



Council of the Great City Schools
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On the Selection of Arne Duncan as U.S. Secretary of Education

WASHINGTON -- The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation's largest big-city school districts, applauds President-elect Barack Obama's selection of Chicago Public Schools Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan to lead the U.S. Department of Education during this important time.

With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, popularly known as the *No Child Left Behind* law, still pending, there is need for fresh leadership and innovation to improve education for all America's children, particularly those in our Great Cities.

The reform-minded Arne Duncan understands the importance of urban schools in the national debate about the status and future of public education. He also knows the challenges facing the nation's big-city public school systems as the leader of the third largest school district in the country for the past seven years.

He and other urban school leaders have achieved substantial academic gains and strengthened accountability despite the challenges. Duncan, like others in urban education, wants to accelerate the pace of student achievement, close racial and economic achievement gaps, recruit and retain effective teachers, and modernize buildings.

His track record leading the Chicago Public Schools has prepared him well to lead the U.S. Department of Education and to improve education for all American students. He has led reforms that have helped Chicago students improve reading and math scores on the state-mandated test in Illinois. The number of students taking advanced placement (AP) courses has tripled over the past seven years, and the number of students passing AP exams continues to rise. College enrollment has steadily increased, and teacher quality has improved under his leadership.

As U.S. secretary of education, if he can help us improve other big-city schools as he helped Chicago's school system, then his contribution will have been profound.

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