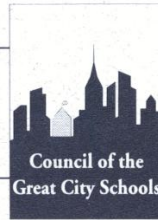


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Council of the Great City Schools

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Miami-Dade County Schools Receives Top National Honor For Financial Management

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 – The Council of the Great City Schools today recognizes the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for employing the highest standards in financial management, accountability and fiscal control.

The coalition of the nation's big-city school systems presented the **Award for Excellence in Financial Management** to the nation's fourth largest school district for its financial performance in safeguarding and protecting the financial integrity of the school system.

This is only the third time since the Council initiated the award six years ago that it has honored a school district with its highest national award for sound financial management. And Miami-Dade County is the first major urban school district in the nation to meet *all* mandatory and recommended management practices of 136 practices across nine broad categories of financial operations.

Calling the school district the "Miami Miracle," Council Executive Director Michael Casserly recognizes the school board, superintendent, chief financial officer and staff for providing exemplary financial management and stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

"The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is leading the way in demonstrating that excellence in urban education is attainable, that rigor in financial operations is doable, and that public confidence and trust are winnable," stresses Casserly.

Seven years ago, the Council embarked on an initiative called the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project to identify performance measures, key indicators and best practices to improve and maximize school-district operations in finance and budget, business services, human resources, and information technology.

As a result, the Council developed rigorous standards leading to the establishment of criteria to create an award for excellence. Participating school districts must comply with a series of management practices that are considered the highest standards in financial accountability.

The Council convenes a panel composed of respected senior financial executives from major school systems across the nation to conduct the review process, which includes an assessment of the district's management practices and an extensive site visit.

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