



Newark Public Schools and NUA win \$14 Million Award

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President's Program Awards Newark/NUA Literacy Initiative \$14 Million *Initiative Strives to Improve Literacy Skills of Newark's Inner-City Children*

NEWARK, NJ -- First Lady Laura Bush and Secretary Margaret Spellings presented a \$14 million Striving Readers Grant to the Newark Public Schools and partner, the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education (NUEE), honoring the Newark/NUEE Literacy Initiative to improve the reading scores and performance of urban elementary and high school students. Newark was selected out of more than 140 school districts around the nation vying for the literacy grants, is one of 8 nationally selected, and besides NUEE, is working with Scholastic's Read 180 program, Westat, and N.J. City College.

"The leadership of Newark Public Schools always puts meeting the needs of schoolchildren and youth first and deserves to be proud of the significant award they have received from the federal government's Striving Readers Grant," states Eric J. Cooper, President and Founder of NUEE.

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act, President Bush established the Striving Readers Program to target issues that exist for middle and high school students struggling with reading. The grant honors literacy programs that implement school-level strategies; vigorous, thorough intervention for struggling readers; and a research-based evaluation of the project's actions to improve reading capabilities.

For the 2006-07 school year, the Striving Readers Program awarded \$30 million to fund projects that use research-based literacy strategies.

The Newark/NUEE Literacy Initiative began in 2000 with the introduction of "Writing as Learning" in the district's 13 high schools. NUEE started with a high school writing initiative because Newark needed a strong writing component in its plan to gain district independence from state management.

In 2001, NUEE, with the support of the district's central administration, began a year long process to introduce literacy and writing concepts to department chairs, assistant principals and principals.

In 2002-2003, the initiative built upon previous year's activities by piloting the writing program in two of the district's elementary schools. By using writing as a curriculum unifier, writing and reading skills are taught in an organized and developmental approach that promotes enhanced vocabulary and reflects advanced comprehension.

"We are overjoyed with the size of the grant, the largest Newark Public Schools has ever received," states Newark Public School's Superintendent Marion Bolden. "We are also thrilled that the grant will allow us to deepen our partnership with the National Urban Alliance, so that more of our students will benefit from the interventions and strategies they have successfully used in a few of Newark's elementary and secondary schools."

NUA's mission is to ensure that no child is left behind, regardless of race, culture, or economic status. By engaging all sectors of the school community to accelerate student achievement they strive to provide educators with ongoing professional development. Ultimately, these teachers learn how to successfully work to unleash their knowledge, skills and creativity in a supportive environment to help close the achievement gap.

"This grant provides an opportunity for the district and its partners to accelerate achievement across a critical mass of schools. Over the next few years, using funding from this grant, the partnership expects to explode the myth about the limited intellectual and learning capacity of students who are challenged by poverty," says Cooper.

The National Urban Alliance for Effective Education (NUA) ® was founded in 1989 with a vision of school reform based upon three beliefs: all children are capable of attaining high educational standards; intelligence is modifiable, not fixed; and all stakeholders in the community must be involved in addressing the social, cultural, and intellectual needs of our youth to improve learning and teaching.

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