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Council of the Great City Schools
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**Statement by Michael Casserly, Executive Director
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On
The Death of R. Sargent Shriver**

WASHINGTON -- Many know Sargent Shriver, who died yesterday at age 95, as the founding director of the Peace Corps. He's also remembered for leading President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, representing the United States as its ambassador to France, as well as his run for president and vice president.

But most people don't know that Mr. Shriver was a co-founder of the Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems.

In 1956, as president of the Chicago Board of Education, Mr. Shriver delivered the keynote address at the initial meeting of an *ad hoc* group of big-city school leaders. He stressed in his speech the importance of boosting the quality of vocational education in the nation's cities, which were struggling with the outflow of manufacturing jobs.

His speech, which called for the elimination of separate regular and vocational educational tracks, hit home with urban educators at the time, and subsequently led the fledging group to incorporate itself and launch a multicity vocational education project. The work of the group helped develop the rationale for the federal Vocational Education Act of 1963 and later the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The coalition of urban school leaders took Mr. Shriver's initial concerns about vocational education and built a national organization that focuses today on raising urban student achievement, improving school leadership and management, and boosting public confidence in big-city public schools.

The Council of the Great City Schools will remember the contributions of R. Sargent Shriver in helping to build the foundation for the Council as well as for his leadership in developing the anti-poverty programs that help support our urban children.

We salute Mr. Shriver for his efforts to make this nation and world a better place for all of us.

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