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Council of the Great City Schools
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**Statement by Michael Casserly, Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools
On
President Obama's Education Waiver Initiative**

WASHINGTON -- The Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban school districts, announced its support for President Obama's proposal to waive various provisions of the federal *No Child Left Behind* program in exchange for an array of school reforms.

The proposal would provide greater flexibility over local use of funds otherwise reserved for supplemental services that have proven ineffective over the years and mandated for professional development if states proceed with adopting higher academic standards, turning around chronically low-performing schools, and tying personnel evaluations to student achievement to a greater degree. The proposal would also redefine NCLB's accountability provisions and sanctions.

"We wish the reauthorization process had moved through the regular legislative process," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council, "but the climate on Capitol Hill has made that unattainable in a timely fashion. In the meantime, the law needs to be revamped. We applaud President Obama and Secretary Duncan for moving forward."

At the same time the Council lends the new initiative its support, the organization also calls on states to refrain from substituting their regulations and mandates for those the federal government is setting aside. Doing otherwise would undercut the Administration's laudable aim to provide greater flexibility to local educators and would undermine the pursuit of reform and improvement of the nation's major urban school districts.

The Council urges the states to apply for these new waivers and work with their city school systems on those applications. If the states are reluctant to proceed, urban districts should initiate their own applications.

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