



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
URBAN SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT

# eNEWS



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
Culturally Responsive  
Educational Systems



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## UPDATE

This eNEWS was sent formatted in HTML. If the graphics do not display properly, please go to: [www.nccrest.org](http://www.nccrest.org) or [www.urbanschools.org](http://www.urbanschools.org) to view the eNEWS online. Back issues of the eNEWS are also available there.

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## NOTICES

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS DUE MARCH 1ST** The 2006 conference for the Relevance of Assessment and Culture in Education (R.A.C.E. 2006) features the theme *Indigenous Issues and Voices in Educational Research and Assessment*. The conference will be held April 27-29, 2006 at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. The call for proposals is now open. They are looking for sessions (symposia, paper and workshops) addressing the following topics: 1.) Voice and Relevance: Research with/in Indigenous Communities, 2.) Epistemological Considerations of Local Knowledge, 3.) Assessment/Testing/Measurement Issues in an Era of Accountability, 4.) Decolonizing Methodologies, (including applications to curriculum, pedagogy, research and assessment), and 5.) Language Revitalization, Maintenance and Language Rights. For more information, visit <http://coe.asu.edu/ivera> or contact [ivera@asu.edu](mailto:ivera@asu.edu).

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## SPOTLIGHT

**21 DAYS LEFT UNTIL NCCREST'S NATIONAL FORUM ON DISPROPORTIONALITY!** You won't want to miss this conference! The National Forum is closely approaching and we are anticipating a great turnout with many insightful presentations. *Creating Opportunities to Learn: A Forum for Addressing Disproportionality* will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Denver, CO on February 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. For more information or to register by credit card visit our website at [www.nccrest.org](http://www.nccrest.org) or follow this [link](#). Online registration as well as keynote speaker luncheons will remain open online until February 10<sup>th</sup>. However, you may register up until the day of the conference with cash or purchase order.

Watch our site for updates that will include additional keynote speakers, pre-conference workshops, and conference agendas.

Spread the word about this exciting conference. We are looking forward to seeing you there and appreciate your help in making this an extraordinary event.

Questions? Email [nccrest@cudenver.edu](mailto:nccrest@cudenver.edu)

**ACCOMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON STATE ASSESSMENTS: WHAT WORKS?** This conference will help you stay current on best practices involving students with disabilities. The No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act have had a profound impact on assessing students with disabilities in K-12 settings. Educators must find ways to ensure that test scores are valid and reliable, and to provide accommodations that improve the accessibility of state assessments. Topics that will be covered include, fairness and validity of test accommodations, use of accommodations in instruction, influence of K-12 assessments on instructional practices, helping IEP teams make decisions about selecting accommodations, legal concerns about accommodating students with disabilities, and implementation of test accommodations in K-12 and postsecondary settings. The conference is co-sponsored by ETS, The College Board, Council for Exceptional Children, and the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI). It will be on March 19-21, 2006 in Savannah, GA at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront. State testing directors, school administrators, guidance counselors, special education coordinators and instructors, and researchers are encouraged to attend. For more information about this conference please visit this link <http://www.ets.org/accommodationsconference> or contact Kathy Howell at [khowell@ets.org](mailto:khowell@ets.org).

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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**JOE JOHNSON:** In August 2005, Dr. Joseph Johnson became the Executive Director of the National Center for Urban School Transformation and the QUALCOMM Professor of Urban Education at San Diego State University.

Previously, he served as a classroom teacher in San Diego, as a school district administrator in New Mexico, as a state department official in both Texas and Ohio, as a researcher and technical assistance provider at the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas, and as the Director of Student Achievement and School Accountability at the U.S. Department of Education where he was responsible for directing the federal Title I Program and several related programs.



Dr. Johnson earned a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin's Cooperative Superintendency Program. He earned a Master of Arts in Education from San Diego State University and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh.

In 1987 Dr. Johnson received the Special Educator of the Year Award from the New Mexico Council for Exceptional Children. In 1989 he was the founding president of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. In 1993 and again in 2000, he received the Educator of the Year Award from the Texas Association of Compensatory Education. In 2003 he received the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award from San Diego State University's College of Education.

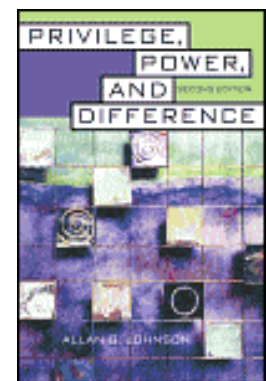
Joe Johnson will be presenting as a keynote speaker at NCCREST's National Forum on Disproportionality on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. He will be discussing the topic, "Eliminating Disproportionality by Making General Education Special". To register for this conference go to... <http://www.nccrest.org/events/disproportionality.html>

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## RECOMMENDED READINGS

*Privilege, Power, and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson

This book provides students with an easily applied theoretical model for thinking about systems of privilege and difference. Writing in accessible, conversational prose, Johnson joins theory with engaging examples in ways that enable students to see the nature and consequences of privilege and their connection to it.



Allan Johnson is a writer, teacher, and public speaker who has worked on issues of privilege, oppression, and social inequality since receiving his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Michigan in 1972. He has almost 30 years of college teaching experience and has worked with a variety of schools and organizations. This book provides students with an easily applied theoretical model for thinking about systems of privilege and difference. Writing in accessible, conversational prose, Johnson joins theory with engaging examples in ways that enable students to see the nature and consequences of privilege and their connection to it.

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## TOOLS YOU CAN USE

**NCCREST'S DATA MINING MODULE** This Professional Development module is designed to help building leadership teams learn the skills required to mine data and use it to make decisions. As principals and teacher leaders become confident in their ability to query their data, they become strong role models and coaches for the entire faculty.

This module takes an in depth look at understanding and using data and other evidence of student performance to improve student learning. It begins by looking at school level data to identify patterns in school performance. Participants will examine data to understand school structures and then look at issues of pedagogy and practice. They will consider a variety of measures of academic performance by asking tough questions about data such as: What do students need to know? How do you know if students have learned it? Who is successful? Who is

not? What to do if students have not learned what they need to know? Working steadily and continuously as a team, school faculty and administrators can become successful with all, not just some, of their students.

### **Academy 1: Mining Meaningful Data**

The activities in this module begin with personal reflection by participants on values and beliefs about the identification, collection and use of data for school improvement. It continues with a brief overview of the new accountability systems, moves to current methods being used by school systems and how this affects all students, and concludes with an activity that requires participants to continue their reflection on tracking data that they can use to prepare for subsequent activities. Participants use data from their own district or another district in their state to begin to examine the link between data and practice changes.

### **Academy 2: Identifying School-Wide Patterns of Student Performance**

This Academy helps participants develop their skills to analyze and use data over time to adjust their strategies for instructional improvement.

### **Academy 3: Looking at Student Work to Target Instruction**

In this Academy, participants learn to examine student work samples and link aggregated student work data to adjust teaching practices.

### **NIUSI ONPOINTS**

NIUSI's OnPoint series are brief discussions of critical issues in urban education. These publications have been written by a variety of researchers, practitioners, and family members about specific practices that support inclusive schooling. OnPoints help people link theories to practices as well as examples of how the theory is translated into practice that is effective and produces learning results for students. All OnPoints are distillations of research, so all references are listed at the end if you want to read more about a particular topic.

### **FEATURED ONPOINT: MENTAL HEALTH IN URBAN SCHOOLS**

This OnPoint written by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor from the University of California, Los Angeles discusses mental health and the affect it has on students, families, school staff and the community. The authors explain what mental health is as well as offer ideas for what schools should be doing to address a range of mental health and psychosocial concerns. They explain that the emerging views on how to enhance mental health in schools involves much more than expanding services and creating full service schools. It is about becoming a collaborative part of comprehensive approaches that strengthen students, families, schools, and neighborhoods and doing so in ways that maximize learning, caring and well-being. This OnPoint offers schools monthly themes to help strategize and encourage a mentally healthy school climate.

*Mental Health in Urban Schools* along with many others is now available on our website at [www.urbanschools.org](http://www.urbanschools.org). Click on 'Publications' then 'OnPoints' or follow this link [Mental Health in Urban Schools](#). We have revamped the OnPoint look and developed two different formats. One, the online reader version, is for easier viewing at your personal computer. The other, the printer ready version, is for organizations to be able to create professional quality materials simply by sending this document to a professional printer.

We are excited to share these new products and look forward to any feedback you may have.

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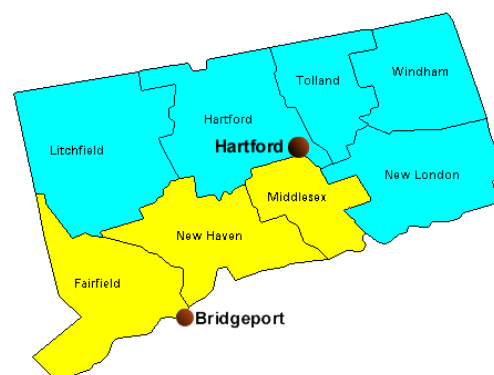
## RESEARCH BASED PRODUCTS

**NIUSI'S INTERACTIVE LIBRARY** The NIUSI Library has been re-arranged according to the Systemic Change Framework making it a more convenient and accessible tool for inclusive education inquiry. It has more than 2000 references. To use this tool visit [www.urbanschools.org](http://www.urbanschools.org) and click on 'library' or follow this link <http://niusi.edreform.net/>. This is an interactive library; under each subcategory you can find articles of your choice. For example if you are searching for information on "Teaching design and practices" click on "teaching design and practices" and you will find more than 300 articles on the subject. This way you can click any subcategory and get related articles.

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## FEATURED STATE WORK *CONNECTICUT*

The Connecticut Department of Education, the Northeast Regional Resource Center, and NCCREST are collaborating in case studies of two Connecticut districts that have reduced disproportionality in special education over the past three years. The team will work to discover what the districts did that made the difference and how to transfer findings to other school districts.



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## FEATURED DISTRICT WORK *DENVER*

Denver Public Schools held NIUSI training November 29, 2006 for nine elementary schools. The schools were Amesse, Barrett, Greenwood, Garden Place, Maramma, McGlone, Swansea, and Smith Renaissance School of the Arts and Steadman. The Denver NIUSI team (Gene Bamesberger, Christine McClendon and Carla Santorno) provided informational sessions on the Systemic Change Framework, Data Mining and developing Building Leadership Teams. Deidre Magee provided support by co-presenting with the Denver Team. Each of the schools will schedule on-site training using the NIUSI PD Modules during the spring semester to ensure more inclusive practices at each school.



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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"...example is the most important teacher. Live your life so that when students think of fairness, caring, integrity...they think of you."

-Rick DuFour

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## FEATURED WEBSITES

**TEACHERS' DOMAIN** The overarching intent of the Teachers' Domain Digital Library project is to provide high-quality, multimedia resources of WGBH (Boston's PBS station) from their archives into the hands of teachers and students in a format that is directly targeted to their teaching and learning needs.

Teachers' Domain multimedia collections and professional development courses support K-12 teaching and learning experiences with media-rich resources that are high impact, engaging and interactive. Science is the main focus of the site. There is also an extensive special collection on civil rights and topics in the life, physical, and soon-to-be-added earth systems. Collections include ecology, motion and forces, genetics, engineering, the cell and more.

Each of the resources is geared to a specific grade level and correlated to individual state as well as national standards. Teachers will find classroom-ready video clips, interviews, web-based interactive activities, photographs, animations, images, and text transcriptions from original sources, along with contextual information and lesson plans for effective use in the classroom which support differentiated instruction. Registered users can create folders of resources on a specific topic and save them to share with their students. Students can also use this feature to create a multimedia report on a given topic. Additionally, there are online courses available for professional development purposes. This is a rich resource that teachers will not want to miss. Take a test drive and register today!

Collections: [www.teachersdomain.org/tdhome.html](http://www.teachersdomain.org/tdhome.html)

Courses: [www.teachersdomain.org/courseinfo/admin/courses/catalog.html](http://www.teachersdomain.org/courseinfo/admin/courses/catalog.html)

**THE MONARCH CENTER** The Monarch Center was established to provide grantsmanship and program development services to faculty at Minority Institutions of Higher Education (MIHEs). Improved grantsmanship skills and program development services are intended to enable MIHEs to compete successfully for federal personnel preparation funds and to develop/enhance their special education and related services personnel preparation degree programs. Two strands of technical assistance are offered: A) Program Development and Enhancement, and B) Grant Proposal Development.

By supporting MIHE faculty in the pursuit of educational excellence for their programs and students and enhancing access to funding, the overarching goal of the Monarch Center is to affect positive change in the lives of children with disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Visit their site at [www.monarchcenter.org](http://www.monarchcenter.org)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **NCCREST'S NATIONAL FORUM ON DISPROPORTIONALITY**

Creating Opportunities to Learn: A Forum for Addressing Disproportionality

Denver, Colorado, February 15-17, 2006

### **CO-SPONSORED BY ETS, THE COLLEGE BOARD, THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (NIUSI)**

Accommodating Students With Disabilities on State Assessments: What Works?

Savannah, Georgia, March 19-21, 2006

<http://www.ets.org/accommodationsconference>

**THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

26th Annual Excellence in Education Conference: Making Equity Work- Engaging All Students for High Achievement

Lincoln, Nebraska, March 29-30, 2006

<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/cspd/Conference/index.htm>

**THE 2006 CONFERENCE FOR THE RELEVANCE OF ASSESSMENT AND CULTURE IN EDUCATION (R.A.C.E. 2006)**

Indigenous Issues and Voices in Educational Research and Assessment

Tempe, Arizona, April 27-29, 2006

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