



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
URBAN SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

eNEWS



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Culturally Responsive
Educational Systems



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UPDATE

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

NOTICES

2ND ANNUAL NATIONAL FORUM: LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

This year's conference will be held in Washington D.C. at the Crystal Gateway Marriott on February 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2007. Educators, policy makers, advocacy groups, parents, and community members from across the United States will gather to explore how educational systems can assure equity in educational outcomes for all students through school improvement, leadership, family and community partnerships, policy, and teaching.

We are now accepting session proposals that cover the range of expertise from presentations of research to presentations of promising practices. Proposals can be for presentation/discussions, workshops, panels, and roundtables or poster presentations. Sessions should be of interest to a wide range of educators, policy makers, and researchers. We anticipate that one third of the sessions will focus on current research, while two thirds will highlight best practices and tools. The following five strands are the focus of all conference presentations, with multiple possibilities for

topics under each strand. To download the Call for Proposal visit our site www.nccrest.org and click on 'events' or click [here](#).

- School Improvement for ALL children
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Policy to Promote Equity and Eliminate Racism
- Leadership for Change
- Transforming Teaching and Learning

The focus for the three days will be to share current research, best practices, and tools for transforming educational systems. Last years conference drew over 450 of the nation's top education experts, leading educators, policy makers, advocacy groups, parents, and community members. Comments from conference participants were...

This is the best conference I've attended in 10 years!

General education leaders need to attend this conference!

The sessions were outstanding!

Visit www.nccrest.org often for the most up to date information on the Forum and for information on call for proposals, online registration and keynote speakers.

SPOTLIGHT

NEW DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Arizona State University (ASU) and the University of Arizona (UA) are seeking applications from outstanding candidates who intend to become Professors of Special Education with expertise in Culturally Responsive Education for Students with Learning Disabilities (LD) or Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (E/BD). To find out more about this program follow this [link](#).

Abstract

The goal of this project is to prepare 6 highly qualified professionals with a doctoral degree in special education who will (a) increase the amount and quality of interdisciplinary research on issues related to the placement and education of diverse students with LD and E/BD, (b) have expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, (c) use interdisciplinary theories about the cultural nature of human development to design and investigate assessment strategies, placement practices, and literacy instruction for culturally diverse students, and (d) are competent in personnel preparation for a diverse student population. Students will be required to enroll full time and to follow a sequence of courses and apprenticeship activities (e.g., research and teaching internships) to graduate in a timely fashion. The program of study will offer students at both campuses similar research based courses taught by core program faculty. Students will enroll in courses at each other's universities by using state-of-the-art videoconferencing and web-based technology. Faculty will also meet regularly with students in the context of research groups to offer formative feedback and mentoring. Ongoing sponsored projects at both campuses (e.g., NCCRESt, Verano en Mexico) will be used to provide mentoring opportunities and authentic collaborative experiences to program participants.

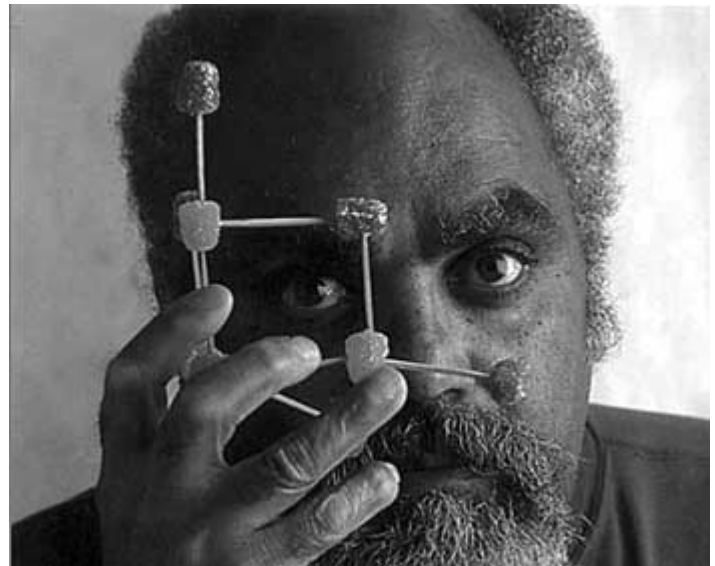
The 6 graduates of the project will become faculty members who can: (1) Evaluate the research literature on disproportionate representation, and assessment and literacy instruction for diverse students with LD or E/BD; (2) Understand and analyze critically the links between the research literature on the education of diverse students with LD or E/BD and federal and state policy mandates (NCLB, State learning standards); (3) Design, secure funding, and conduct quantitative and qualitative research to generate new knowledge about culturally responsive

special education placement practices, assessment and literacy instruction, and personnel preparation for diverse students with LD or E/BD; (4) Apply research-based interdisciplinary knowledge about disproportionate representation and culturally responsive assessment and literacy instruction in their teaching and research; (5) Work effectively in collaborative projects and communicate (orally and in writing) skillfully with researcher and practitioner audiences; (6) Prepare highly qualified teachers who can provide culturally competent, evidence-based, and standard-based assessment and literacy instruction to diverse students with E/BD or LD; and (7) Play a visible, culturally responsive, and effective leadership role in IHE and SEAs/LEAs.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

ROBERT MOSES

What is the common denominator of Civil Rights and algebra? The answer to the equation can be found in the name of one man, Robert Moses. An activist since the 1960s when he demanded political access for African-Americans by organizing voter registration drives in the South, Bob Moses focuses today on another fundamental civil right – economic access defined by math literacy. He wholeheartedly embraces the educational concept that all children can learn and that all children deserve the best education they can receive. To Bob Moses, it is all about removing barriers to learning, so disadvantaged youth can take advantage of new technologies and economic opportunity to experience workforce equality.



As a concerned parent and impassioned middle school mathematics teacher, first in New York and then in Tanzania, East Africa, Bob Moses speaks from experience. As often happens, the concept for The Algebra Project, which he founded to promote math literacy, grew out of a volunteer experience in his oldest daughter's middle school class in the Open Program of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While his daughter was proficient in the math being taught at school, he felt what she was learning was inadequate to prepare her for her future. So, he took action. At the teacher's request, he worked with a small group of students. This small beginning multiplied into a movement in which his daughter's math teacher, the rest of the students and other parents became involved. The adage, "Think globally, act locally," is exactly what took place in organizing a community around the teaching of algebra right where he lived. Three of Moses' children caught the wave of his passion and have since joined him in The Algebra Project as teachers.

So, how does Bob Moses make abstract math interesting and intelligible to inner city children and children of the rural poor? The answer is subway rides, games, competitions, gumdrops, toothpicks, lemonade and everyday life experiences. His students do not sit passively in a classroom and memorize equations and formulas. Instead, they take field trips and measure distances and map their journey. They assign symbols to points of interest. They create models and pictures and write creatively about their experiences. From these physical events and

familiar experiences, they construct mathematical concepts, using practical logic and abstract symbols.

The Algebra Project has become a model program for teaching math literacy. Its success can be measured in students' improved performance in math and in the number of students enrolling in college-prep math classes. Bob Moses' activism has brought the issue of math literacy front and center. Through the Algebra Project, he has raised awareness and united students, parents, teachers, and community members in the struggle to remove barriers to the fundamental civil rights of economic access and workforce equality.

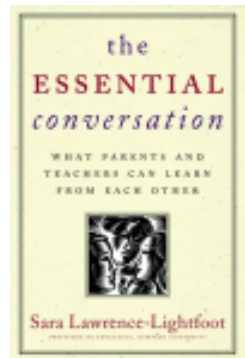
Robert Moses is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Heinz Award for the Human Condition, which seeks to honor those individuals who have created programs that protect and empower disadvantaged individuals.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

THE ESSENTIAL CONVERSATION: WHAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

By Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot

With the insights she has gleaned from her close and subtle observation of parent-teacher conferences, renowned Harvard University professor Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot has written a wise, useful book about the ways in which parents and teachers can make the most of their essential conversation—the dialogue between the most vital people in a child's life. "The essential conversation" is the crucial exchange that occurs between parents and teachers—a dialogue that takes place more than one hundred million times a year across our country and is both mirror of and metaphor for the larger cultural forces that define family-school relationships and shape the development of our children. Participating in this twice-yearly ritual, so friendly and benign in its apparent goals, parents and teachers are often wracked with anxiety. In a meeting marked by decorum and politeness, they frequently exhibit wariness and assume defensive postures. Even though the conversation appears to be focused on the student, adults may find themselves playing out their own childhood histories, insecurities, and fears.



Through vivid portraits and parables, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot captures the dynamics of this complex, intense relationship from the perspective of both parents and teachers. She also identifies new principles and practices for improving family-school relationships. In a voice that combines the passion of a mother, the skepticism of a social scientist, and the keen understanding of one of our nation's most admired educators, Lawrence-Lightfoot offers penetrating analysis and an urgent call to arms for all those who want to act in the best interests of their children.

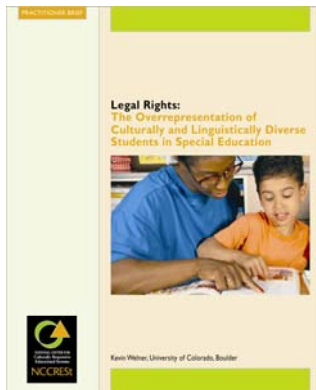
For parents and teachers who seek productive dialogues and collaborative alliances in support of the learning and growth of their children, this book will offer valuable insights, incisive lessons, and deft guidance on how to communicate more effectively. In **The Essential Conversation**, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot brings scholarship, warmth, and wisdom to an immensely important cultural subject—the way we raise our children.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

PRACTITIONER BRIEF

Legal Rights: The Overrepresentation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education

By Kevin Welner, University of Colorado, Boulder



In this practitioner brief Welner explains the laws that govern special education in general, and disproportionate representation in particular. These statutes cover two related issues: the guarantee of a free and appropriate public education and anti-discrimination laws protecting students with disabilities. Welner provides examples, and describes the Office of Civil Rights complaints process.

To download this Practitioner Brief go to www.nccrest.org, click on resources and publications, then Practitioner Briefs or follow this [link](#).

ONPOINT

Understanding Culture

By Shelley Zion, University of Colorado at Denver
and Elizabeth Kozleski, University of Colorado at Denver

Understanding culture is critical for educators because our individual cultural orientation is present in every interaction. Too often, we make assumptions about a person's beliefs or behaviors based on a single cultural indicator, particularly race¹ or ethnicity, when in reality, our cultural identities are a complex weave of all the cultural groups we belong to that influence our values, beliefs, and behaviors. The purposes of this *On Point* are (a), to define and understand the different factors that impact our cultural identity development, and (b), to gain a perspective on the ways that others may differ; (c), to understand difference as something to celebrate and learn about rather than to reject, by becoming culturally responsive and (d), to understand culture as not a static element, but as an ongoing evolution as we grow and develop over the course of our lifetimes.



To download this document please visit our website at www.urbanschools.org then click on 'publications' then 'OnPoints' or follow this [link](#).

RESEARCH BASED PRODUCTS

The Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP): Synthesis of Findings and Policy Implications

<http://projectforum.org/docs/SEEP-SynthesisofFindingsandPolicyApplications.pdf>

This In-Brief Policy Analysis synthesizes the SEEP findings 23 different surveys used to collect data for the 1999-2000 school year at the state, district, school, teacher and student level. This synthesis provides insight into some of the details of special education provisions across the nation.

Reflecting detailed service descriptions for over 10,000 special education students, it provides knowledge well beyond what was previously known regarding the exact mix of services that students with varying primary categories of disability receive in varying types of districts and in some cases across individual states. Beyond descriptive data, SEEP provides a wealth of information for informing future special education policy.

LISTENING TO SOMALI, MIEN, CAMBODIAN, VIETNAMESE & LATINO FAMILIES

This article by Betty J. Cobbs and Margery B. Ginsberg describes a summer learning experience that helped educational leaders listen to and learn from underrepresented voices. In July of 2005, doctoral students studying to become superintendents, most of whom were currently principals, visited the homes of Somali, Mien, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Latino families living in a Seattle-area school community. Although several of the students had visited low-income homes in their own districts, this was the first time they had done so with the primary purpose of listening to under-represented voices on matters of district policy. The leadership students sought to understand how members of linguistic minority communities respond to policy decisions such as a school closure. In addition to learning about perspectives on policy, home visits also helped students challenge assumptions regarding equitable communication and cultural awareness. The process revealed eight common themes and a structure for encouraging high-level decision-makers and administrators to meet with diverse families in their homes -- one that the authors hope others will also consider using.

<http://news.publiceducation.org/t/4842/209559/84/0/>

FEATURED STATE WORK *OHIO*

The Access Center, NCRRC, NCCRESt, and the Ohio Department of Education hosted a meeting for their "Ohio Big 8 Urban District Community of Practice Event" on June 27th and 28th in Columbus, OH. The districts that participated in Ohio included Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton City, and Youngstown City. NCCRESt presented their Rubric-LEA Assessment for Culturally Responsive Practice and their Disproportionality Data Mapping on the first day. On the 28th, all eight districts discussed and worked on planning across the district level, organizing their work using the "Pyramid of Learning" integrated systems model, working across departments to create a system of prevention and intervention for all students, aligning their work around key district-wide principles, open and shared budget discussions, and determined what services/functions to keep and what not to keep as one collaborative unit.

FEATURED DISTRICT WORK *HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT*

Hacienda La Puente Unified School Districts Special Education Services Department is collaborating with NIUSI on a three-day summer institute in their efforts to improve the educational experiences for all students. The institute is designed to bring together building teams consisting of a principal, general and special education teachers and district coaches for training. The teams will be introduced to features of effective collaborative teaching and explore the role of personal teaching styles in collaborative classroom environments. Participants will also explore strategies that focus on speaking and listening across the curriculum to enhance student learning.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"No one should make claims of being educated until he or she has learn to live in harmony with people who are different."

-A.H.Wilson

FEATURED WEBSITE

http://www.nccrest.org/events/events/art_contest.html

NATIONAL ART CONTEST WEB PAGE

Imagine a world in which everybody is included, valued, appreciated. Visualize a school where the atmosphere is caring, promoting respect for diversity, a community of learners born of compassion, trust and courage. A school where students and teachers intentionally commit themselves to support and encourage an individual's unique gifts, passions and intentions; to challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance and performance. How would you artistically express this type of school environment?

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) is sponsoring a national art contest, in conjunction with its National Forum: *Leadership for Equity and Excellence: Transforming Education*. NCCRESt seeks to capture the vision of artists about what schools would look like when they value and include the backgrounds, experiences, and heritage of ALL students.

Work submitted to this contest will be used on products and materials developed by NCCRESt to raise awareness and to help people across the nation understand the vision of inclusive, culturally responsive education. For additional information about the mission of NCCRESt please visit our website: www.nccrest.org.

The contest is open to students in grades K-12 and adults. The grand prize winner will receive a \$300 cash award and a trip for two to Washington, D.C. to attend the 2007 National Forum on Disproportionality in Education, February 7-9, 2007. At this national forum the grand prize winner will be honored at a reception and artwork will be on display.

For more information about the rules, prizes, and to download submission forms please visit our website at www.nccrest.org or follow this [link](#).



DID YOU KNOW...

...one third of all new teachers leave the profession within the first three years. Fifty percent of all new teachers leave within their first five years. What are you doing to help your new teachers become highly qualified and fully satisfied with their choice of profession? Join the growing number of districts that have selected ***Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*** by Paula Rutherford to provide their new teachers a strong instructional foundation. [Learn More!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE 5TH ANNUAL NATIVE AMERICAN TRAINING AND INFORMATION NETWORK CONFERENCE

Brought to you by The National Native American Families Together Parent Center

Arlington, VA, July 10-11, 2006

<http://www.nativefamilynetwork.com>

THE 2006 I TEACH 1ST! NATIONAL FIRST GRADE TEACHER CONFERENCE

Brought to you by Staff Development for Educators

Orlando, FL, July 10-13, 2006

www.sde.com/Conferences/iteach1st/overview.asp?c1=enews&source=ASCD-2006-05-23-06&kw=NATL-1st

THE 6TH INCLUSION INSTITUTE

Brought to you by The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)

Chapel Hill, NC, July 25-27, 2006

<http://www.nectac.org/~meetings/InclusionMtg2006/mtghomepage.asp>

FIESTA EDUCATIVA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Brought to you by a Community Parent Resource Center in Los Angeles

Los Angeles, CA, July 28-29, 2006

<http://www.fiestaeducativa.org/html/conference205.html>

THE 2ND ANNUAL NATIONAL FORUM: LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Brought to you by the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREST)

Washington DC, February 7-9, 2007

www.nccrest.org

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