

# EDUCATION

## College student orientations advantageous

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

August and September are traditional months when colleges and universities conduct their new student orientation programs. These programs are not universal remedies for all of a campus' shortcomings, however, they are essential in higher education.

During these visits, students and parents are introduced to classes, administrators, faculty, facilities and services.

I stand by my statement that parents shouldn't worry too much at this point if your son or daughter, as a new or transfer student, is not as clear as he or she could be about their academic or career pursuits. Take it from a parent and educator who knows.

This does not mean that academic and career pursuits should not be defined and refined much earlier in life. Education is a team effort with parents, family, educators and community contributing.

Sometimes even the best



HILTON

By Dr. Keith  
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plans can go astray. Students don't always heed advice. And sometimes we don't give them the best advice or provide them with enough alternatives. The key remains early, ongoing preparation.

A few years ago, I was on a panel that dealt with "Self Esteem and African-American Youths" sponsored by the African-American Caucus of the California Teachers Association.

A lot of the information covered in the conference was based on research and true life experiences.

Most parents or teachers may not have the time or interest to conduct scientific research, but they usually

score pretty high when it comes to reality checks.

When I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to college. However, I had no idea what I wanted to major in. One of my sisters, who had a big influence on me, graduated from Norfolk State College (now university). I was fortunate to have her and several others as models.

But even with these role models, I didn't know what the initials; A.A., B.A., M.S., etc., meant until I took my new students' orientation course. By the way, the initials stand for Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Science.

Today, I still encounter

undergraduate and graduate students who are not sure of some of the terminology that is used to "move them through" their collegiate studies.

It has been my observation that many students don't participate in orientations. However, by not participating, they miss an opportunity to get a head start. (Also, nowadays many colleges have introduced sessions on cultural awareness and sensitivity).

This year, as each year, we strongly encourage you to participate in your school's orientation. Get involved and let us know how it went.

Perhaps next year, you will participate as an orientation guide or peer counselor. Stay involved and encourage others to, also.

Don't be intimidated, be assertive and confident.

**HILTON: HIGHER EDUCATION** is an internationally syndicated column designed to dialogue with college and world readers..

## Teacher retention a hurdle in Indiana

By Barato Britt  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
from the Indianapolis Recorder

As Indianapolis students await the upcoming school year, moving up a grade may not be the only change they deal with.

For the Indianapolis Public School (IPS) administration, the 1997-98 school year has meant hiring new teachers to replace the slew of old ones who left over the summer seeking greener pastures.

To date, 30 teachers have turned in resignation. That number is projected to increase to 40 once school starts. But there is no need to worry, according to IPS officials who say resignations are typical this time of year.

Charlie Kent, assistant superintendent of human resources, said the administration will be able to meet faculty replacement demands. "There's no need to panic, we're getting the schools filled," Kent said.

While the reasons for the resignations vary, a large percentage of the faculty are leaving to seek financial and career advancement.

In surrounding townships, faculty payroll and benefits are determined by federal funds and revenues generated by the local tax base. Since the IPS district has the lowest tax base in the Indianapolis area, teacher pay is correspondingly low.

"All of us (would) like to advance and make more money," Kent said. "We can say that IPS is competitive but the township's salary structure is not quite high."

A perceived limit to career advancement has also driven some teachers from the system. But some suggest that teachers are using IPS as a proving ground or stepping stone. School officials say the situation is much more complex.

On a promising note, Kent said many teachers are still loyal to IPS' inner city students and to the needs of the school system. They have reconciled the fact they won't get immediate raises or advancement opportunities, he said.

"Teaching is not about making widgets," said Kent. "We talk about money being an issue, but when you talk about teaching, it's a gut level feeling. The real loyalty is to the kids. If I'm teaching in IPS, I'm loyal to the students in (the) system."

## FastWEB links students, colleges

*By Teresa Thorne*

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Do you know a student who needs money for college?

More than one million students have already sought the expertise of the Internet's leading scholarship service, FastWEB, to help finance their higher education.

The Internet address is [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). This free, fast and thorough service quickly sorts through 180,000 financial aid awards to match students with scholarships appropriate to their individual qualifications.

"As the cost of college education continues to skyrocket, we offer a free service that helps students fund their educations," says Bob Michelson, president of FastWEB. "In less than a year, usage of our free service has more than quadrupled, indicating that FastWEB is an ideal way for students to get accurate scholarship information within minutes."

Students access the FastWEB home page. The FastWEB service equips each student with a personalized, password-protected mailbox, and asks a series of questions, including name, major, hobbies, special interests, etc.

After completing the questions, FastWEB will scan its database of 180,000 listings to find financial aid outlets that match a student's profile. Within five minutes,

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FastWEB provides the student with a list of all matching scholarships and a sample letter which can be used to request the scholarship application.

FastWEB recently introduced a new e-mail notification feature that makes the service even more convenient for students. Students automatically receive e-mail updates from FastWEB whenever a new award has been entered into the database that matches their unique criteria.

Updates are provided daily on over 180,000 scholarships in the FastWEB database — with over 500 new or updated scholarships added daily. Students are encouraged to check their personal mailboxes daily to learn of

new scholarships.

The value of FastWEB's services also has been recognized by the Department of Education, the National

Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, FinAid: The Financial Aid Information Page, and nearly 400 of the largest universities and colleges in the United States — many of which have "hyperlinks" from the university's website to FastWEB. FastWEB is also linked to the Department of Education's website.

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