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PPW Applauds Schools for Efforts to Engage Parents

Free Tutoring Deadline Extended for Baltimore City Students

WASHINGTON, DC (October 25, 2005) — Parent Power Works today recognized ten schools and principals for their success in getting parents to sign their children up for free tutoring. The schools are:

Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle	Principal: Alease Owens
Dickey Hill Elementary/Middle	Principal: Joyce Hughes
Dr. Carter G. Woodson Elementary/Middle	Principal: Patrick Harris
General Wolfe Elementary	Principal: Christopher Gaither
Harriet Tubman Elementary	Principal: Angelette Bazemore
Pimlico Middle	Principal: Brenda Abrams
Tench Tilghemann Elementary	Principal: Charletta Logan Generett
Thurgood Marshall Middle	Principal: Richard Greene
West Baltimore Middle	Principal: Toni Worthington
Westport Academy	Principal: Barbara A. Johnson

“These schools and their principals really went the extra mile to get the word out to as many parents as possible,” said Barbara Davidson, Project Director of Parent Power Works. “We want to encourage more schools to follow in their footsteps. Prompted by the Maryland State Department of Education, school districts throughout Maryland are paying increasing attention to parental involvement. We hope those officials will take note of the multiple avenues of outreach used at these schools.”

Strategies used included distributing applications, hanging posters at all entrance/exit doorways, displaying applications in areas easily accessible to parents, talking to parents directly about the opportunity (during morning and afternoon greeting periods), and making daily announcements on the PA system and in class.

Davidson noted how important it is for schools to make sure parents are aware of this opportunity to help their children through after-school tutoring. “If they, the parents, don’t apply for these funds — which simply requires filling out a one page form and returning it to the school — the funds will go back to the school district to use as it wishes — and there’s no guarantee they’ll use it for tutoring.”

The deadline to apply for free tutoring, called Supplemental Education Services, has been extended for Baltimore city school students, meaning there's still time for parents to sign their children up for tutoring valued at about \$1,900 per child.

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 in a school that has failed to meet state-defined academic achievement targets for three consecutive years.

The number of free tutoring slots in Baltimore city more than doubled from 4,200 last year to 9,200 this year. So far this school year, about 7,200 students have applied.

The tutoring is provided by nonprofit or for-profit businesses, faith-based organizations, or local education agencies that have been approved by the Maryland State Department of Education and generally takes place after the regular school day.

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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