



DR. GENE T. HARRIS

Superintendent/CEO, Columbus City Schools | 2001- Present

Gene T. Harris, Ph.D., is the 19th superintendent of the Colum-

bus City Schools (CCS). She's a Columbus native with deep roots in the local community and direct experience with public schools as diverse as Ghana and China.

Harris holds a doctorate from Ohio University (OU), earned her master's degree from The Ohio State University and her Bachelor's from Notre Dame.

A graduate of Linden-McKinley High School, Harris was admitted to Notre Dame as an upperclassman in the first year the school accepted women. After graduating, she returned to the district to teach English and drama, moving from the classroom to a supervisor of principals and then deputy superintendent.

Harris understands that strong public schools are essential to our nation's future. She asks staff, parents and community members to "reach higher" so that every student achieves to the level of his or her full potential.

Under the direction of Harris, CCS has focused on building a system of 21st century learning environments, supported by a 15-year, seven-segment capital improvement plan that has thus far resulted in 36 new and renovated schools.

Since 2002, CCS has invested more than \$521 million in new facilities, with the work completed on time and within budget. In 2008, voters approved a combined 7.85 mill levy and 1.13 mill bond issue, generating \$77 million annually in operating funds.

From this bond issue, \$123 million will be used to replace or renovate 10 more schools and \$41 million to purchase new buses, textbooks and computers - while making \$76 million in cuts to remain fiscally responsible.

Additional initiatives target increased parental engagement, higher standards of customer service and marketing.

Academic initiatives include a no-cost Saturday Winter Institute to help students pass the Ohio Graduation Test, a Virtual High School program which enables students earn credits online, and a Credit Recovery Program enables students to retake classes and continue to earn credits toward graduation.

Other academic initiatives include the creation of the CCS Higher Education Partnership which provides a single point of contact between the district and eight central Ohio colleges/universities to develop programs that boost student achievement, college readiness, and create a seamless transition.

They include the Africentric Early College at Columbus State Community College, the DeVry Advantage Academy, the Columbus Teaching Academy on The Ohio State University (OSU) campus, and the Schoenbaum Family Center operated by OSU beside the district's new Weiland Park Elementary School.

In 2009, 21 Columbus seniors, participants of the *Seniors-to-Sophomores* program graduated from high school (2008-2009) with up to one year of college credit from six of these local institutions of higher learning.

Harris serves on the Board of Trustees of OU, the Board of the United Way of Central Ohio, and the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Board. Currently a Sunday School teacher and Trustee at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, she is married to Stanley E. Harris, Vice President of National City Bank.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- 2007 *Donald and Gail Anderson Award* from The OSU College of Education and Ecology
- 2004 *Martin Luther King, Jr., Dreamer Award*
- Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs 2005 *Stellar Performer Award*
- Cavaliers Club Award for Outstanding Accomplishments
- The Children's Hunger Alliance *Champion of Children - Educator of the Year Award*
- CMACAO 2003 *Community Impact Award*
- Two-time winner of the Ingram Award for outstanding leadership as a principal
- National Council of 100 Black Women-Columbus Chapter's *Personal Achievement Award*
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity 2002 *African American Role Model Award Devoted Service Award*
- University Council for Educational Administration *Excellence in Educational Leadership Award*
- YWCA 1991 *Woman of Achievement Award*
- Who's Who in Black Columbus *Master Achiever in Education Award*