

# Urban Perspectives



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## District Looks to Adopt Proactive Discipline Guidelines

If guidelines from a 29-member school-community task force are adopted, discipline practices in the Aurora (Colorado) Public Schools (APS), will be proactive. The guidelines, entitled **General Characteristics Which Each School's Discipline Program Should Possess**, grew out of the work undertaken by the Student Discipline Task Force. Community members, parents, APS employees, and APS administrators served on the task force, which issued its final report in February 1998.

Formed in September 1997 as part of a "partnership agreement" with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the task force was charged with addressing disparate student discipline practices within the school system. While the agreement noted that no finding of wrong-doing was made, OCR and the Aurora Public Schools leadership did agree that issues relating to disproportionate discipline of racial minority students needed resolution.

**Dr. Junious Williams**, an attorney and national expert on equity and discipline from Oakland, California, consulted with the task force. In a September 1997

address to task force members, Dr. Williams offered a philosophy to guide their work.

*"Statistical disparities in discipline figures do not prove discrimination; however, such disparities should lead us to try to understand why the numbers are as they are and to change them to the extent we can. Our goal is to educate and inspire, not to exclude students from the benefits of an education."*

Williams stressed that any discipline policy or program must be viewed by the entire community—students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at large—as being "fair on its face."

## A Common Set of Behavioral Expectations

The task force report urged Aurora Public Schools to adopt a common set of District behavioral expectations that would apply to **all** staff and **all** students.

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*Our goal is to educate and inspire, not to exclude students from the benefits of an education.*

*Dr. Junious Williams  
Attorney*

*Operating two disparate discipline systems sends the wrong message. Without strong statements that reflect this core belief, we cannot level the playing field and serve all students. Suspension and expulsion without educational services wastes resources and takes valuable time away from learning.*

*David Wood  
Executive Director of  
Student Services*

**General Characteristics Which Each School's Discipline Program Should Possess** presents the framework, which is organized into six action categories that should be present in each school's discipline program.

According to task force recommendations, each District school should reflect this basic set of expectations in its own building-based, individually-adopted discipline procedures. In addition, District leadership would be required to support these expectations through policy development and the sponsorship of professional development activities.

## Guidelines Based Upon Core Beliefs

An important aspect of the task force's work involved articulating beliefs about discipline. The final report emphasizes the importance of members' beliefs in developing recommendations. Those beliefs follow:

- Discipline is a tool for learning.
- Learners include all stakeholders—students, staff, and the school community.
- Connecting the student, the school, and the community will strengthen effectiveness of the discipline program.
- Prevention is more important than intervention.
- Good classroom management and student engagement minimize discipline problems.
- Offenses should have just consequences.
- Suspension is the punishment of last resort.
- In order to maintain an environment conducive to learning, removal of a student (not necessarily suspen-

sion) is sometimes necessary.

- Even after suspension or expulsion, the District is responsible for providing educational services to the student.
- Every child should have an advocate.
- Adults have the responsibility to be sensitive to each student's individuality.
- Adults model the expectations they have for students.
- Staff development (diversity, anger management, conflict resolution, teaching to the whole child, etc.) is essential to the implementation of the task force's recommendations.

**David Wood**, Executive Director of Student Services for Aurora Public Schools, who followed the progress of the task force, found that the depth of the belief statements truly portrayed the District's belief in serving **all** students—even after suspension or expulsion. "Operating two disparate discipline systems sends the wrong message," Wood asserts. "Without strong statements that reflect this core belief, we cannot level the playing field and serve all students." From Wood's perspective, the belief that prevention is more important than intervention becomes particularly important as all students strive to meet newly adopted graduation standards. "Suspension and expulsion without educational services wastes resources and takes valuable time away from learning."

## Contact Information

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# General Characteristics Which Each School's Discipline Program Should Possess

## Leadership and Planning Team

1. Assure that discipline plan is fair, equitable, and consistent, using input from shared decision making groups.
2. Agree that although the principal has ultimate responsibility for discipline, the entire school community will take significant responsibility and ownership for discipline and school climate.
3. Agree that responsibility for leadership and planning should be a collaborative effort of administrative team, staff, parents, school and community. Representatives should reflect the diversity of all groups identified above.

## Policy and Procedures

4. Agree that serious student misbehavior that creates significant disruption or presents a safety risk must be dealt with in compliance with District policies/state mandates.
5. Agree on standards of conduct that require staff and students to be personally responsible for their actions.
6. Provide a clear statement to stakeholders that the school can use discretionary authority in building-level policy for suspension and other disciplinary actions. For example, administration has the right to use discretionary authority in disciplinary matters.

## Data and Information

7. Use qualitative and quantitative data as a basis for assessment, planning, and decision making for reducing referrals and disparities as well as for designing staff development.

## Behavior Management Plans and Programs

8. Focus on academic achievement and instruction as the most effective deterrent.
9. Develop a plan for a support system in each school that stresses advocacy and incentives to encourage students to continue their education and avoid suspension (e.g., counselors, peer mediators, etc.).
10. Provide reasonable interventions for minor misbehaviors to avoid referring students for disciplinary action.

## Education and Training Programs

11. Provide comprehensive and ongoing instruction for students in problem solving, anger management, conflict resolution, and violence prevention as preventive strategies, as well as for those students experiencing problems.
12. Develop a plan for providing ongoing staff development at both District and building levels. The plan should be based on analysis of building and classroom data in order to determine needs and to address staff development in areas such as:
  - Diversity and cultural awareness for staff and students.
  - Techniques and skills to more effectively manage student behavior.
  - When and how to refer according to District/building discipline policies.
13. Develop plan for providing support and assistance to staff experiencing difficulty managing student behavior.
14. Provide all students with copies of the code of behavior, and instruction on its content.
15. Make opportunities available for parents to review and understand the discipline policy and procedures.

*Student Discipline Task Force,  
Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, CO  
February, 1998*

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# The Time is Now for Major Change in Urban Schools

Ingrid L. Draper, Ed.D.,  
Associate Collaborative Director



**T**he education of America's children must be the nation's highest priority. There is no way to overstate the imperative and the urgency for major, dramatic, and accelerated change in the nation's schools. Urban schools, in particular, must come to scale in attaining high levels of achievement for all children—a level that now is attained in too few schools in our large city school systems.

As the world approaches a new millennium, we must deal with a new reality. Our rhetoric and the reality that we create must match. Educators can no longer accept and perpetuate rhetorical dissonance and mismatch, repeating the mantra that "all children can learn" while continuing to perpetuate practices that create institutional barriers and confusion that actually impedes the success that we so desperately need to achieve in our schools. We can no longer continue to create systems and schools based on the all too prevalent, unspoken belief that many students (and their parents) do not "fit" the view of who we think will be successful in schools.

We must recognize and acknowledge that we have created systems aligned to categorize and to constrain human potential—a reality that legitimizes separation, the devaluing of the potential of large groups of children; particularly children of poverty, of low socioeconomic status, of color, and with disabilities. We have created systems that search for pathology, that equate difference with deviance, and that create different places for the children who we determine will not "fit" traditional profiles of successful students.

The era of predicting student success or failure in the nation's schools is over.

The era of justifying and rationalizing why such dismal results have been achieved for the masses of children in urban schools can no longer be excused by blaming the children, their families or their circumstances.

There is an urgency. The visible impact of our failure to recognize that the world demands the skills, competence, the mind power, and contributions of **all** of our children, has ushered in a new and welcomed era. We are now in a no-excuse era in which we will be held accountable for the products, the human products that exit the nation's schools. There will be no more prizes for predicting the rain—only prizes for those who can build the Ark.

We must face, accept, embrace, and welcome the fact that we are living in a time of promise for the future of our children. The promissory note for the children of America and the world is now coming due. Of course, the contributions of all of the nation's children should have been a priority all along! Children of poverty, African-American, Hispanic, and children of other racial and ethnic backgrounds should have been seen as valued contributors to the nation's human resource capital all along!

We are at a time and a place in history when the rhetoric that "children are our greatest resource" must now match the reality that America must nurture the talents, gifts, skills, and knowledge of all of its children in order to maintain its preeminence in a world market.

We are at a time and a place in history when the nation's schools must ensure that children who are exiting our urban schools have the skills, knowledge, information, and confidence to make their contributions to the nation and the world. Employers and the business community are demanding results:

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*We are at a time and a place in history when the nation's schools must ensure that children who are exiting our urban schools have the skills, knowledge, information, and confidence to make their contributions to the nation and the world.*

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skilled, literate, competent students who will “fill their jobs.” Parents and communities are rightfully demanding that schools perform the task of educating our children to excellence. Schools must produce the skilled and productive children that our society needs.

We must take action to change the conditions and the expectations of our schools. We must chart a new course and literally change the systems that divide our schools. And, we must believe that we have the knowledge, the skills, and the human resources needed to create school environments that produce excellence in our staff and in our students.

## Coming to Scale

What will it take for urban schools to come to scale? The dissonance between our rhetoric and our reality must be confronted. We must value and build the alliances that are essential for including many voices—voices with often unseen commonalities. We need people with shared priorities to produce schools of excellence. We need educators, parents, teacher preparation colleges and universities, politicians, the business community, churches, human service agencies, and the many other constituencies who have an interest in the excellence of our schools, our students, and building world class cities. It will take many voices, all valued, to create the on-going dialogue and opportunities for participation and involvement in creating new visions for our schools and society. The reality of improved schools and improved life chances for the children in urban communities must be the core vision around which all school improvement efforts are designed.

We are at a time and a place in history that requires transformational leader-

ship. Leaders who are able to create visions of what schools and society must become; leaders who can lead their organizations to believe that each person can make a difference; leaders who can create the urgency for institutional change, redirection, and collaboration within their systems and across many systems; leaders who can create new alliances around common principles and shared visions of excellence for the nation’s children.

We are at a time and place in history where we need continuous school improvement and the creation of learning environments that value and respect the knowledge, skills, and contributions of parents, educators, and broad based constituencies. School improvement must focus on results, and support the on-going process of aligning systems of support at all levels. Continuous monitoring of change efforts, with the on-going use of data in planning and school decision making, must be the foundation that guides the entire school improvement process.

## Successful Schools Create Successful Students

We know that successful schools will create successful students. Let us come together to:

- Create schools of excellence.
- Provide for the inclusion of many interdependent voices as we create new visions.
- Create learning organizations that use the unfulfilled human potential of our students and our staff in creating new realities.
- Connect our schools and children to our cities, our nation, and to the world.

*Recommendations of excellent publications that focus on building alliances, transformational leadership, and the focus on results:*

- Cibulka, J.C., & Kritek, W.J. (1996). **Coordination among schools, families, and communities: Prospects for educational reform.** State University of New York Press.
- O’Toole, J. (1995). **Leading change: The argument for values-based leadership.** NY: Ballantine Books.
- Schmoker, M. (1996). **Results: The key to continuous school improvement.** Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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# A New Culture Emerging in Los Angeles Schools



*Steven Mark, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education, Los Angeles Unified School District*

**I**n what could be the most extensive special education reform effort in the nation, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is building a new system for all students with special needs. The renovation is so systemic that it is creating a new culture for the entire District population.

The Los Angeles Unified Division of Special Education serves nearly 70,000 identified students, employs almost 4,800 teachers and administrators, and operates on a budget of \$677 million. "The key to transforming this unit," says **Steven Mark**, Assistant Superintendent of the Division, "is collaboration. Parents and students, teachers and staff, community leaders, and general and special education authorities have been sitting down together for almost two years designing the changes. We hope to get enthusiastic support across the District."

## From Frustration Springs Impetus for Positive Change

The impetus for change began in frustration in 1993, when the concerned mother of Chanda Smith—a student previously identified with learning disabilities—and a group of parents of students with disabilities, filed a class action lawsuit against the District. Their suit claimed that the District was not providing their children with the educational services dictated by law. In less than five years, the resolution of that legal dispute has resulted in what may become a model for urban schools.

The journey to reform began when the federal judge and lawyers for both sides of the lawsuit agreed to a settlement

and signed the **Chanda Smith Consent Decree** in March of 1996. "The School District took the moral high ground," explains LAUSD counsel **Bonifacio "Bonny" Garcia**. "We looked at the facts and we agreed that we wanted to obey the law rather than fight." The agreement aimed at solutions, not blame, and has been called "remarkable," "proactive," and based upon "good faith" by the judge who supervised the settlement.

Once the agreement was reached, the real work of reform began. Assistant Superintendent Steven Mark shares this analogy, "Think of the Division of Special Education as the orchestra, and the Consent Decree administrators as the composers writing the score."

Two outside consultants, **Dr. Louis Barber** and **Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr**, were hired to assist with the decree development process. Dr. Barber is known for his work in special education in California, as well as with the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Kerr is a nationally recognized expert based at the University of Pittsburgh, who has directed and advised school-based special education programs across the country.

In order to correctly identify problems and possible solutions within the old system, Dr. Barber and Dr. Kerr spent 10 months assessing the Los Angeles program. In a 1995, 200 page report, they described the areas in which LAUSD was out of compliance. From that, the blueprint for reform was born: 30 plans were to be crafted that guaranteed special education students access to all services required by law. When officials from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) looked at the Consent Decree, they commented, "This is the opportunity for an urban school district to get it right."

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*A 1993 lawsuit against the District claimed that the District was not providing their children with the educational services dictated by law. In less than five years, the resolution of that legal dispute has resulted in what may become a model for urban schools.*

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## District Begins Task of Rebuilding Special Education

One of the first actions taken by the District was the formation of a community planning committee—500 people who would advise the District in how to rebuild special education in Los Angeles' schools. This volunteer force represents the spectrum of men and women committed to creating the services that will benefit special and general education students. More than half of the group is composed of parents—some with youngsters in the general education program, most with youngsters in special education programs. Community leaders, support staff, teachers, and administrators round out the committee.

The committee meets monthly. Meetings are bilingual to accommodate all members.

The results are already making an impact. The closed culture is gone; the new atmosphere is open and inclusive. Old enrollment and identification forms have been scrapped, obscure language has been replaced with "family friendly" words. Parents bring their experiences—positive and negative—to the table, to guide the Consent Decree administrators as they write new guidelines for changes in processes like Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the hiring of credentialed special education teachers and staff. In fact, more than a dozen reform plans are already in draft form.

## Reform Activities Transcend Special Education

The positive effects are not reserved just for the areas specific to special education. A district-wide Parent Hotline has been implemented. It grew from the need of special education families for accessible information about services and programs available to them. But its

value was so apparent in the first few months that it has been expanded to handle questions regarding general education issues as well.

To facilitate the new focus on communication, the Division of Special Education now publishes a bilingual, bimonthly newsletter which goes to 115,000 readers—all school employees as well as every special education family. Its purpose is to share the information and pace of change being created by the Consent Decree. Also, a series of professional development videos has been produced for both general and special education teachers. This series highlights the goals and the processes of reform. Currently, parents and teachers are collaborating on a new video on the new IEPs for students in special education.

## Is Change Ever Easy?

It is a very demanding and exciting time within the Division of Special Education. Change is never easy. Someone integral to the reform efforts suggested the image of turning around an ocean liner.

An entire District is moving in a new direction, driven by the energy and commitment of the **Chanda Smith Consent Decree**. The Court Order included a deadline of the year 2001 for the required reforms to be operational. It will be a fitting way for special education to begin the next millennium.

*The results are already making an impact. The closed culture is gone; the new atmosphere is open and inclusive. Old enrollment and identification forms have been scrapped, obscure language has been replaced with "family friendly" words. Parents bring their experiences—positive and negative—to the table.*

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# From Policy to Practice, a Framework for Excellence



*Fay Clark, Director, Exceptional Student Education, Broward County, FL*

**B**roward County (Florida), like most other urban school districts, had a “weighty” policy handbook filled with rules for the day-to-day operations of schools, rules that generally were written because someone did something someone else thought imprudent. Policies were synonymous with bureaucracy—hardly a set of documents that inspired visionary thinking!

When Superintendent **Dr. Frank R. Petruzielo** came to Broward County in 1993, he and his Deputy Superintendent for Instruction, **Dr. Frances Haithcock**, set about developing a framework for excellence—a policy framework against which actions and outcomes could be measured. The superintendent’s thinking was that policies, which are approved by elected officials and skillfully marketed, have clout and can communicate to the public those standards and priorities for which the district intends to be accountable. Petruzielo believed that policies—as opposed to administrative directives—prevent “institutional amnesia.” While administrators and their memoranda may come and go, policies remain—unless there is a conscious and public decision by the school board to change or replace them.

## Linking Policies to Learning Standards

Broward’s policy framework for excellence started with the development of standards for student learning. The standards, which represent what students in Broward County should know and be able to do, were the outcome of a year-long effort by community members, parents, and school personnel to define high expectations for student achievement.

Special education was involved in setting standards at the inception of the initiative. Parents of students with disabilities, representatives of community agencies serving the disabled, and school and district special education and student services representatives were members of the leadership group.

As the draft standards emerged, focus groups reacted to the standards from the perspective of their appropriateness for all students. During this initial development and adoption period there was consensus that the standards were appropriate for all students, although there could be differences in how the standards were assessed.

The standards are based upon state and national standards, in addition to the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Skills report. What makes the standards unique is that parents, the business community, health and human services agencies, teachers, administrators and students had input into the development process and reached consensus on 15 core competencies. These competencies combined with content standards in the essential foundation skills of reading writing, listening, speaking, and mathematics are similar to standards developed by other urban school districts.

Immediately after the adoption of the standards, the district launched a communications loop designed to spread knowledge of the standards throughout the system and the community. At a summit led by the superintendent, principals were charged with the responsibility for communicating the message to their school teams. Principals were provided with staff development modules for this purpose and were directed to engage school staff in conversations about the standards during the first week of school. Bro-

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*Policies—as opposed to administrative directives—prevent “institutional amnesia.” While administrators and their memoranda may come and go, policies remain—unless there is a conscious and public decision by the school board to change or replace them.*

*Dr. Frank R. Petruzielo  
Superintendent  
Broward County*

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chures for families and businesses and posters for school and administrative offices were disseminated. Senior administrators met with key business leaders to thank them for their involvement and to seek their continued support. Newspaper editorials acknowledged this critical first step.

The second phase of the policy framework was the development of standards for adult learning known as Professional Pathways. Developers felt that adults in the school district needed to also be part of a “community of learners” and see themselves as lifelong learners. This phase was deemed critical to student achievement because it seemed unlikely that students would achieve at high levels unless adults were engaged in the learning process as well.

The Professional Pathways policy requires the following standards of practice in all schools:

- A long-range vision/focus on student achievement.
- A process for ongoing identification and analysis of adult learning needs that is based upon individual needs as well as the needs of the organization.
- A system for the selection of effective research-based professional development opportunities.
- A system for continuous evaluation of professional development.
- Development of adult learning plans.

The third phase of the policy framework was the development of standards for student services (SOSS). At the core of the framework was a belief that student achievement is the ultimate accountability indicator for student services—in other words, guidance, social work, and psychological services exist in order to have an impact on student achievement. The SOSS policy set an expectation for a personalized, less fragmented, culturally sensitive support system for students and families.

The SOSS policy is the District’s customer service policy. It is a policy that focuses on children and families and tells our community we really believe parents are partners in the educational process. It reminds us of what we know and can’t afford to ignore. “Motherhood and apple pie” is the phrase that has often been used to describe the 10 standards in the SOSS policy. A few examples of the standards will illustrate why this phrase is an apt description:

- Students, families, and school personnel will treat each other with respect and dignity.
- Each family will have opportunities, appropriate to the needs of the family, to participate in their child’s education.
- Each student and family will receive timely, culturally sensitive, appropriate intervention and services in a family focused, coordinated manner.

The student services policy is more than platitudes—it also has “guts.” It says that the district must develop indicators that provide evidence the standards are being implemented. It says that organizational structures at all levels of the organization must be reviewed. It says resources must be matched with the needs of students. And it says that students’ safe passage to a healthy, productive adulthood is a joint school and community responsibility and zones must link students and families with the broader network of community support.

A policy approved by the school board and placed in every principal’s policy handbook will fail to move us forward if nothing else changes. Because it is hard to move from policy to practice, six innovation zone (feeder pattern) teams have been selected to spend 1997-98 studying and planning for the actual implementation of a new student services delivery system. This is intended to be a “break the mold” process, and an opportunity for zone teams to answer the question, “If we were starting over in our quest to

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*The Standards for Student Services (SOSS) policy is the District’s customer service policy. It is a policy that focuses on children and families and tells our community we really believe parents are partners in the educational process. It reminds us of what we know and can’t afford to ignore.*

*The accountability system is substantively different from others in that it does not rely solely on a snapshot of performance when rating schools. The system focuses on schools' progress over time.*

*With the District's accountability system, a school does not have to fail or make inadequate progress before assistance and interventions are made available.*

support students and families in achieving rigorous standards, what would the model look like?" There is no expectation of a cookie cutter model and there are no directives "from above." There is the opportunity to figure it out!

## Core Competencies for Students

- Cooperative learners.
- Effective leaders.
- Information managers.
- Information analyzers.
- Efficient resource managers.
- Effective communicators.
- Problem identifiers and solvers.
- Creative and complex thinkers.
- Competent choice makers.
- Global connectors.
- Self-directed learners/workers.
- World citizens.
- Concerned citizens.
- Wellness champions.
- Art appreciators and producers.

## Accountability Policy Supports District Efforts

The District is supporting the effort with its accountability policy, which was approved by the school board in the spring of 1996. The purpose of this policy is to measure the individual progress of every school in achieving a broad range of student performance indicators. The primary indicator at all levels is student achievement. Other indicators include dropout/graduation rates, student attendance, teacher attendance, student behavior, and

community partnerships.

The 1997-98 school year is the first year in which schools will be rated. Schools will be rated annually at one of three levels:

- High performing or high progress.
- Acceptable student achievement or progress.
- Low achievement or minimal or no progress.

This accountability system is substantively different from others in that it does not rely solely on a snapshot of performance when rating schools. The system focuses on schools' progress over time. Consequently, schools that have typically served at-risk populations and are not yet performing at the highest levels but have made dramatic progress in student achievement can receive the highest rating.

The indicators used in the formula vary slightly from level to level, and there are some differences between indicators for students in disciplinary centers and those in special education centers. It is anticipated that the indicators for performance and progress will continue to evolve as we become more skilled in identifying ways to measure what matters most.

With the District's accountability system, a school does not have to fail or make inadequate progress before assistance and interventions are made available. Two intervention strategies are already being implemented—one targets the most critical academic standards at specified grade levels, and another is broader in scope and more proactive in its approach.

The first strategy is for a team consisting of a district administrator with school-based administrative experience and a small cadre of reading and math specialists to be assigned to schools that have not fared well on state assessments. Team members observe reading, writing, and math instruction at

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specific grade levels (related to state assessments) and work with the principal to develop an action plan for improving instruction (and scores). Action plans often include staff development for teachers, increased time for reading instruction, and a requirement that the principal observe—on a daily basis—implementation of strategies presented in the staff development sessions. This strategy has resulted in improvements in schools' scores in all but two of 25 low-performing schools that were assigned teams.

The second strategy, which is currently being field tested, also involves a team approach. The team has much broader representation (including all areas of the curriculum and representatives from special education and English as a second/other language) and is more proactive in its intent. Teams observe in every classroom and examine administrative practices and school climate.

This curriculum assessment/audit model is being offered to principals who are new to their school, either because they are first-year principals or because they are experienced principals who have been assigned a different school. The intent is to give these principals a timely and comprehensive assessment of curriculum and instruction. From this assessment, the principal can determine priorities and develop action plans. The action plan becomes part of the performance appraisal process for the principal.

Monitoring of progress is done by the director who conducts the principal's evaluation. It is hoped this curriculum audit process will decrease the time it takes for the principal to assess the teaching and learning practices at the school and to accelerate the rate of student progress. It is envisioned that as the curriculum assessment/audit documents are refined, they can be used as self-assessments by schools, department heads, and teachers.

The curriculum assessment/audit development process has brought about some unanticipated outcomes. As lists of "things to look for" during classroom observations were developed by each curriculum supervisor, it became apparent that experts in different subject areas were looking for many of the same effectiveness indicators. It also became apparent that special education and English as a second/other language strategies did not vary significantly from quality instruction in other areas.

## Moving Ahead

Broward's pilot zones are benefiting from the experiences of other districts that have begun to implement systems unification models. **Dr. George Batsche**, Professor and Co-Director of the Institute for School Reform, Integrated Services, and Child Mental Health and Educational Policy at the University of South Florida, and **Dr. David Yamamoto** of the Ann Arbor, Michigan, School District have been instrumental in providing initial guidance to our innovation zones.

As we work together, we are refining what is important and thus will be able to focus the energy of schools and the district more effectively.

*Have we "arrived"? No.*

*Do we know where we are going?  
Yes.*

*Will we know when we get there?  
Yes.*

*Will our community know when we get there? Yes.*

Our policy framework for excellence is our commitment to our community. Our accountability system is the public reporting of the results.

*As the curriculum assessment/audit documents are refined, they can be used as self-assessments by schools, department heads, and teachers.*

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# Urban Collaborative News

*Urban Perspectives* is a publication of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative.

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## Welcome New Member Districts

**F**our new member districts joined the Collaborative this winter. Welcome:

- Cranston Public Schools, Cranston, RI.
- Northside ISD, San Antonio, TX.
- Rochester Public Schools, Rochester, NY.
- Isaac School District, Phoenix, AZ.

## Visit the Web Site

A standing invitation: If you haven't done so already, visit the Collaborative's web site at <http://www.edc.org/collaborative>. Recent features include:

- Online topical discussion, ***IDEA '97 Implementation Challenges and the Expansion of Inclusive Educational Practice***, hosted by Collaborative Director **David Riley** and colleagues **Elizabeth Kozleski** and **Philip Ferguson** from the National Institute for Urban School Improvement.
- Online workshop: ***Science for All: Including Students with Disabilities and Integrating Technology***, along with the National Center to Improve Practice. Collaborative

member **Patricia Williams** from Kalamazoo, Michigan, served on the Expert Panel as a facilitator.

- ***Urban Perspectives Online***: The Collaborative's newsletters, past and present, are available for downloading and printing.
- Online survey: Resource mapping and needs assessment surveys for Collaborative program planning and development work.

## Plan to Attend the Harvard Institute

"English Language Learners and Disabilities" is the topic for the 1998 Institute on Critical Issues in Urban Special Education, July 20 - 24, at Harvard University. Collaborative Director and Institute Educational Co-Chair **David Riley** and his colleagues at Harvard adopted three goals for this year's Institute. These are:

- Improve outcomes for English language learners with disabilities.
- Identify appropriate assessments, instructional programs, and support services.
- Create better linkages among special and bilingual education and the general education curriculum.

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