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Council of the Great City Schools
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School Modernization Woefully Needed in Urban Schools; Investment Would Create Jobs, Says Report

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14 – Most of the nation's big-city school buildings are more than 60 years old and overcrowded, with urban school systems needing substantial construction, renovation and deferred maintenance to meet the classroom needs of today, says a new city-by-city report released by the Council of the Great City Schools.

In a survey of America's 65 largest urban school districts, the Council found with 50 districts responding that they have approximately \$15.3 billion in new construction needs, \$46.7 billion in repair, renovation and modernization needs, and \$14.4 billion in deferred maintenance needs for a total of about \$76.5 billion.

Facilities needs range from replacing and modernizing old, out-dated facilities, updating science and computer laboratories to renovating and upgrading roofing, plumbing and heating systems, especially to meet fire and other safety codes.

With all the facilities work needed in the urban school systems, it would provide more than 165,000 construction jobs in a variety of occupations in the first year of a funding investment, the report, *Facility Needs and Costs in America's Great City Schools*, points out.

"School modernization in the nation's major city school systems is critical to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning to prepare students to meet the challenges facing America today in the global marketplace," stresses Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

Projected Needs Exceed \$100 Billion

Of its 65 member big-city school systems, the Council projects that urban school districts need approximately \$20.1 billion in new construction, \$61.4 billion in repair, renovation and modernization, and \$19 billion in deferred maintenance, totaling some \$100.5 billion in facilities needs.

The Council also projects that its 65 school systems could start some \$16.3 billion in facilities projects in the first year, if funds were available, supporting at least 215,000 construction and trade jobs. Upgrading the facilities would improve the learning environments for some 7 million inner-city school students, the report notes.

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