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Urban Schools Coalition Marks Anniversary of *My Brother's Keeper*

Over 60 Major City School Systems Working to Implement Pledge

WASHINGTON -- The Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, joined with President Obama and the White House today in marking the first-year anniversary of *My Brother's Keeper*, the Administration's initiative to improve outcomes for the country's males of color.

"This work on behalf of our boys and young men of color continues to be one of President Obama's signature initiatives, and one that the nation's Great City Schools are proud to join," stated Michael Casserly, the Council's executive director.

Since standing with the president last July to pledge to improve a range of educational outcomes for males of color attending the nation's big city public schools, the urban coalition has convened its members to begin working on implementation plans, partnered with both the NBA and the College Board on a series of joint activities, and begun the process of benchmarking its progress over the long-run.

In addition to implementing the work around its pledge, the Great City Schools have also linked up with mayors and other community leaders in their cities, and have held a number of citywide town hall meetings and other forums to ensure broad discussion of and involvement in the critical issues around the joint work. Communities like Long Beach (CA), Albuquerque, Fort Worth, and others have assembled community members and young people to tackle the challenges that President Obama has articulated.

The education of the nation's African American and Hispanic males remains a central priority of our Great City Schools, and the pledge that member school districts in the Council's coalition took entails enhancing early childhood education, improving student achievement, reducing disproportionate suspensions and expulsions, decreasing dropout rates and boosting graduation rates, and other steps.

"The activities that our Great City Schools put into motion will last well beyond this Administration and will be sustained until every one of our students has access to the highest academic standards and attains their full potential," added Casserly.

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