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Council of the Great City Schools
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. ♦ Suite 702 ♦ Washington, D.C. ♦ 20004
<http://www.cgcs.org>

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Contact: Henry Duvall
(202) 393-2427

Statement by the Council of the Great City Schools On the White House Meeting with Urban School Leaders

WASHINGTON – The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation’s largest urban public school systems, today led some 30 urban school superintendents and board members to a roundtable discussion with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Obama Administration officials at the White House to discuss how best to utilize the economic stimulus package to improve and advance American urban public education.

“We had an opportunity to learn how we might take advantage of the stimulus funds in creating and saving hundreds of programs to help our inner-city children achieve, implementing shovel-ready projects to aid in modernizing our school buildings, and investing in initiatives to provide the best school teachers and principals in underserved schools,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

Showing gratitude for the stimulus funds, Bill Isler, chair of the Council and member of the Pittsburgh school board, stressed, “We know that we need to spend the funds wisely, transparently and effectively in a short period. With this meeting today, we have a better idea of how to channel the funds to spur progress in the classrooms and throughout our school systems to enhance reform efforts.”

Boston Public Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson noted that the roundtable discussion gave her a better understanding about the stimulus provisions, guidelines and funds, and how they can be put to use in accelerating reform efforts. “We believe that Secretary Duncan and President Obama appreciate the need to spur progress in the nation’s urban centers to improve the economy and better prepare our students for global competition.”

The nation’s Superintendent of the Year, Atlanta’s Beverly Hall, welcomes the stimulus funds to help lift her reform initiatives to new heights. “With this new support, Atlanta Public Schools is ready to put the funds to the best use in elevating our educational programs to increase student progress.”

School leaders from New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Miami, Detroit, Philadelphia and other major cities throughout the nation attended the two-hour session.

In addition to Secretary Duncan, the urban educators also met with President Obama’s senior adviser, Valerie Jarrett.

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