

## School

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fer less in the way of high standards," said Ross Wiener, policy director of The Education Trust, an advocacy group for poor and minority children. "It is a shame that a country dedicated to equal opportunity tolerates these inequities."

Among students in public schools, 59 percent are White, 19 percent are Hispanic and 17 percent are Black, according to Education Department numbers from the 2003-04 school

year.

In the poll, students in wealthier schools reported fewer serious problems than students in poor schools, but results were not available for racial groups of different income levels.

Minority parents were more likely to see problems in schools, just as their kids did.

Black and Hispanic parents were more than twice as likely as White parents to call weapons and fighting a very serious problem. They re-

ported bigger concerns about crowded classes and low standards.

Most teachers, meanwhile, said academic expectations for students were high regardless of the racial makeup of the school. Teachers in mostly minority schools reported less parental involvement, lower support from their superintendent and poorer grammar among their students.

The findings are based on phone interviews with a random sample of 1,379 parents

of children now in public school, 1,342 public school students in grades six through 12, and 721 public school teachers. The interviews were conducted between Oct. 30, 2005 and March 7.

The margin of error for the sample was plus or minus 4 percentage points for the parents and teachers and 3 percentage points for the students. The poll was paid for by the GE Foundation, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the Wallace Foundation.

## Villaraigosa

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school district have enrolled at the Marcus Garvey School in South Los Angeles, they usually lag behind academically, said Linda Saunders, the school's executive director.

"You know, I don't think they're being challenged," Saunders said of the district's students. "It's always been the philosophy of [Marcus Garvey School founder] Dr. Anyim Palmer that no matter how large the class, the teacher — if she has the right agenda — can reach all students," she explained.

"I think charter schools are better than what's going on now. And I don't know [Villaraigosa's] full plan, but if it's more accountability for teachers and smaller classrooms — if those things can be accomplished — our children will benefit."

The mayor's proposal includes a strategy to sell L.A. Unified's huge headquarters building, reduce its staff from 3,100 to 100 and increase the number of charter schools in the district.

Board member Marguerite LaMotte said the best approach is a "cooperative and

collaborative effort with the mayor's office and the school district."

"That would be in the best interest of the children right now," she said.

"The district has had a good plan. We have been studying the low-performing middle and high schools. We have a plan. We're going to do some innovative things. I don't know what [Villaraigosa's] plans are. I just think we need to give our

plan a chance."

Part of the school district's plan calls for going to 20 of the lowest academically-performing middle and high schools and installing extra teachers so that "there will always be a pool of substitute teachers," LaMotte said. "That's the main thing. That's something that we should have [already] done."

Gene C. Johnson Jr. writes for the WAVE Newspapers.

## Court upholds firing of Nolan Richardson

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) - A federal appeals court said Friday that Nolan Richardson wasn't a victim of racial discrimination when the University of Arkansas fired him four years ago.

Richardson said after a hearing at the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that "they came after me" when he spoke out against racism at the Fayetteville school.

The appeals court said that by the time of Richardson's complaint, university administrators already wanted to fire the only man to coach Arkansas' basketball team to a national championship.

University lawyer Scott Varady said the school "always said that coach Richardson was not terminated based on his race or the exercise of any First Amendment rights."

Richardson attorney John Walker said the coach was traveling and not available for comment. The lawyer said the coach's complaint against the university had a positive effect. He noted Friday that the university had hired Cynthia Nance, a Black woman, to serve as dean of its law school.

"I would ask whether or not that would have happened ... if Mr. Richardson had not gone forward," Walker said. "When Black people or people in general assert their rights under the law, we profit as a people."

Phil Kaplan, the main attorney for the university in the case, disagreed that the Richardson case helped lead to Nance's hiring. "Dean Nance secured that position on her own merits," he said.

"I think that Mr. Walker can have his views about the result of the lawsuit or the bringing of the lawsuit," he said. "But when litigation goes on and there is no merit to that litigation, I really don't see that there is any benefit."

## Skins

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Others have earned as much as \$20,000 apiece for skins used in major motion pictures. Just ask Israel Cook who entered the first Howard University Windows Media Player Skins Challenge in 2002.

The user-interface skin Cook entered, "Past & Beyond," went on to take first place in the competition. At the time, Cook was majoring in computer science at Howard University in Washington, D.C. His work caught the attention of Hollywood; subsequently, Cook has created skins for "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" and "Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life." From there, the WB television-network came knocking and asked him to create a skin for their drama "Smallville." Currently, Cook is webmaster at BET.com, an affiliate of Black Entertainment Television, Inc.

The men behind the competition are Todd Shurn, Ph.D., associate professor of Systems and Computer Science at Howard University and executive producer of the 2005 Skins Challenge; and Keith Toussaint, program manager in the Windows Digital Media Division of Microsoft.

To quote Shurn said, "The Skins Challenge is a tremendous opportunity for enterprising students to demonstrate their creativity in developing culturally enlightened state-of-the-software digital media products for a worldwide audience."

This year's final round was held at Howard University and was once again won by Howard students, Paul Onakoya from Baltimore, Md., Munyiri Kamau from Germantown, Md., and Chinweizu Owunwanne from Rochester, N.Y.

Fortunately, for the rest of the field, these three winners, known as "The Three Wise Men," are seniors and ineligible to compete next year because this is the second year in a row they have won.

Like last year, the 2006 winning entry was based on an African theme. The skin "Ngao" is an African shield inspired by Shaka Zulu, a warrior and general. In addition to the normal functionality one would expect to find in a media skin, the Ngao also has an information tap that will tell you more about the Shaka Zulu and his place in history.

Fred Green is a technology consultant and writes for NNPA.

## Your Horoscope Says... June 1-7

### ARIES

Share in the glory of your friend who has been recognized for outstanding work. Plan a small get-together to celebrate the occasion. Your time will come, and you will be placed on the pedestal. Watch out for a new romance that might come along.

Soul Affirmation: Someone wonderful is looking to find me.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 26, 35

### TAURUS

People can get on your nerves, can't they? And this week is one of those weeks. Getting through it will be a test. You can get the highest grade on the test by smiling at the stupidity of those who oppose you. They don't know any better and this week you can't teach them.

Soul Affirmation: The winner is me. I smile for the cameras.

Lucky Numbers: 22, 28, 29

### GEMINI

A secret may be revealed in a casual conversation. Your confidence is valued and appreciated. Take it all in! There's no returning to what has been once you realize the gift you've been given.

Soul Affirmation: Freedom of mind is the greatest gift for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 22, 36

### CANCER

Drive the speed limit in all things this week or you could wind up with a ticket of some kind. Why rush? Serenity is available if you only stop and listen for it inside of you. Discharge your usual obligations with dignity

and count your blessings.

Soul Affirmation: I obey the rules this week and avoid hassles.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 24, 35

### LEO

Slow down and relax your brain-energies! The universe knows how to take care of itself and of you. Give it a chance by getting your mental schemes out of the way. Sometimes it is hard, but trust!

Soul Affirmation: I let my luck work for me.

Lucky Numbers: 21, 27, 34

### VIRGO

A friend from the past could suddenly appear in your life. This could be a highly beneficial reunion for both of you. Let bygones be bygones, and renew this friendship. Love isn't used up just because it's shared with many.

Soul Affirmation: I love many people this week.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 40, 45

### LIBRA

Be open to a new friendship that could bring public recognition, a new assignment, or a raise in income. You'll also be pleased with romantic vibes that come from far away. Call! Someone special is waiting to hear from you.

Soul Affirmation: Distant love is sometimes sweeter.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 28, 36

### SCORPIO

You'll radiate with confidence and enthusiasm this week. Important people will be impressed. Make sure you spend time in their presence. The week promises success in making new starts with old contacts. Refresh yourself by socializing just for fun.

Soul Affirmation: My spirit makes

all things new.

Lucky Numbers: 31, 39, 42

### SAGITTARIUS

An unexpected piece of excellent advice comes from an old friend. Heed well what is said. Follow your intuition concerning matters at work. Your gut feelings are wiser than your brain this week. Trust you feelings more than your thoughts.

Soul Affirmation: I let my instincts light my way this week.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 45, 55

### CAPRICORN

This is a good time for personal inventory. Dust off old ideas. They will shine brighter than any new ideas this week. You are primed for success in an agreement about a money matter.

Soul Affirmation: I find many things about myself that I really love.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 20, 28

### AQUARIUS

Socially your positive vibes can take you a long way this week. Your intuition serves you well in business. A new move is favored. Open yourself up to financial flow. It's coming.

Soul Affirmation: I open myself up to the wealth of the universe.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 44, 48

### PISCES

Your home can be your best profit center this week. Expand your concept of what profit is. Boost your attention to your lover's personal needs. Invest time in being considerate. Put other people first this week.

Soul Affirmation: By rewarding others I reward myself.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 21, 29