



Urban League of
Greater Pittsburgh

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

Agency Media Report
June, July, August 2015



Elsie Hilliard Hillman
December 9, 1925 – August 4, 2015

“Every person she ever met, she made to feel as though they were her best friend and that she would do anything for them, but her family always came first in her heart”

– Henry Hillman

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Date	Topic	Media Outlet
6/1/2015	Report: Many lack access to “opportunity schools” Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
6/1/2015	BMLDI application ad	Soul Pitt
6/1/2015	BMLDI application ad	Brotha Ash
6/1/2015	Education’s new focus on jobs-ready skills Mentions: Urban League	Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal
6/2/2015	Urban League panel, Bush stress “Black Lives Matter”	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/5/2015	Educational Equity and Excellence Project Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	The Philadelphia Tribune
6/9/2015	Coalition to rally for fair school funding from state Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, and Esther L. Bush	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/11/2015	Closer Look: Who’s Coming Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Thanksgiving Distribution	Pittsburgh Business Times
6/16/2015	Three Rivers Youth celebrates 135 years Mentions: Esther L. Bush	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/16/2015	Community Calendar Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Operation Home	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/23/2015	Community Calendar Mentions: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Operation Home	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/30/2015	Corporate diversity conference promotes mentoring Mentions: Esther L. Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	New Pittsburgh Courier
6/30/2015	‘Do the Write Things Challenge’ – An initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence Mentions: Esther L. Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	New Pittsburgh Courier
7/7/2015	NAACP president introduces national march Mentions: Esther L. Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	New Pittsburgh Courier
7/18/2015	National Lab hosts event for sake of science Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post Gazette
7/18/2015	Energy jobs revealed to students Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Tribune Review
7/20/2015	Black Who’s Who Mentions: Esther L. Bush	Pittsburgh Post Gazette

Date	Topic	Media Outlet
7/21/2015	Bank On Greater Pittsburgh to hold free Financial Literacy Symposium Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Bank On Greater Pittsburgh	The Almanac
7/21/2015	Financial Literacy Symposium Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Bank On Greater Pittsburgh	New Pittsburgh Courier
7/26/2015	Promise program gets a reality lesson Mentions: Esther L. Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post Gazette
7/28/2015	Who's Who unveiling blows up Twitter Mentions: Esther L. Bush	New Pittsburgh Courier
7/28/2015	Community Calendar Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	New Pittsburgh Courier
8/1/2015	You should know Sabrina Saunders Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Magazine
8/4/2015	Urban League hosts Financial Literacy Education Symposium	New Pittsburgh Courier
8/5/2015	W. PA loses grand dame of GOP Mentions: Esther L. Bush	Tribune Review
8/6/2015	'Elsie was on their side' Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
8/11/2015	Sleep Health	New Pittsburgh Courier
8/11/2015	Elsie Hillman's support for the Black community remembered Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Esther L. Bush	New Pittsburgh Courier
8/18/2015	Community calls for federal voting rules on 50th Anniversary Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, Esther L. Bush	New Pittsburgh Courier
8/26/2015	2015 Partnership Appreciation Event Mentions: Urban League, Esther L. Bush, and more	UPMC Center for Engagement & Inclusion
8/27/2015	It's hard to find and retain employees as economy improves Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
8/28/2015	Richard W. Taylor Mentions: Urban League President Esther L. Bush	Pittsburgh Tribune Review
8/28/2015	Reunion to mark patriarch's 101st birthday Mentions: Dr. Major Mason, co-editor, along with Dr. Ralph Bangs, of "The State of Black Youth in Pittsburgh," a 562 page book printed for the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	The Daily News
8/31/2015	Execs bring can-do attitude Mentions: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Tribune Review

Coalition to rally for fair school funding from state

by Christian Morrow
Courier Staff Writer

In three weeks, a coalition of corporations, nonprofits, faith organizations and education advocates from across the state will meet in Harrisburg to send a single message to legislators ahead of state budget negotiations: put a fair school funding formula in place.

The Campaign for Fair Education Funding includes more than 50 organizations all concerned with Pennsylvania's dismal standing with respect to funding disparities among its school districts. Two recent reports place it last, or near last in the nation.

Allies for Children Executive Director Patrick Dowd, a former teacher, school board member and Pittsburgh councilman, said the scope of the coalition is unlike he's seen but they are galvanized

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by the issue of improving educational equity for children across the state.

"We don't believe money fixes everything," he said. "But if you have children that are already challenged by poverty and give them less money—that definitely doesn't work."

That, according to studies published by the Education Trust and the National Forum on Educational Statistics is exactly what Pennsylvania has been doing.

The lack of a funding formula, Dowd noted, coupled with the heavy reliance on local property taxes have resulted in a 33 percent funding disparity between the wealthiest and poorest districts in the state, ranging from \$8,000 per student to \$24,000 per student. This, the studies say, has led to:

- 93 percent of school districts reducing staff;
- 50 percent furloughing teachers or other staff;
- 74 percent cutting or reducing at least one academic program, and
- 57 percent increasing class size.

Dowd said a new system needs to be put in place, and his organization has developed one that can address the current funding disparities. But it won't happen overnight.

"This is an old problem. We don't expect resolution in one year or with one piece of legislation," he said. "But we could put something in place that moves in that direction—a student-based system."

The formula would multiply a dollar amount by number of students in a district and weight it according to factors that challenge performance such as deep or moderate poverty, non-English speakers, homelessness, etc.

"We also suggest using sparsity, the population per area and the number of charter schools. Then determine state and local funding percentage," he said. "If state did that, it would become one of the best in the country—because it starts with the students and their needs."

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh President and CEO Esther Bush, herself a former teacher, will be making the trip also, and is excited to be part of the initiative.

"This is a big deal. We have civil rights groups, religious groups, educators public and charter school advocates from across the state all coming together on behalf of our children," she said. "It's evolutionary and revolutionary, and I'm proud to be a part of it. But Individuals need to know they have a roll in this too, and elected officials need to see that people care about this"

That's why she, Dowd and coalition members like A+ Schools Executive Director Carey Harris, Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network President Rev. Richard Freeman, and attorney Cheryl Kleinman of the Education Law Center are urging individuals to join them in Harrisburg.

For information on buses leaving for the rally, contact Mara Christy 412-586-0880 ext. 2 or email mara.christy@alliesforchildren.org.

(Send comments to cmorrou@newpittsburghcourier.com.)





PHOTO: WITH GUY FERNANDEZ FROM LARAMORE and Soul Pitt CEO Donna Baxter

Greater Pittsburgh Charter School in East Liberty, Propel East in Turtle Creek and Propel McKeesport.

Two others are operated by Pittsburgh Public Schools: Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy 6-12, a magnet school known as Sci-Tech in Oakland, and Obama 6-12, an international studies magnet in East Liberty.

One, Verner Elementary in the Riverview School District, is a traditional public school.

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Propel East, Urban League and Verner were honored for their elementary grade levels, Propel McKeesport for its middle grades, Sci-Tech for middle and high school grades, and Obama for high school grades.

While PennCAN counts 4,940 students in high poverty schools, only 2,622 attend the opportunity schools.

There are many ways to measure school performance. The state Department of Education uses a School Performance Profile core for each public school. Even with their success, none of the school performance scores of the PennCAN's opportunity schools fall into the top 25 percent of scores in the state.

Jonathan Cetel, executive director of PennCAN, acknowledged the opportunity schools haven't reached the top quarter where many affluent schools reside. Still, he said, "There are schools in Allegheny County that deserve celebration and we can learn a lot from. But we have a long way to go to be getting students access to the high quality education they deserve."

Mr. Cetel said, "What we want our public education to do at the very least: A kid no

state average."

He said the report creates a sense of purpose and a sense of urgency.

"I want people to report and feel both and outraged to do," he said.

The report highlights factors that contribute to high performance: high standards; high expectations; flexible autonomy to adapt to needs; use of data; and deep relationships with students and families.

The report also lists "on-the-cusp" schools that just missed the cutoff. The list includes eight schools operated by Pittsburgh Public Schools: Allegheny North Side, Beechcroft PreK-8 in Beechcroft, Brookline PreK-8, Brookline Greenfield, Liberty K-5 in Shadyside, Liberty K-5 in Point Breeze, Liberty K-5 on the South Side.

Other regular schools listed as on the cusp are Carnegie Elementary in Carlynton, Elroy Elementary in Brentwood, and Woodland Hills Academy in Woodland Hills.

Three charter schools were on the cusp: Manchester Academy, Propel Montour and Center High School, Doan.

Of on-the-cusp schools with both elementary and middle grade levels, Propel Montour was recognized for both levels. The report recognized only four elementary schools except for Hill Middle, Brookline Elementary, and Mount Pleasant, which were recognized for middle grade levels.

PennCAN will be holding the schools' success stories at Kaufmann Center for the Arts House at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

Education writer
Chute: echute@post-gazette.com or 412-263-

Live at the Kelly Strayhorn Theatre
 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15206
Friday, July 10, 2015
 Doors Open at 7:30 PM | Show Starts at 8:00 PM

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