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Council of the Great City Schools

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Urban Schools Coalition Calls for Fully Balanced Budget Deal With Both New Revenue, Entitlement Reform To Avert ‘Fiscal Cliff’

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 – The Council of the Great City Schools calls on national leaders to design a *fully* balanced budget solution that includes both revenue and entitlement program reforms to prevent the looming “fiscal cliff” of pending federal budget cuts and tax increases in 2013.

The organization also cautions that the investment in educational programs for disadvantaged students, English learners and students with disabilities, as well as teacher professional-development programs, must be strengthened—not cut—to avoid an “academic proficiency cliff” as the nation works to implement the more rigorous Common Core State Standards.

“The economic implications of the educational cliff are as serious as those presented by the fiscal cliff itself, and the nation’s leaders should keep these twin issues in mind with the same sense of urgency,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

While primary attention has been focused on the political wrangling over raising revenue through tax increases on the wealthy, financial reform of the massive entitlement portion of the federal budget is also essential for a lasting solution to the national deficit/debt crisis and fiscal cliff, the Council points out.

Without a balanced resolution to the “fiscal cliff,” federal domestic discretionary programs in education and other areas (which constitute only 16 percent of the budget) will be squeezed out, and important investments in the nation’s future like better schooling will be permanently undermined.

Today, the Council provides a snapshot of the major effects of the potential across-the-board cuts, or sequestration, on education programs and services for tens of thousands of urban schoolchildren without a budget deal before the new year.

It releases a research brief – *Impact of Sequestration on the Nation’s Urban Public Schools* -- based on a survey of more than 30 big-city school districts. Access the web link for the findings: http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Sequestration_Research_Brief.pdf

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