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Availability of Free Tutoring More than Doubles for Baltimore City Students

Local education group helps get word out to parents

WASHINGTON, DC (September 1, 2005) — Information packets and applications for free tutoring are going home in the backpacks of approximately 25,000 students in Baltimore city public schools tomorrow.

The free tutoring, mandated under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, is available to low-income students if they are eligible for the free lunch program and are in kindergarten through eighth grade at a school that fails to meet state-defined academic achievement targets for three consecutive years.

Free tutoring slots are available for 9,200 students in Baltimore city this year. Last year 4,200 slots were available.

“Baltimore is one of the few major urban markets in the country where parental demand for the program matched the number of slots available last year,” said Barbara Davidson, Project Director of Parent Power Works. “We could not be more delighted that events have conspired to so dramatically increase the number of slots available to poor families this school year.”

The jump in numbers is due to a slight increase in the 2006 Title I allocation, a carry-over of money from last year, and an increase in local funds.

Tutoring, called supplemental educational services in the language of No Child Left Behind, can be provided by nonprofit or for-profit businesses, faith-based organizations, or local education agencies. The tutoring generally takes place after the regular school day and is provided by educational companies selected and approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. The “value” of a tutoring slot for Baltimore city public school students is about \$1,900.

With the help of about 10 volunteers recruited by Parent Power Works, the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) is hand-delivering the applications to 53 elementary and middle schools. This marks a big change in distribution from last year, when the free tutoring information was sent to schools electronically and the individual schools were told to make arrangements to get it home to parents.

“With 5,000 additional slots, we want to do everything possible to get the word out to parents before the sign-up deadline at the end of September,” said Delshan Hanks with the Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development, one of the participating volunteer organizations.

More information about the tutoring service, will be provided at fairs on Saturday, September 17, 2005 (Edgewood Elementary located at 1900 Edgewood St.) and Saturday, September 24, 2005 (BCPSS Headquarters located at 200 E. North Ave.) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Representatives from the tutoring companies will be available to speak with parents.

Parent Power Works is a project of StandardsWork, a nonprofit educational consultancy that since 1992 has worked with school systems across the country to improve student performance. The Parent Power Works project is designed to provide the tools needed for parents of children in low-performing schools across Maryland and the District of Columbia to make informed assessments about the quality of their child's education and take whatever actions are necessary to secure the best education for their child. Parent Power Works strives to identify and train partners in all communities where there is a concentration of schools identified as "needing improvement." The state list of supplemental educational services in Maryland can be found at www.bethepower.org.

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