

Featured Sessions

Changing the Curriculum Paradigm from Remedial to Rigorous

Margaret Beecher, Bugbee Elementary School

This presentation will focus on a school's eight-year educational journey that resulted in dramatically reducing the achievement gap between different ethnic and SES groups. A unique approach to this pervasive problem shifted an elementary school from a remedial paradigm to a rigorous curriculum with the strength-based methodology of school wide enrichment teaching and learning. The following essential elements of this successful approach will be highlighted: the vision, the leader's role, strategic planning, the development of an enriched and differentiated curriculum, high expectations for all children, data based decision making, formative assessments, teacher and student accountability, and effective staff development.

CommPACT Schools: Connecticut's Collaborative Approach to Meeting the Needs of Urban Learners

Eugene Chasin, The University of Connecticut; John Yrchik, Connecticut Education Association; Sharon Palmer, American Federation of Teachers, CT & Dave Larsen, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

In this presentation, a panel including superintendents, administrative partners, and university partners will talk about this new, exciting, and promising initiative for closing the achievement gap. For the first time nationally, stakeholders have signed off on a common agenda for urban school reform known as the CommPACT Schools. Through mutual agreement, these schools will be given considerable autonomy in areas such as governance, budgeting, and curriculum along with greater accountability for increased student achievement. Special focus will be given to closing the achievement gap and stemming the increase of schools facing sanctions under NCLB.

"We are not the problem": Urban Youth Researchers Respond to the Achievement Gap

Jason Irizarry & Students from Project FUERTE, The University of Connecticut

In this presentation, student researchers from Project FUERTE (Future Urban Educators conducting Research to inform Teacher Education), and Dr. Jason G. Irizarry will share the findings from their year-long research projects exploring the ways that power and opportunity are manifested in urban schools. Instead of being positioned as the "problem" within school reform efforts, urban youth participating in this project serve as researchers developing and delivering empirically-based recommendations to enhance the professional development of teachers and administrators.

Breakout Sessions

Using Standards, Best Practices, and Formative Assessment Strategies to Promote Academic Progress and Deep Understanding for All Learners
Deborah Burns, Cheshire (CT) Public Schools

Creative and Humorous Ways to Teach Math Without the Use of Worksheets
Rachel McAnallen, University of Connecticut

School Funding and the Achievement Gap
Dianne deVries & Panelists, Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding

Practical Strategies For Turning Around The Pedagogy of Purgatory Through High-End Learning Opportunities, Resources, and Encouragement
Joseph Renzulli, University of Connecticut

Motivating Students to Want to Achieve
Del Siegle, University of Connecticut

Approaches to Increase Inquiry in the Science Classroom
Jeanelle Day, Eastern Connecticut State University

Project M³: Mentoring Mathematical Minds: Closing the Achievement Gap for Mathematically Promising Elementary Students
M. Katherine Gavin, Tutita Casa, & Jill Adelson, University of Connecticut

Strategies for Engaging All Learners: Closing the Achievement Gap through Academic Motivation
Jason Stephens, University of Connecticut

Learn How to Address the Achievement Gap by Offering 10th Graders the Class, United States History Through the African American Experience
Tracey Wilson & Susan Stefanowicz, Conard High School

Music: The Offering of Equity, Empowerment, and Promise for Learning
Linda Neelly, University of Connecticut

Reading/Literacy Focus

Closing the Vocabulary Gap in the Primary Grades: Supporting Vocabulary Development within a Response to Intervention Framework
Michael Coyne, University of Connecticut

Supporting Literacy Engagement for Upper Elementary and Middle Grade Students
Susannah Richards, Eastern Connecticut State University

Comprehension Instruction after 4th Grade: What does RtI look like in a Middle School?
Michael Faggella-Luby, University of Connecticut

Implementing Early Reading Intervention: Marshalling the Resources
Sharon Ware, Athena Lentini, Chrissy Civetelli, & Michael Coyne, University of Connecticut

Realizing the Vision of Two-Way Immersion: Fostering Effective Programs and Classroom
Elizabeth Howard, University of Connecticut

Closing the Achievement Gap for Second Language Learners
John Leach, University of Connecticut

Readers' Theatre in the Social Studies & Language Arts Classroom
John Zack, University of Connecticut

Deconstructing Disinformation and Media Spin on the Role and Impact of Minorities in the 2008 Presidential Election: A Critical Thinking Challenge
Thomas Goodkind, University of Connecticut & Elizabeth Rowell, Rhode Island College

For full descriptions of all the sessions, see our website at www.achievementgap.uconn.edu

Opening Keynote Speaker



Dr. Sonia Nieto

Sonia Nieto is Professor Emeritus of Language, Literacy, and Culture, School of Education at the University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Nieto's scholarly work has focused on multicultural and bilingual education, curriculum reform, teacher education, Puerto Rican children's literature, the education of Latinos, immigrants, other culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.

She has received many awards for her research and advocacy, including the Educator of the Year Award from NAME, the National Association for Multicultural Education (1997), the 2005 Outstanding Educator from the National Council of Teachers of English, the 2006 Enrique T. Trueba Lifetime Achievement Award for Scholarship, Mentorship, and Service, and two awards from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) at the 2006 annual meeting.

Featured Session Speakers

Eugene Chasin

Director, Accelerated Schools, University of Connecticut

In the late 1980s, Gene was the principal of a very successful Accelerated School in California that gained national attention for its increased achievement. He later became a school superintendent in Massachusetts. Currently, he serves as the director of Connecticut's CommPACT schools initiative and is vice chairman of the Coalition for Comprehensive School Improvement.

Margaret Beecher

Principal, Bugbee Elementary School, West Hartford

Peg is the author of a book entitled *Developing the Gifts and Talents of All Students in the Regular Classroom*. She was awarded the Outstanding Administrator of 2007 by the University of Connecticut Alumni Association. She also received a Citation of Merit from the Connecticut Association of Schools and was a Finalist for the National Distinguished Principal Award.

Jason Irizarry

Assistant Professor, Curriculum & Instruction, University of Connecticut

Jason's research focuses on urban teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention with an emphasis on increasing the number of teachers of color. His additional areas of interest include culturally responsive pedagogy, urban youth culture, and Latino students in U.S. schools.

In Brief

The third annual Closing the Achievement Gap Conference will feature locally and nationally renowned speakers presenting research and best practices for closing the achievement gap.

We are excited to announce our keynote speaker: *Sonia Nieto* and our featured session speakers: *Eugene Chasin, Margaret Beecher, & Jason Irizarry*.

The conference registration fee is \$100.00 and includes a continental breakfast, catered lunch, parking, and conference materials. Registration forms and directions can be found online at www.achievementgap.uconn.edu.

Please be sure to register early. The deadline for registration is May 16th. Prior to May 16th, there will be a \$ 50.00 cancellation fee. We cannot refund registration fees for cancellations after May 16th.

Schedule

8:00am	Registration & Breakfast
9:00am	Opening Remarks
9:15am	Keynote
10:30am	Session A
11:45am	Lunch
1:00pm	Session B
2:30pm	Session C
3:45pm	End of Conference

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CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP CONFERENCE



Wednesday, May 28th, 2008
8:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Student Union
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT

Check for registration information & updates at
www.achievementgap.uconn.edu