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Council of the Great City Schools

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School Board Member in Tampa Wins Nation's Top Prize in Urban Education Leadership

BOSTON, Oct. 27 – Candy Olson, a 17-year member of Florida's School Board of Hillsborough County in Tampa, tonight received the 2011 Richard R. Green Award, the nation's highest honor for urban education leadership, at the Council of the Great City Schools' 55th Annual Fall Conference here.

Six school board members from big-city school districts nationwide competed for the top prize, which is given in alternating years to an outstanding school board member and superintendent from 65 of the largest urban school systems in the country.

Olson received the 22nd Annual Richard R. Green Award from the Washington, D.C.-based Council, America's primary coalition of urban schools; ARAMARK Education, a support services company; and Cambium Learning Group-Voyager, a learning intervention provider.

The Green Award is named in honor of the first African-American chancellor of the New York City school system, who had also headed Minneapolis Public Schools back in the 1980s.

Currently vice chair of the Hillsborough County school board, Olson has been a longtime crusader for quality education for all students. She had led efforts to diversify Hillsborough County classrooms when the school system was struggling with desegregation issues.

"Candy Olson's leadership goes beyond Florida, as she has made significant contributions to improving education for urban schoolchildren nationwide," says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly. "She has headed the Council's Achievement Gaps Task Force and By-Laws committee, and now serves as chair-elect to lead our urban-school reforms in the coming year."

As the recipient of the Richard R. Green Award, Olson receives a \$10,000 college scholarship to present to a high school senior of her choice in the Hillsborough school system or from her high school alma mater.

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