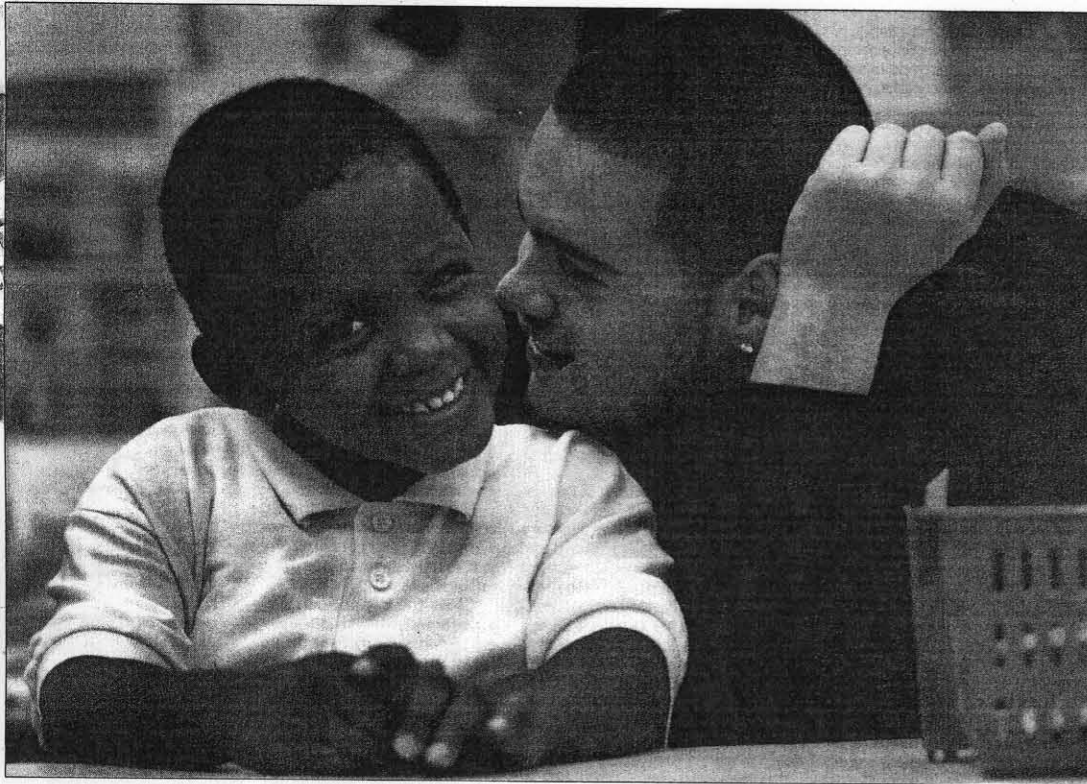


SCHOOLS



STARTING EARLY: Stranahan High student Daniel Nusser works with kindergartner Iverson Dorelus at North Fork Elementary in Fort Lauderdale in a Broward School District program that recruits high-schoolers who want to teach in underprivileged schools. Staff photo/Judy Sloan Reich

TACKLING TURNOVER

"The kids need someone they can relate to. When I was growing up, I didn't have teachers like us."

ASHLEY KNIGHT
15-YEAR-OLD PARTICIPANT
FROM STRANAHAN HIGH
SCHOOL

Broward battles teacher loss by recruiting local high school students to fill future ranks.

BY KARLA D. SHORES
EDUCATION WRITER

For every 100 new teachers who step into Broward County's poor, predominantly minority schools, 35 quit within three years.

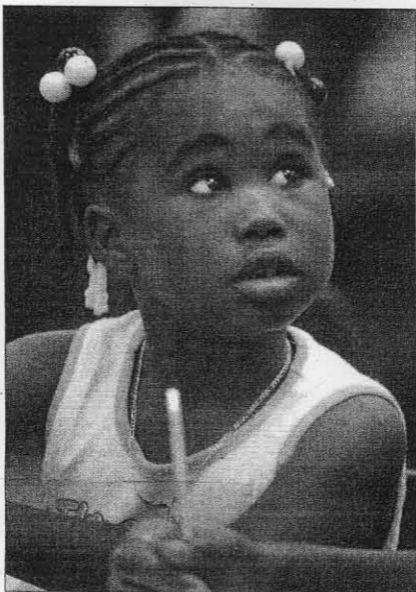
Hoping to combat a dizzying turnover rate that has sapped underprivileged elementary schools of stable teaching staffs, the Broward School District is banking on a "grow-your-own" model.

Its 4-year-old Urban Teacher Academy recruits students who want to teach at poor, predominantly minority schools and starts to train them in high school, coordinator Sara Rogers said.

"New teachers are in many cases high-minded and idealistic, and when they get [to underprivileged schools] it's not what they thought it was," Rogers said.

The academy graduated its first four teacher-hopefuls from Stranahan High last spring and sent them on full scholarships to Broward Community College's education program this fall. The students: Jeannie Davilmar, Ashley Hood, Krystal Rainey, and Christina Sandler. They are expected to return to teach at schools like Northside and North Fork elementaries where more than

■ RETENTION CONTINUES ON 6B



ATTENTIVE: North Fork kindergartner Zariah Bell focuses on program participant Ashley Knight, not pictured, who also attended North Fork. Staff photo/Judy Sloan Reich

Students get scholarships, help district

■ RETENTION

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50 percent of students receive free or reduced price lunch.

"If I hadn't gotten this scholarship, I probably wouldn't have been going to college," said Rainey, 19, who went to Bethune Elementary in Hollywood.

The program will monitor the students through two years at the community college and the next two years at another participating university.

"My instructors are constantly behind me," Rainey said. "If I miss something, they make sure I stay on task."

The district hopes to give four-year scholarships to 120 Academy students each year starting in 2008, and to target more of the district's 101 urban schools.

The district can't require students to return to teach in Broward, but they will lose the scholarship if they drop out of their colleges' schools of education, Rogers said.

Schools involved in the program are: Stranahan, Nova, Deerfield, and Flanagan high schools; Nova, Arthur Ashe, and Silver Lakes middle schools; and Blanche Forman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, North Fork, North Side, Lake Forest, Broadview, and Cypress elementaries.

The Council of Great City Schools donated money to jump-start the program, which is funded by the school board and grants, said Gracie Diaz, associate director of the district's teaching and leadership center.

"Most universities teach to a general audience," said board member Bob Parks,

who helped start the program with leftover funds from his unopposed school board campaign. He also raised money for scholarships in 2002 with Rogers and Broward Education Foundation executive director Michael Long. "But the kids we're looking for have been identified as students in this urban environment who want to teach and give back."

Participating Stranahan High students recently spent an hour working with North Fork Elementary kindergartners and first-graders.

Sophomore Ashley Knight read *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff, to Zariah Bell, 5.

"She asked me what my name is, and I said 'Zariah,'" she said. "It was fun 'cause... she was a good partner. And she gave me a hug."

Knight, 15, said she enjoyed working with North Fork students because she attended the school herself and still lives in the neighborhood just east of Interstate 95 off Broward Boulevard.

"The kids need someone they can relate to," Knight said. "When I was growing up I didn't have teachers like us."

North Fork second-grade teacher Mary Ann Kenealy said she is amazed by how quickly her pupils have taken to the high school students, many of whom attended similar schools themselves.

"They're like natural mentors," Kenealy said. "When you have the right situation in the classroom, these teachers don't want to leave."

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