school year, students in the

G.A.T.E. Program have partnered with the Walter's Art Museum in Baltimore to conduct artifact analysis and hands-on lessons and field experiences; engaged in interactive labs with the Traveling Science Center; conducted primary-source research at the Maryland Historical Society; and researched African-American history and heritage at the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Special Collections Department.

Students had the opportunity to be the only Baltimore City middle school present at the BCPSS press conference to kick off Black History Month in the city. The press conference was held at the new Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Museum. Eighth-grade student Kevin Gillespie gave a speech on African-American history and how it is presented in the school.

Eighth-grade students participated in the 2007 Maryland Future City Competition at the Maryland Museum of Industry. For the first time since the competition was established, William H. Lemmel brought home several top honors including second place in the overall competition and the People's Choice Award.

Roland Park Middle

It's spring, and things are blooming at Roland Park. The school completed its first International Week, featuring songs, dance, food, speakers, and costumes from around the world. The annual May Mart will be held on May 12. It is a day of food, games, crafts and fun. Alumni Day is May 17. To stay posted on what's coming up at Roland Park, please visit the school's new Web site at www.rolandparkpublic.org.

High Schools/ Special Programs

William S. Baer School

The Baer School was founded in 1933 for students with polio. Through the years, the Baer School has seen many significant changes in its population. The children have become increasingly more dependent on medical technology, more medically fragile and economically deprived. The school continues to provide quality services to children from throughout Baltimore with multiple disabilities. The children are enrolled as young as three and our older students "age-out" or graduate at age 21.

Students with exceptional needs receive special-education services, occupational and physical therapy, speech, vision, adapted physical education as well as art and aquatic therapy. An emphasis is placed on physical therapy and the M.O.V.E. (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) Program. The Baer School serves as an international M.O.V.E. site. Additionally, medical support is provided to meet the needs of the children.

The school has been chosen by the Paint and Powder Club to be a recipient of the proceeds from the club's annual theatrical production. The Paint and Powder Club is an organization that has been helping worthy causes and schools around the region for almost 115 years. Baer School and the Maryland Conservatory of Music will share the proceeds -- expected to amount to more than \$50,000 -- from the club's three-day original theatrical production, "Mustang Margie," May 3-5.

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute announced its powerful vision statement: To Create the Next Generation of World Leaders. Since 1883, Poly has been the one of the leading learning institutions in Maryland. In addition to exciting new offerings including forensics, genetics, anatomy and physiology, Poly's engineering department opened the first phase of what the school is calling the "Poly Labs." These labs, which are similar in nature to the intensity and creativity of the famed Bell Labs, are places where there is an expectation that new things will be created. One of the labs is the ROBART Lab (a combination of robotics and art). The hope is that the technology will push the art and the art will push the technology.

Reginald F. Lewis High

The Baltimore Citywide Dance Symposium was held on at Coppin State University. The Reginald F. Lewis High School Modern Dance Team captured the audience and judges with their upbeat performance to excerpts from the hit movie "Drum Line." They were rewarded with a trophy for best costume that showed off school colors of black and silver.

The Reginald F. Lewis High School of Business and Law Chess Team competed in the Maryland Scholastic Team Championship at Towson University. In spite of being ranked last in their division, and this being the first tournament in which they participated, the team placed fifth in the high school junior varsity section. The winning team members are: Gregory Burley, Nathaniel Wright, Jameel Wilson and David Dillard. The team received a trophy for their efforts.

Jasmine Vaughn is the recipient of a Ben Carson Scholarship. She is in the 10th grade and president of the Class of 2009.

Liberal Arts Academy

The Liberal Arts Academy has a focus on credit recovery and acceleration. The school has a population of over-age students with minimum credits and the majority of these students have progressed to grade level and graduation. This is achieved through focus on small classrooms, individualized instruction and a strong mentoring component.

BALTIMORE CITY DIRECTORY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Carver Vocational Technical High - 454

Michael Frederick, Principal
2201 W. Presstman St., Baltimore 21216
410-396-0553

Central Career Academy at Briscoe - 451

Paulette Burgess, Principal
900 Druid Hill Ave., Baltimore 21201
410-396-0771

Claremont School - 307

Dr. John Butt, Principal
5301 Erdman Ave., Baltimore 21205
410-545-3380

Coppin Academy - 432

William Howard, Principal
2500 W. North Ave., Baltimore 21216
410-951-2600

Digital Harbor High School - 416

Brian Eyer, Principal
1100 Covington St., Baltimore 21230
443-984-1256

Frederick Douglass High - 450

Darine Lyles, Principal
2301 Gwynns Falls Pkwy., Baltimore
21217
410-396-7823

Dr. W.E.B. Dubois Senior High - 418

Delores Berry, Principal
2201 Pinewood Ave., Baltimore 21214
410-396-6435

Paul Laurence Dunbar High - 414

Roger Shaw, Principal
1400 Orleans St., Baltimore 21231
410-396-9478

Eager Street Academy - 370

Dr. James Scofield, Principal
401 East Eager St., Baltimore 21202
410-209-4091

Edmondson-Westside High - 400

Delphine Lee, Principal
501 Athol Ave., Baltimore 21229
410-396-0685

Entrepreneurial Academy - 435

Rose Bacus-Hamm, Principal
2000 Edgewood St., Baltimore 21216
443-984-3330

Forest Park Senior High - 406

Loretta Breese, Principal
3701 Eldorado Ave., Baltimore 21207
410-396-0753

Harbor City Learning Center - 413

Magdalen Reymont, Principal
2555 Harford Rd., Baltimore 21218
410-396-1513

Harbor City High - 413a

Magdalen Reymont, Principal
2555 Harford Rd., Baltimore 21213
410-396-6241

Heritage High - 425

Karen Lawrence, Principal
2801 St. Lo Drive., Baltimore 21213
410-396-6637

Homeland Security Academy - 434

Selma Curry, Principal
2000 Edgewood St., Baltimore 21216
443-984-3327

Independence School - 420a

Helen Atkinson, Principal
101 S. Caroline St., Baltimore 21231
410-467-1090

Doris M. Johnson - 426

Tricia Rock, Principal
2801 Saint Lo Drive, Baltimore 21213
410-396-6643

Learning Co-Op - 284

Judy Friedman, Principal
1234 W. 36th St., Baltimore 21211
410-662-8049

Liberal Arts Academy - 436

LaMarge Wyatt, Principal
2000 Edgewood St., Baltimore 21216
410-396-0723

Reginald F. Lewis High - 419

Jean Ragin, Principal
6401 Pioneer Drive., Baltimore 21214
410-545-1783

Maryland Academy for Technology & Math - 331

Rebekkah Gaish, Principal
4701 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore 21209
410-545-0955

Maritime Industries Academy - 431

Marco Clark, Principal
790 W. North Avenue, Baltimore 21217
410-396-0242

Thurgood Marshall High - 424

Russell Williams, Principal
5000 Truesdale Ave., Baltimore 21206
410-396-5938

Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High - 410

Eugene Leak, Acting Principal
3500 Hillen Rd., Baltimore 21218
410-396-6496

National Academy Foundation - 421

Ron Carey, Principal
1100 Covington St., Baltimore 21230
443-984-1594

New Era Academy - 422

John Davis, Principal
2700 Seamon Ave., Baltimore 21225
443-984-2415

Northwestern High - 401

Taja Gross, Principal
6900 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore 21215
410-396-0646

Patterson High - 405

Laura D'Anna, Principal
100 Kane St., Baltimore 21224
410-396-9276

Renaissance Academy - 433

Karl Perry, Principal
1301 McCulloh St., Baltimore 21223
443-984-3164

Southside Academy - 181

Denise Gordon, Principal
2700 Seamon Ave., Baltimore 21225
410-545-3528

Southwestern High - 412

Cecilia McQuaid, Principal
200 Font Hill Ave., Baltimore 21223
410-396-1422

Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy - 429

Dr. Starletta Jackson, Principal
100 N. Calhoun St., Baltimore 21223
443-984-2832

Upton School - 303

Gloria Robinson, Principal
6900 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore 21215
410-396-0775

Western Senior High - 407

Eleanor Matthews, Principal
4600 Falls Rd., Baltimore 21209
410-396-7040

Francis M. Woods Alternative High - 178

Angela Seaton, Principal
1001 W. Saratoga St., Baltimore 21223
410-396-1290

Woodbourne Center - 372

Sandra Howard Simmons, Principal
900 Druid Hill Ave., Baltimore 21201
410-962-7110

2007-2008 SCHOOL-YEAR CALENDAR

AUGUST

6-17 New Teacher's Summer Institute
13 Administrator's return to work
14 CEO's Academy
15-17 Area Administrators meetings
20-21 New Hires (Teachers) School-based orientation
22 Teachers and 10-Month employees report to work
22-24 Whole-day systemic professional development
27 Opening Day for Students

SEPTEMBER

3 Holiday-Labor Day (Schools and offices closed)
11 Primary Election-Schools closed for students and teachers
28 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students

OCTOBER

5 Progress Reports issued to parents
18 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students
19 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students
19 QUEST Conference

NOVEMBER

2 End of 1st Quarter
5 Beginning of 2nd Quarter
6 General Election-Schools closed for students and teachers
9-16 First quarter reports issued
12-16 American Education Week

16 Early release day-Parent Conferences/Records Management
17 High School Fair
22-23 Holiday-Thanksgiving (Schools and offices closed)

DECEMBER

14 Progress Reports issued to parents
24-31 Winter Break

JANUARY

1 Winter Break
2 Return to School /Work
15-17 High school exams
15-17 Early release days for high schools only (exams)
18 Early release day-Parent Conferences/Records Management
18 End of 2nd Quarter/End of 1st Semester
21 Holiday-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (Schools and offices closed)
22 Beginning of 3rd Quarter
24-30 2nd Quarter/1st Semester Report Cards issued
31 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students

FEBRUARY

1 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students
18 Holiday-President's Day-Schools and offices closed
23 Presidential primary election-Schools closed for students
29 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students

MARCH

20 Whole-day systemic professional development-Schools closed for students
21-28 Spring Break
31 Return to School/Work
31 Progress Reports Issued

APRIL

8 End of 3rd Quarter
9 Beginning of 4th Quarter
18 Early release day-Parent Conferences/Records Management

MAY

14 Progress Reports issued to parents
20-22 Final exams for seniors
23 Grades closed for seniors
26 Holiday-Memorial Day observed (Schools and offices closed)
30-31 High school graduations

JUNE

1-2 High school graduations
3-5 Final exams for high schools
3-5 Early release days for high schools only (final exams)
6 Closing exercises for elementary schools
9-11 Closing exercises for middle schools
9-11 Early release days-Parent Conferences/Records Management
12 Unless there are no weather-related closings, last day for students and teachers



We're No. 1 (6 times over)



George Washington Elementary School Principal Susan Burgess, left, and teacher Raquel James pose with students.

George Washington School attains Blue Ribbon status

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

Walking through the halls of George Washington Elementary School, the shocking pink and green walls, guided by a palette of post-it note hues, may capture some attention.

But of all the colors, traditional blue has taken on a new significance this year, as the school celebrates its Blue Ribbon status.

The school was one of six statewide to be named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, making it the sixth city school ever to receive the honor.

"We are proud to celebrate this enormous accomplishment," said Dr. Charlene C. Boston, interim CEO of the Baltimore City Public School System. "The principals, teachers, students and staff understand that the pursuit of academic excellence is not defined by race, gender or class; rather, it is defined by a commitment to quality instruction and a learning environment that supports the development of the whole child."

The Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes and honors schools that exhibit high performance and significant improvement in reading and mathematics, as measured by Maryland's assessments. The 2006 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) data shows that more than 90 percent of all George Washington Elementary students scored at the proficient/advanced level in reading and mathematics. On the Stanford 10, students in grades 1 and 2 scored above the national percentile in reading and mathematics.

"When I came here four years ago, the test

scores were okay, but I thought, 'we can do better,'" said Burgess. "We started with basic things, like teaching kids how to fill in the bubbles, just to give them practice taking tests. Then we want on to tackle multiple choice and how to eliminate answers based on what you already know. We worked through practice books and the teachers have learned how to think out loud, modeling for the kids."

Burgess credits the stability, dedication and hard work of the staff in propelling the school toward success.

"We have low teacher turnover here and a good mix of newer and more experienced teachers," said Burgess. "I think of this school as a family, and everyone knows we're all here for the children."

The school is in its first year as a Community School, joining 27 others in

Baltimore City. As such, it supports academic achievement by supplementing teaching and learning with educational, youth development and family/community building activities; creating shared ownership between the school and the community; and maximizing the use of the facility through extended hours and calendar.

"We spend a lot of time, not only on academics, but on social skills," said Burgess.

This year, the school formed a Boys Group, teaching young male students about respect and coping with problems in a non-aggressive manner. It is also a site of BOOST: Baltimore's Out of School Time Initiative, a citywide public/private venture launched in 2004. BOOST is designed to make the out-of-school hours safe, enriching and educationally inspiring for all children. Community partnerships, such as with the

University of Maryland School of Dentistry, the Pigtown Community Association and the neighboring St. Jerome's Catholic Church, have further enriched student opportunities. Increased parental involvement through the Parent Teacher Association, formed in 2003, has also been key to the academic and social success of the students.

In addition to being named a Blue Ribbon School, George Washington Elementary was also named a National Title I Distinguished School in recognition of student achievement on the Stanford 10 and MSA tests. George Washington and fellow Baltimore City school, Graceland Park O'Donnell Heights, were the only Maryland schools to be honored this year. They are two of only 64 schools nationwide to receive the Blue Ribbon distinction.

In January, Burgess attended the National Title 1 School conference in Long Beach, Ca. Burgess was also invited to a State dinner in Annapolis, in March, where she was recognized for the school's Blue Ribbon status. In February, the school celebrated with their own ceremony, run entirely by the students.

George Washington Elementary will go on to compete for National Blue Ribbon Awards, which will be announced by the U.S. Department of Education in September.

Past city schools designated as Maryland or National Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence are as follows: Baltimore City College, #480; Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, #403; Bentalou Elementary, #150; Patapsco Elementary, #163; and Roland Park Elementary-Middle, #233.



George Washington Elementary School students, from left, Kiara Armstrong and Berdella Gladden work together during a math lesson.

SPORTS

THE BALTIMORE CITY EDUCATOR

FOOTBALL SQUADS MAKE A STATEMENT

Dunbar and Edmondson credit new stadium for success in Maryland state playoffs

By RICH FAHEY

It didn't make a tackle or score a touchdown. But that doesn't mean the Lumsden-Scott Stadium on the campuses of Baltimore Polytechnic and Western High Schools didn't play a major role in the success of city high schools in the Maryland state football playoffs.

Perennial power Dunbar High School won the Class 1A championship, beating Fort Hill 38-23 at M&T Bank Stadium, home of the Baltimore Ravens. Edmondson won the Class 2A championship the same day, beating McDonough of Pomfret, 37-9, also at M&T Bank Stadium. Baltimore City College High also had a great season, going 11-0 before losing to Franklin High of Reisterstown, 7-6, in the playoffs.

"I think the new stadium had a tremendous effect on the student-athletes," said Bob Wade, director of athletics for the Baltimore City Public School System. "It gave them a sense of identity."

The Baltimore Ravens, the NFL and Baltimore-area donors

contributed the \$1.26 million it cost to make the improvements to the stadium, which included Sportex field turf (the same as M&T Bank Stadium), new lighting, and renovated public restrooms, locker rooms, bleachers and press box.

Dunbar has been no stranger to football success since the Baltimore schools joined the state athletic association in 1993. The school has won four state championships and represented the city in the playoffs more than any other school. Having another school join them on the awards stand was a milestone, according to Wade, who said Edmondson matured during the season and "represented the city with a great deal of pride."

Wade said Edmondson players said playing on the same kind of turf they played on during the season was an advantage when it came to playing the Class 2A final at M&T Bank Stadium.

Wade praised the Ravens for their continued support of the city's football program. The past two seasons, every city team

has worn uniforms and helmets purchased by the team.

The effort to give every one of the city's 18 schools the Friday Night Lights experience last fall was a huge success, he said. Each school had the chance to play at least two games in the new stadium, at least one of them a night game.

Some city teams had previously played night doubleheaders on the campus of Morgan State University, but the games proved prohibitively expensive because of the cost of staffing the stadium.

Schools that play in Lumsden-Scott Stadium also have a chance to aid their athletic programs by manning the stadium's concession stands when their team plays. The city provides the equipment and a recommended menu. The schools buy the supplies and keep all the proceeds from the sales.

"We've had great feedback on the stadium from parents, fans and school alumni," said Wade.

Next fall, all of the city's schools will again get a chance to play at Lumsden-Scott.



Dunbar High School beat Fort Hill to capture the Maryland Class 1A championship.