



CollabNews

Volume 10, Number 11

December 2007

Welcome to the December issue of *CollabNews*!

CollabNews is a monthly electronic newsletter for members and associates of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, a network of special and general education leaders from the nation's urban school districts.

FEATURES THIS MONTH:

- **Member Update:** Welcome New Member District, Spring 2008 Meeting Keynote Speaker Announcement, Web Board Addition
- **Events:** *Inclusive Schools Week* Success!
- **Resources:** A Look at Graduation Policies, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Researches the Issue of Minorities in Special Education
- **Website of the Month:** The Nation's Report Card
- **Collaborative Help Desk**

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO OTHERS

1. MEMBER UPDATE

Welcome New Member District

The Collaborative is pleased to welcome our newest member, Durham Public Schools.

Durham Public School District is located in Durham, NC, and has a total enrollment of over 40,000 students. Our Member contact is Terri Mazingo, Chief Academic Officer. Please visit www.dpsnc.net for more information.

Complete contact information for all member districts is available on the Collaborative Web site: <http://www.urbancollaborative.org> (log into the members only section to access this online database).

Spring 2008 Meeting Announcement
"Responding to Childhood Trauma: Lessons Learned"
May 14-17, 2008
Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

Update on Spring Member Meeting in New Orleans – Two leading experts to speak

The Spring 2008 Member Meeting is scheduled for May 14-17 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel on famous Bourbon Street. The topic, "Responding to Childhood Trauma: Lessons Learned" is generating a great deal of interest and we expect a higher than normal turnout. To help our members understand the impact and implications of childhood trauma on education in urban school districts we are pleased to announce that Dr. Robert F. Anda and Dr. Carl C. Bell, two leading researchers and experts in the field, will speak on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning of this May's meeting and will serve as discussion leaders as well.



Robert F. Anda, M.D., MS, has designed and conducted epidemiologic studies for more than 20 years. He was Co-Principal Investigator for the ACE Study; perhaps the largest scientific study of its kind, analyzing the relationship between multiple categories of childhood trauma and health and behavioral outcomes later in life. He has written more than 100 peer-reviewed and government publications, as well as several book chapters. He is currently a senior researcher at the Center for Disease Control (CDC). As a result of his research findings he has had several appearances on CNN News, The National Press Club, and provided information for national newspapers such as USA Today, as well as local and national radio.



Carl C. Bell, M.D., F.A.P.A., C.C.H.P., F.A.C. Psych. has practiced psychiatry for 35 years. He is internationally recognized lecturer and author; he has given numerous presentations on mental wellness, violence prevention, and traumatic stress caused by violence. He is the author of *The Sanity of Survival: Reflections on Community Mental Health and Wellness* and co-author of *Suicide and Homicide Among Adolescents*. Dr. Bell is also a clinical professor of psychiatry and public health in the School of Medicine at the University of Illinois. He has addressed mental wellness and violence prevention issues on the Today Show, Nightline, 60 Minutes, CBS Sunday Morning and Frontline; and his campaign to prevent Black on Black violence has been featured in several publications including Ebony, Jet, Essence, Emerge, the New York Times, Chicago Tribune Magazine, and People Magazine. In recognition of his efforts to reduce violence, he became the first recipient of the American Psychiatric Foundation's Minority Service Award in 2004. He is also the recipient of the American Psychiatric Association's Presidential Award.

For more information on our Spring 2008 Member meeting, please log into the Collaborative website at: www.urbancollaborative.com.

Receive Assistance with our Member Exchange

We have created a "Members Seeking Assistance" topic on our new Member Exchange. Member Exchange provides a place for our members to communicate with each other regarding a wide range of issues and to seek assistance from colleagues. Dennis Matthews from the Educational Service District 112 in Vancouver, Washington has requested some assistance in locating some Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery materials. Dennis posted his specific request on the Member Exchange. Please see if you can help. Log into the Collaborative's Website at www.urbancollaborative.org and click on Member Exchange on the left.

2. EVENTS

Schools Around the World Celebrate the 7th Annual *Inclusive Schools Week*

Schools and communities across the US and around the world participated in the 7th annual *Inclusive Schools Week* celebrated December 2-7, 2007. The *Week* was a great success thanks to the hundreds of school districts, including many Collaborative member districts, and organizations who took the time to plan events and activities to highlight inclusive education.

To mark the occasion, there were official *Inclusive Schools Week* proclamations from the state governments of Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey. The cities of Boston, MA; Newark, NJ; Montclair, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; and Roswell, GA, also issued proclamations. The White House acknowledged *ISW* in a supportive message from President George W. Bush.

In 2008 the Collaborative and the Education Development Center, Inc. plan to expand *Inclusive Schools Week* from an annual event to an international sustainable initiative—the *Inclusive Schools Network*. Information about this new network will be featured in future editions of CollabNews.

Inclusive Schools Week is sponsored by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative and Education Development Center, Inc. For additional information and resources about inclusive schools, visit www.inclusiveschools.org.

3. RESOURCES

A Look at Graduation Policies for Students with Disabilities Across the Nation

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has conducted four studies on state graduation policies for students with disabilities. A synthesis of the results of the 2007 study is available online. This brief report also compares the results to the previous NCEO studies. Results are described in the areas of graduation requirements for youth with and without disabilities, diploma options available, state use of exit exams and consequences of graduation requirements and diploma options. Trends and recommendations in light of the survey findings and trends are given. The six page document can be obtained at: <http://projectforum.org/>

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Researches the Issue of Minorities in Special Education

There is arguably no single issue in special education seemingly as intractable as the overrepresentation of minorities in special education programs. [The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#) has assembled a panel of experts to discuss whether minorities are frequently misplaced into special education programs. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a bipartisan, independent, federal commission charged with the responsibility for investigating, reporting on, and making recommendations concerning, the civil rights issues that face the nation. Some of the reasons for the disproportional representation to be explored by the Commission's panel of experts include: poor reading skills, limited English proficiency, perverse financial incentives, poor teacher training and instruction, disparate treatment, and the achievement gap. The panel held a hearing on December 3, 2007 and the issues explored in a three-hour session included parental choice (including vouchers), school officials' judgment calls on special education placements, and effective early-childhood education. The commission plans to review the issues discussed at the hearing and ultimately make recommendations on this important issue. They will be accepting public comments via e-mail during the period the report is being drafted. See this link for additional details: <http://lnk.edweek.org/>

4. WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

The Nation's Report Card and Results for Students with Disabilities

The NAEP report shows that students with disabilities are making significant improvement – particularly at the 4th grade level – in both reading and math and in most cases have made gains that far outpace the gains made by students who do not have disabilities.

In Reading the percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above basic, proficient or advance levels in 4th grade has grown by 14 percent. In Math, the percentage of students with disabilities performing at or above basic, proficient or advance levels in 4th grade has doubled and in 8th grade has grown by 13 percent.

The results can be seen graphically on the official NAEP website:

<http://www.nationsreportcard.gov> . In the left column click on the subject area and then click on the link to "Results by Demographic Group" to get to the results for students with disabilities.

5. COLLABORATIVE HELP DESK

Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative
Education Development Center, Inc.

55 Chapel Street

Newton, MA 02158

Phone: 617-969-7100 x2447

TTY: 617-964-5448

FAX: 617-969-3440

Email: collaborative@edc.org

Web site: www.urbancollaborative.org

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