



Conference Report

Launching Atlantic Legal's Guide to *Leveling the Playing Field*

DECEMBER 2005

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"Charter schools...are making a giant contribution to the United States. They are here to stay."

Secretary Rod Paige

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Secretary Rod Paige Honored

Former U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige was the keynote speaker when Atlantic Legal announced its Charter School Advocacy Program, a nation-wide effort to advance the mission of charter schools and parental choice in education, at a conference in New York City on November 7, 2005.



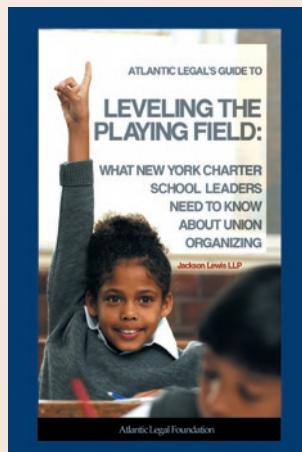
Secretary Paige, who received Atlantic Legal's inaugural Freedom Award for Leadership in School Choice, said that "charter schools...are making a giant contribution to the United States. They are here to stay."

To encourage the growth of charters, Secretary Paige said that inferior charters should be shut down, otherwise "charters are going to look a lot like traditional schools." Paige also emphasized the need for the charter school movement to do a better job of communicating its message. "We've got a story that we've got to get out; we've got to get it out in the right way; we can't depend on the media to do that."

Secretary Paige was introduced by Atlantic Legal President William H. Slattery who praised the Secretary's lifelong service to education and his leadership in the passage and implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation.



Mr. Slattery observed, "Secretary Paige's initiatives began to turn the aircraft carrier around and at long last it's moving."



The conference featured the launching of the first in a series of educational guides for charter school leaders: [What New York Charter School Leaders Need to Know About Union Organizing](#).

Panel Discussions

Secretary Paige's remarks were preceded by two panel presentations together titled "Solving Charter School Personnel Challenges."

George Fatheree, Chief Operating Officer of the California Charter Schools Association, was the moderator of one panel discussing the recruiting and retention of charter school teachers and principals. The panelists were: **Norman Atkins**, co-founder of Newark's North Star Academy and co-founder of Uncommon Schools; **Linda Brown**, Executive Director of Building Excellent Schools; **Chris Clemons**, Associate Director of the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship; **Caryl Cohen**, a consultant on certification and recruitment for the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence; and, **Becca Weinstein**, Senior Recruiting Officer for Achievement First.

A second panel was staffed by four partners of Jackson Lewis LLP, a national law firm representing management exclusively in workplace law and related litigation. This panel introduced the first edition of Atlantic Legal's *Leveling the Playing Field* series. **Thomas Walsh** and **Roger Kaplan**, authors of the New York edition, were joined by **Susan Corcoran** and **Jeffrey Corradino**.

Biographies of Participants

Dr. Roderick Raynor Paige

Rod Paige is a national policy fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center and a senior advisor for Westmark Systems which specializes in high quality education programs for teachers and administrators.

Dr. Paige brings the credentials of a distinguished career in education to his new positions. He was the first school superintendent to serve as Secretary of Education, and as the nation's top education official from 2001–2005, he was the driving force behind the enactment and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

His appointment by President George W. Bush as the seventh U.S. Secretary of Education was a signal honor for Paige, the son of a principal and a librarian in public schools. Born in 1933 in segregated Monticello, Mississippi, Paige's accomplishments speak of his commitment to education. He earned a bachelor's degree from Jackson State University in his home state. He then earned both a master's and a doctoral degree from Indiana University.

Paige began his career as a teacher and coach. He served for a decade as dean of the College of Education at Texas Southern University (TSU), working to ensure future educators would receive the training and expertise necessary to succeed in the classroom. He also established the university's Center for Excellence in Urban Education, a research facility that concentrates on issues related to instruction and management in urban school systems.

Elected to the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District in 1989, Paige was a trustee and an officer until 1994, when he became Superintendent of HISD, the nation's seventh largest school district. Inside Houston magazine named Paige one of "Houston's 25 most powerful people" in guiding the city's growth and prosperity.

In 2001, Paige was named National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators.

Recruiting and Retaining Charter School Teachers and Principals: Different Approaches

George Fatheree

George Fatheree is the Chief Operating Officer for the California Charter Schools Association. The California Charter Schools Association is the membership, advocacy and support organization serving California's 575 charter schools. While at the Association, Mr. Fatheree has launched the Charter School Legal Defense Fund to provide strategic legal support to California's charter schools.

Prior to joining the Association, Mr. Fatheree developed business and management experience as a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company. Mr. Fatheree has also advised school districts and nonprofits on increasing operational efficiency and creating revenue-generating ventures.

Mr. Fatheree was named one of Silicon Alley's Top 25 Minority Entrepreneurs in 1999, for his work founding govWorks, an e-government company.

Mr. Fatheree graduated from Harvard University with a degree in Government and Religion and is currently a Fritz B. Burns Scholar at Loyola Law School where he is pursuing a law degree. He lives in Pasadena with his wife and young son.

Norman Atkins

Mr. Atkins is president of Uncommon Schools, a charter management organization. He is the Co-Founder of North Star Academy Charter School of Newark and formerly served as Co-Executive Director of the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City. He also is Co-Founder of the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association and an Adjunct Fellow at the New York Charter School Resource Center. Most recently, he helped found Excellence Charter School - an all-male elementary school in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Atkins also has supported the development and growth of charter schools in his capacity as a faculty member for New Leaders for New Schools, a consultant to the State University of New York Charter School Institute, and a trustee of the WKBJ Foundation.

Mr. Atkins has spoken widely on charter schools at conferences throughout the country. He has also written widely on education, poverty and other social issues for such publications as *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Parenting*, *Family Life*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Observer*, and *The Washington Post*.

He earned his B.A. in History from Brown University and earned his M.A. in Educational Administration from Columbia University Teachers College where he received the school's Early Career Award in 1997.

Linda Brown

A leading charter school supporter, Ms. Brown views charter schools as the engine driving all schools to higher standards. She works along with education entrepreneurs as they bring strong educational options to those who need them the most. Her work has been critical and instrumental to the initial success of charter schools in Massachusetts and contributed to the creation of successful charter school support programs across the country. Since 1993 the technical assistance and coaching of Linda and her team has been replicated in almost every state with strong charter school legislation.

Building Excellent Schools supports the design and start up of high performing urban charter schools nationally. Building Excellent Schools' flagship program, the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, is a twelve-month, full-time comprehensive training program that prepares individuals, organizations, and communities to create and operate academically excellent charter schools in underserved urban areas. The Fellowship has contributed to the successful launch of 75% of the charter schools approved in Massachusetts since 2001 and can count schools opened by its Fellows in Washington, DC, New York City, Ohio, Colorado, and New Jersey. The Building Excellent Schools Fellowship currently invites applicants from 10 states/cities.

Chris Clemons

Mr. Clemons' varied experiences in education have primarily been grounded in intense work for SummerBridge, an academically rigorous enric-

ment program for underserved students. His many responsibilities during his seven years of work with the program have included teaching algebra, serving as a primary student guidance counselor, supervising and training program faculty, and serving as program director.

Mr. Clemons has augmented his SummerBridge experience with non-profit work serving low-income, high achieving Philadelphia high school students with White-Williams Scholars, serving as a resident tutor for A Better Chance, and by teaching American History to seventh and eighth graders at Germantown Friends School (Philadelphia).

Mr. Clemons was a Building Excellent Schools Fellow and led the start-up phase of a charter school in Denver.

Caryl Cohen

Ms. Cohen is the certification consultant for the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, supporting charter schools on certification, NCLB and related issues. This position follows her more than thirty year career with the Board of Education of the City of New York where she was Director, Teacher certification and Licensing and, for eight years, Director of Recruitment for New York City Public Schools in a period of decreasing applications for teaching positions.

Ms. Cohen is a graduate of State University of New York, Cortland State College and received a M.S. (Education) from City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York.

Becca Weinstein

BECCA WEINSTEIN is the Senior Staff Recruiter for Achievement First, New York. Working alongside Carla Seeger, Ms. Weinstein is responsible for recruiting and retaining great teachers and school leaders for Achievement First NY schools.

Prior to joining the AFNY team, Ms. Weinstein served as the Literacy Program Coordinator for schools serving court involved youth throughout New York City. Additionally, Ms. Weinstein was a staff developer for Alternative Schools and Programs in the NYC Department of Education. Ms. Weinstein taught middle school in the Alternative

schools for five years. Ms. Weinstein also has worked with the New York City Teaching Fellows. As a Fellow Advisor, she prepared more than 120 incoming special education, elementary and secondary education teachers in their pre-service training in both the summer and midyear programs.

In 2001, Ms. Weinstein was selected to participate in Coro's Leadership New York, XIV. In addition to working with Achievement First, Ms. Weinstein serves as the Director of Literacy for Incarcerated Teens, a non-profit dedicated to creating and maintaining libraries for juvenile offenders in NYC. Ms. Weinstein earned her B.A. in history from the University of Connecticut and her M.S. Ed. from Bank Street in 1997.

Do's, Don'ts, and Best Practices: Addressing Union Organizing and Other Employment Issues

Roger S. Kaplan

Roger S. Kaplan is a partner in the Melville, Long Island office of Jackson Lewis LLP. He received his B.S. degree from Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, and holds an LL.B degree from New York University School of Law. He is a member of the bar of the State of New York, and has appeared before many federal and state courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as administrative agencies.

Mr. Kaplan frequently counsels clients with respect to National Labor Relations Board proceedings, including representation and unfair labor practice cases, collective bargaining, grievances and arbitrations, substance abuse testing issues, Americans with Disabilities Act and workers compensation issues, discrimination complaints and related issues, and OSHA investigations.

Mr. Kaplan has addressed business and professional organizations on National Labor Relations Act issues, OSHA liability, workers compensation, workplace violence and substance abuse, and

has written various articles on labor and employment law. He co-authored “Responding to Union Organizing Campaigns”, a LEXIS NEXIS Matthew Bender Business Law Monograph (rev. 1998) and participated in rewriting Jackson Lewis’s *Winning NLRB Elections*, (CCH 4th ed. 1997). Mr. Kaplan also edited and contributed to *The Accountant’s Role in Labor & Employment Relations*, published by the American Society of Certified Public Accountants (CPE-DW). He is a past contributor to the American Bar Association’s Committee on Labor Law publication, *The Developing Labor Law*.

Susan Corcoran

Ms. Corcoran is a partner in the White Plains, New York office of Jackson Lewis LLP, and has been with the Firm since April, 1990. Ms. Corcoran has practiced exclusively in the area of employment and labor law, and regularly litigates or defends administrative matters on behalf of the firm’s clients. She counsels clients on a variety of labor and employment law matters, and serves as a firm expert and resource on nationwide policy development and background investigations (including Fair Credit Reporting Act compliance issues).

Ms. Corcoran also speaks on employment-related topics before various human resource and other groups, as well as serves as an adjunct professor at Manhattanville College, teaching a masters level class on employment legal issues. She has published a variety of articles on employment law issues, addressing domestic violence in the workplace, fair credit reporting issues, workplace investigations and sexual harassment.

Jeffrey J. Corradino

Mr. Corradino is a partner in the Morristown, New Jersey office of Jackson Lewis LLP. He received his juris doctor degree from New York Law School cum laude after graduating from Montclair State University. He is admitted to practice in New Jersey and New York and is a member of the New Jersey Bar Association. Mr. Corradino has extensive experience representing employers before the National Labor Relations Board in employment related litigation, collective bargaining and employment related coun-

seling. Mr. Corradino is a frequent speaker on Human Resource and legal topics such as *How to Avoid the Courthouse and Other Third Party Intervention; Navigating FMLA, Workers’ Compensation and ADA Issues; Managing in an EEO World; How to Avoid Sex Harassment; and Collective (and Corrective) Bargaining and Administration*.

Thomas V. Walsh

Mr. Walsh is a partner in the White Plains, New York office of Jackson Lewis LLP. He received a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from Long Island University and his Juris Doctor from St. John’s University. He is a member of the New York State Bar Association and of the American Bar Association, and participates in the labor and employment law sections of both organizations.

Since joining the firm in 1986, Mr. Walsh has represented employers in all aspects of labor and employment law and litigation. He has represented many employers before state and federal courts, regulatory agencies, as well as in numerous arbitrations. Mr. Walsh has extensive experience in representing employers faced with union organizing drives, in collective bargaining, and in proceedings before the National Labor Relations Board. He has litigated matters on behalf of employers before numerous U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, and has appeared on behalf of national industry groups before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Walsh frequently lectures on labor and employment law developments before professional and business organizations. He is also a resource for developing legal and legislative strategies for clients and industry groups.



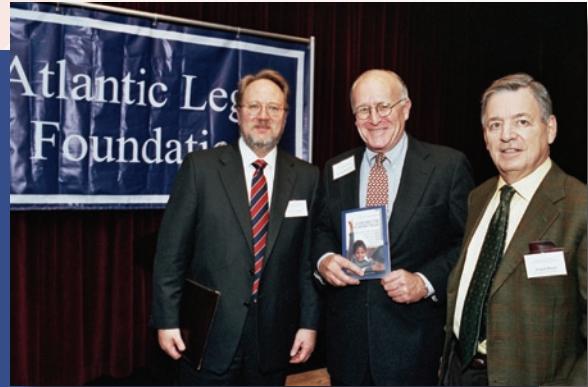
Secretary Rod Paige receives Atlantic Legal's inaugural Freedom Award for Leadership in School Choice from President Bill Slattery.



Secretary Paige explained: "We have already passed this hurdle about whether or not there will be charter schools. That argument is settled...they're here to stay."



Secretary Paige with (L to R) Atlantic Legal's General Counsel Martin Kaufman, Peter Murphy, New York Charter Schools Association, and Briscoe Smith, Executive Director of Atlantic Legal's Charter School Advocacy Program.



Tom Walsh (L), a principal author of *Leveling the Playing Field*, displayed by Atlantic Legal's Briscoe Smith. Joseph Reich (R) of the Pumpkin Foundation, supported the guide's publication.



Atlantic Legal Advisor Thor Halvorssen (C) confers with Darrell Bradford (L) and Dan Gaby (R) of New Jersey's Excellent Education for Everyone.



Panelists (L to R) Becca Weinstein, Chris Clemons and Linda Brown. Clemons described finding that the public school system was so "besieged with bureaucracies and other requirements that...didn't make a lot of sense and didn't really translate towards improving academic outcomes...."



Norman Atkins and Caryl Cohen. Atkins voiced succinctly the views of other panelists: “the single biggest thing we know is without great teachers nothing else really matters.”



George Fatheree, panel moderator, lamented the “strained” relationship with the teachers’ union and urged charter leaders “to put our minds at work...finding some middle ground.”



Panel moderator Roger Kaplan of Jackson Lewis introduces his partner Susan Corcoran.



Thomas Walsh noted that “most charter operators want to keep their flexibility...to remain free from entanglements with government agencies and staying free from collective bargaining with the teachers’ unions.”



Jeffrey Corradino said that where charter school employees affiliate with a union they change their relationship with their employer and engage in “the most inefficient process ever created by man—the process of collective bargaining....”

Charter School Advocacy Program Advisory Committee

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