Eugene T.W. Sanders, Ph.D.
CEO, Cleveland Municipal School District
(CHANGE AGENT)



In the years 2004 and 2006, Cleveland was ranked the poorest big city in America. The poverty rate for Cleveland in 2006 was measured at 32.4%. Poverty is often linked to education, or rather, the lack of it. In 2006, the USA Today News paper published statistics on graduation rates of major U.S. Cities. Cleveland ranked near the very bottom with a graduation rate of only 43.8% . The graduation rate for African Americans, which make up the majority of Cleveland's school system's pupils, is even worse, and the graduation rate for black males is still even worse. Change is needed in the Cleveland public School system. In 2006, Dr. Eugene Sanders came to Cleveland as that needed change agent.

Dr. Sander's credentials:

Dr. Sanders has a PhD. in Educational Administration and Supervision from Bowling Green State University. He has authored a textbook on urban school leadership and written several articles on achievement and organizational improvement in schools.

Prior to coming to Cleveland, Dr. Sanders was superintendent in the Toledo Public School district for six years. He moved that district to its highest academic achievement ranking to date, raising graduation rates, and rising to be one of the few urban districts in the nation to meet the No Child Left Behind guidelines for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Awards that Dr. Sanders has won include:

- state of Ohio recognition for Education Excellence
- Ohio Superintendent of the Year honor by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
- NAACP's Daisy Bates Award
- Accomplished Graduate Award: Bowling Green State University

Dr. Sanders is a native of Sandusky, Ohio

Understanding the challenge

I believe that one of the essential components of Dr. Sanders background is his ability to understand the scope of the problem he will be facing here in Cleveland. In an interview with Crain's Cleveland Business magazine, Dr. Sanders exhibited that he does have a full grasp of what he is getting into. The Following excerpt is from a question of how to restore the community's trust in the school district.

> **One of the things I realized coming in was that we needed to develop a strong, trustworthy relationship with the community…. I think as we are straightforward with what our challenges are, we'll be positioned to establish a higher degree of trust. The community wants to trust us, they want to support us, and they want us to be successful and effective.** (Crains)

When asked the question "What is your biggest challenge in the Cleveland schools? How do you solve that problem"? Dr. Sanders responded:

> **Clearly the biggest challenge for us is the achievement issue in the district, relative to our ability to raise overall academic achievement as measured by the achievement tests of our state. … The ability to raise our academic standards has a direct correlation to the perception that the community will have about our students' abilities, (which) is without question the number one challenge that we have.** (Crains)

I feel that Dr. Sanders fully understands that the challenge he faces will involve political and social forces against him. I think a very important part of his biography is the book he wrote entitled "Urban School Leadership: Issues and Strategies", which was published in 1999, by the publishers "Eye on Education". Some of the chapters in this book are:

- Chapter 8: "Community Relations and Politics in Urban Schools and Communities"
- Chapter 9: "Creating Change in Urban Schools";
- Chapter 1: "Circular Hopelessness, Poverty, and Urban Schools"

I have included in appendix A of this paper the abstract of this book. Information on this book can be found at the Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC# ED434176 .

The Bowling Green State University's weekly publication "Monitor", published an article that served as a quick review of Dr. Sanders' book. The following are a few excerpts:

1. The text describes the "circular hopelessness" often experienced by underrepresented populations‹a hopelessness based on negative interactions with six major institutions in American culture: the

legal system, the financial system, politics and political parties, health care and the family, social services, and business and career socialization. (Monitor)

2. Sanders' book provides insight into a variety of issues facing urban school districts, including economic changes, multiple cultures and poverty. The idea for the text grew from Sanders' doctoral work, completed in 1992 and based on a study of Milwaukee's urban schools. (Monitor)
3. "I've always had an interest in issues related to African-American males and their progress in school," Sanders said. "I hope that, by bringing these issues to the forefront, the text will help graduate students develop a better understanding so that they can play a major role in improving urban schools and their communities."

Change Model:

The changes that Dr. Sanders will be attempting to make is not as explicit as most non- urban school environments. He will need to make broad changes in the social habits of his constituency. He will also have to deal with fiscal problems and poverty related issues. His change model will need to directly affect scholastic achievement as well as drop out rates. Dr. Sanders just took his position in 2006. The second part of this paper will detail his broad change initiatives, and will also give a short term assessment.

Summary:

Dr. Sanders represents the ultimate change agent. He is charged with changing broad Systemic processes that are social, technical, and political in nature. At the same time, he will probably try to implement technological changes also. Ultimately the changes he wants to make will directly improved scholastic achievement. This will be measured in the form of standardized test scores. It will also be measured with improved graduation rates. However, the forces working against him are socio-economic, and political. He also knows that the community is a stakeholder as well as intended adopters in this change model. What he is charged with is massive in scope. From his biography, I believe he is well suited for the challenge. The next part of this project is to detail his broad plans that will help turn around the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

References

Wikipedia.org Reference entry on "Cleveland, Ohio"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleveland,_Ohio

BGSU Monitor 8/23/99 Article "Sanders book examines urban schools"
http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/mc/monitor/pastissues/8-23-99/urban.html

Crain's Cleveland Business Feb. 16, 2007 , Mortland, "Executive Chatter with Eugene Sanders"
http://crainscleveland.com/article/20070216/FREE/70216016/1041/exchatter#

The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio Dr. Sanders Bio
http://www.diversitycenterneo.org/humanitarianawarddinner.asp

Appendix A

ERIC #:	ED434176
Title:	Urban School Leadership: Issues and Strategies.
Authors:	Sanders, Eugene T. W.
Descriptors:	Academic Achievement; Boards of Education; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Leadership; Parent Participation; Principals; Superintendents; Urban Schools; Urban Teaching; Urban Youth
Source:	N/A
Peer-Reviewed:	N/A
Publisher:	Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Suite 106, Larchmont, NY 10538 ($29.95); Tel: 914-833-0551; Fax: 914-833-0761; Web site: .
Publication Date:	1999-00-00
Pages:	219
Pub Types:	Books; Reports - Descriptive
Abstract:	This book attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the major leadership issues facing urban schools. It also provides practical recommendations for improvement to address the challenges of urban school reform. The chapters are: (1) "Circular Hopelessness, Poverty, and Urban Schools"; (2) "Academic Achievement and Parental Involvement in Urban Schools"; (3) "Debating Self-Esteem and Urban Students"; (4) "The Contemporary Urban Teacher"; (5) "The Urban Principal"; (6) "The Urban Superintendent"; (7) "The Urban School Board"; (8) "Community Relations and Politics in Urban Schools and Communities"; (9) "Creating Change in Urban Schools"; and (10) "Leadership Challenges for Urban Schools in the New Millennium." (Contains 242 references.) (SLD)