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**Tampa Schools Prepare Students For The World Of Tomorrow Through Global Classrooms**

**By Patricia Hawke**

The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), along with New

York-based Merrill Lynch & Co. Inc., has brought the Model United Nations to Tampa schools. Originally, only four high schools were participating and only as an extra-curricular activity. Now, over 50 teachers teach the Global Classrooms curriculum to students in over 120 classrooms in 35 Tampa schools. The program has the supported of Tampa schools District Social Studies Supervisors Dennis Holt and Martha Ford, as well as Tampa schools administrators, University of South Florida, and University of Tampa.

The Model United Nations program of Global Classrooms was developed by the UNA to enhance student understanding of international issues. Their hope is to develop strong leadership and critical-thinking skills in our youth, needed to shape a globally informed workforce in the future. To that end, a special Model UN teachers training program was recently developed that includes global trade, finance and development.

Global Classrooms deal with such critical world issues as human rights for refugees, prevention of nuclear terrorism, global economics, post-conflict transition, and UN Security Council reform --- the same issues world diplomats deal with daily in the United Nations. It is an excellent educational opportunity for students in the Tampa schools.

Tampa schools participation increased in the Model UN program after the April 2006 conference, held at the Tampa Convention Center. More than 500 high schools and 600 middle schools participated in the conference of Global Classrooms.

Ambassador William H. Luers, president of the UNA-USA, addressed the Tampa schools students and students from other areas within the Hillsborough and Pinellas County Public Schools. Luers noted that children today must learn about the world to be prepared for tomorrow. The younger the child, the more open minded he or she will be.

Another speaker was Shaun King, former quarterback for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, current player for the Detroit Lions, and a favorite with Tampa schools' students. Like Luers, King wants to see young

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people use all that talent they have. He believes it truly makes a difference, especially for children of single-parent and/or disadvantaged families.

The UNA-USA is a not-for-profit organization that develops innovative programs to engage Americans, especially the children, in issues of global concern. It promotes educational and humanitarian campaigns, as well as policy and advocacy programs. The UNA's mission is to allow people to make a global impact at a local level.

The Model UN program would not be possible without the support of business. Merrill Lynch has donated more than \$37 million in 2005 to charities with educational organizations receiving more than half. They are responsible for bringing the April Model UN conference to Tampa and underwrote the cost of implementing the program in the Tampa schools.

Together, the UNA and Merrill Lynch hope to bring the Model UN experience to urban public schools across the nation, as well as a diverse array of schools around the world.

It is a fact that the U.S. is losing its world economic edge by falling far behind other countries in preparing its youth for the global world issues of tomorrow. With programs, such as the No Child Left Behind that concentrates only on reading and mathematics skills, the children of the U.S. are missing an opportunity to know about the world and its issues. Bringing the Model UN program to students in areas like the Tampa schools is an essential step. Hopefully, more Tampa schools will participate in the future.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more on Tampa schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Florida/Tampa/index.html>

### **Tampa Schools Encouraged -- Student Referrals To County Disciplinary Panel Down**

**By Patricia Hawke**

The Tampa schools are a member of the Hillsborough County School District, in which the Disciplinary Committee resides. The disciplinary panel deals with the troubled youth who commit serious offenses and policy violations at school. The panel imposes such measures as expulsion or reassignment to another school.

This past school year of 2005-2006 had the lowest number of referrals to this disciplinary panel than any other since the 1998-1999 school year.

Tampa schools, along with the other school districts, have been trying harder to solve student problems in-school, before making referrals to the panel. This obviously has increased the number of

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in-school suspensions over previous years; however, the Tampa schools believe their mission is to teach children — and you cannot teach those who are not attending school. Tampa schools have cautioned their principals to be more patient and tolerant with problem students, when their offenses do not hold a danger to other students, educators and school employees. Additionally, Tampa schools educators have been educating students more aggressively on the district's zero tolerance of violent acts and other serious offenses, strongly stressing the consequences of such acts.

The Hillsborough County School District has about 191,000 students, many of which belong to the Tampa schools (the county seat). In the 2004–2005 school year, 1,602 students were referred to the panel for hearings. Those referrals decreased to 1,369 students in the 2005–2006 school year. These resulted in:

·183 students expelled; ·660 recommended for change of school placement; ·More than 400 were exceptional education students, who legally cannot be expelled and were recommended for change of school placement; and ·113 received no expulsion or change of school placement.

The panel also saw a drop in weapons referrals. In the 2004–2005 school years, there were 336 weapons offenses. In 2005–2006, they received 311 weapons referrals, of which 19 percent were firearms. The surprising statistic is that more middle school students brought firearms to school than high school students, though this trend was seen in Pasco, Pinellas and Polk counties, as well.

Principal Katie Hoffman, of the Tampa schools' Madison Middle School, believes that the psychological development and maturity level of this age group may have something to do with the high statistics. She believes that children at this age try to impress others at a higher rate than high school students, testing their limits and succumbing to peer pressure to prove themselves.

Unfortunately for the Tampa schools, their Chamberlain Senior High School had the most overall referrals with 49. Tampa schools' Blake High School came in second with 40. The Tampa schools' also led the way for elementary offense referrals with five for Cahoon Elementary.

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