

The Educational Policy Institute's

# student success

WINTER 2011

The Newsletter for Higher Education Professionals

A close-up portrait of Neal E. Boyd, a man with a slight smile, wearing a grey beret and a dark jacket. The background is dark and out of focus.

## Neal E. Boyd

An EPI Interview with America's got Talent 2008 winner

## EPI's Student Success Story

A glance of UTEP's Computing Alliance for HSIs

## EPI-DAS

EPI's New Data Analysis System

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**Student Success** is an occasional e-publication of the Educational Policy Institute to EPI members. Premier membership to EPI may be purchased at [www.educationalpolicy.org/memberships.html](http://www.educationalpolicy.org/memberships.html).

If you would like to comment on this edition of **Student Success** or suggest an article for our next issue, please contact [info@educationalpolicy.org](mailto:info@educationalpolicy.org) or call (703) 875-0701.

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## THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE

**Opening Shots**..... 3

**Interview**  
Neal E. Boyd ..... 5

**EPI Student Success Story**  
CAHSI & UTEP ..... 8

**EPI-DAS**  
EPI Data Analysis System ..... 10

**EPI Memberships**  
Benefits and Sign in Form ..... 12



The **Educational Policy Institute (EPI)** is a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-governmental organization dedicated to policy-based research on educational opportunity for all students. EPI is a collective association of researchers and policy analysts from around the world dedicated to the mission of enhancing our knowledge of critical barriers facing students and families throughout the educational pipeline.

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*Watson Scott Swail, Ed.D.  
President & CEO  
Educational Policy Institute*

# Opening Shots

Last fall, I had the privilege of meeting Neal Boyd, America's Got Talent 2008 winner, at AACRAO's SEM Conference in Dallas, Texas. I didn't know anything about Neal. In fact, I almost didn't meet him (I attend a lot of conferences, and typically "miss" the general sessions so I can conduct other EPI work. I know hotel rooms well).

But I decided to poke my head into this one. My good friend Jay Goff of Missouri University of Science and Technology, who also was chairing the AACRAO conference, pulled me over to his table. Neal was sitting next to him and was about to go up on stage.

Neal is a big boy. Not tall, but big. He commands presence even before he opens his mouth. And within about 30 seconds, Neal owned the audience. He owned me.

Neal Boyd comes from a small town in rural Missouri. A small white town. And Neal is Black. In this issue of Student Success, Neal gives us an insight into the challenges he faced growing up, and how it was important to look toward college and other opportunities to help not only him, but his mother.

In the end, Neal earned two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree in management. He has succeeded. But his greatest achievement, perhaps, was in Summer 2008 when he sang Puccini's *Nessun Dorma*, winning the America's Got Talent 2008 competi-

tion. He is now living his dream as a singer.

At AACRAO, Neal told the audience of his humble beginnings, about his drive to succeed, the factors that contributed to success, and the people in high school and college who helped make it all happen. Then he sang. And sang. He brought most of us to tears with his story, insight, and talent.

I invite you to see Neal LIVE with us at RETENTION 2011 in San Diego this June. Come experience a person who has persevered and succeeded. Let Neal share his dream with you.

See you in San Diego.





The Educational Policy Institute's

# Retention

# 2011

*An International Conference on Student Retention*  
June 12-14, 2011, San Diego, CA

## JUNE 12-14, 2011 - SAN DIEGO, CA

The Educational Policy Institute cordially invites you to attend RETENTION 2011, our sixth annual conference dedicated to exploring contemporary issues related to student success. Hosted by the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina in San Diego, CA on June 12-14, 2011, this year's conference looks like it could be our biggest in years, based on the number of proposals for presentations received. We will have the most breakout sessions ever, with 65 concurrent sessions, plus our plenary sessions. The event will bring together teachers, administrators, researchers and policymakers from around the world who are dedicated to promoting student

### THERE WILL BE TWO PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS:

Workshop 1: An Introduction to Student Retention  
June 12, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon; Dr. Watson Scott Swail,  
Educational Policy Institute

This session will outline a retention framework and discuss issues related to defining retention on campus, data usage, student tracking systems, campus buy-in, and proven practices.

Workshop 2: Building a Roadmap for Meeting Institutional  
Regional Goals

June 12, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm; Jay Goff & Harvest Collier, Missouri University of Science & Technology

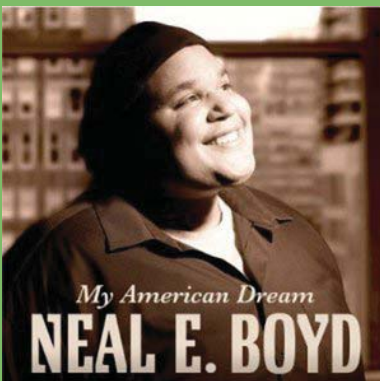
This session provides an opportunity for institutional leaders to discuss how coordination between offices in data collection can be useful in analyzing institution-specific retention issues.

## F E A T U R E D   S P E A K E R

Neal E. Boyd, 2008 winner of America's Got Talent

The unlikelyst of superstars, singer Neal E. Boyd won the hearts and votes of millions of fans when he appeared as a contestant on the wildly popular NBC show "America's Got Talent." Now, with the release of his highly anticipated debut CD "My American Dream" on Decca (June 23rd), Neal is determined to make sure that his example and his music inspires others to succeed.

Neal Boyd credits his readiness to succeed to many of the educators and mentors who believed in him and made a difference in his life.



**HIGH SCHOOL • TWO-YEAR • FOUR-YEAR • PROPRIETARY**

## Student Success: An Interview with Neal E. Boyd

**T**he unlikely of superstars, singer Neal E. Boyd won the hearts and votes of millions of fans when he appeared as a contestant on the wildly popular NBC show “America’s Got Talent.” Now, with the release of his highly anticipated debut CD “My American Dream” on Decca (June 23rd), Neal is determined to make sure that his example and his music inspires others to succeed.



A struggling singer who has overcome a

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- Student Success Magazine (Quarterly E-Magazine);
- The Swail Letter on Higher Education (Monthly E-Newsletter);
- The Journal on Student Success (Quarterly E-Journal);
- 20% Discount on all EPI events including webinars

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- Campus Student Organization, 1 year, \$895
- Institution-wide campus, 1 year \$1,995
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**Enroll now at [www.educationalpolicy.org](http://www.educationalpolicy.org)**

He was also a member of Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity.

Discover how Neal Boyd found his success path through an interview with by Dr. Swail. Neal Boyd will be a keynote speaker at EPI 2011 International Conference on Student Success in San Diego this coming

My brother Michael and I were mixed and therefore, it wasn’t the easiest time for my mother. As we grew up, we realized the challenges we were going to face to be accepted in the town [such as getting into the] little league baseball team or anything like that. Yet, we tried to find our way. We grew up next to a park and we couldn’t get a lot of kids to play ball with us, so we played with each other and we became really good. Our uncle was playing in the minor league at that time and eventually joined the major one. We competed with being like him. He was

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- Student Success** Magazine (quarterly e-magazine); only available through Premier Membership;
- The Swail Letter on Higher Education** (bi-monthly e-newsletter); only available through Premier Membership;
- DataWorks** (bi-monthly e-newsletter); data and analysis on key issues in K-12 education; only available through Premier Membership;
- The **EPI Book Club**, read a book and talk with the author (six times annually);
- The **Journal of Student Success** (bi-annual e-journal); only available through Premier Membership
- Professional Networking Resources** Access to an exclusive network of professionals with whom members can associate and use as professional resources;
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Call us at (703) 875-0701 or email [info@educationalpolicy.org](mailto:info@educationalpolicy.org) if you have any questions. Registrations can be made on our website.

# EPI PREMIER MEMBERSHIP

The Educational Policy Institute, a non-profit research think-tank dedicated to the study of issues related to educational access and opportunity, has launched a premier membership level to give professionals access to a wide assortment of materials and services from EPI. Compare below benefits included in EPI Premier Membership:

Feature	Details	Free Membership	Premier Membership
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<b>Access to Limited EPI Publications &amp; Reports</b>	Download a limited number of EPI publications & reports on a wide variety of topics relating to access to educational opportunity, student retention, and related issues.		
<b>EPI Book Club</b>	EPI Webinars are an ongoing series of interactive online presentations focused on a variety of educational topics in the areas of early childhood, secondary and post-secondary education.		
<b>Access to All EPI Publications &amp; Reports</b>	Download all EPI publications & reports at no cost using a Premier Discount code.		
<b>Student Success Magazine</b>	Quarterly publication devoted to issues about postsecondary student retention, persistence, and graduation. Student Success includes articles from practitioners and policy experts, interviews with people of interest, book reviews, and best practices.		
<b>Journal of Student Success</b>	Biannually e-journal focusing on issues ready to K-12 and postsecondary education. The peer-reviewed journal provides articles from around the globe on relevant policy and practical issues related to helping students succeed in education.		
<b>The Swail Letter on Higher Education</b>	Bi-monthly e-magazine on important and timely issues in higher education.		
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