



Council of the Great City Schools  
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## **Big-City Schools Credit Stimulus Funds for Saving Jobs**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29 – Some 75,000 to 90,000 jobs have been paid by federal stimulus dollars in the nation’s big-city school districts, according to the Council of the Great City Schools.

The Council has been monitoring and aiding urban school districts on the use of the unprecedented infusion of federal stimulus dollars since President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law back in February. Large urban public schools are expected to receive a substantial amount of the new education aid.

“Big-city school systems are using the stimulus money to pay for education jobs, fill gaping budget gaps, meet unmet needs and pursue short-term reforms with long-term payoffs,” says Council Executive Director Michael Casserly.

In Boston, Superintendent Carol Johnson says, “The additional federal dollars have enabled us to restore teaching positions and other jobs that were in grave danger of being cut in this enormously challenging economic environment. But the ARRA grants also allow us to make investments today that will strengthen our infrastructure and develop human capital for long-term gains as well.”

Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall welcomes the federal funding, which she says is being used to support professional development and academic programs that otherwise may not have been possible. “The programs APS has initiated with these federal revenues will improve teacher quality and student academic achievement, and they are designed to continue to have a positive impact on the district beyond when the funding is scheduled to terminate.”

In Baltimore, the city’s chief executive officer of schools, Andrés Alonso, notes, “The stimulus funds allow us to continue to advance our reform priorities over the next two years and sustain student achievement gains. We will do this by continuing to create great school options for students, expanding staff support that is tied to performance, and better using our data to be responsive and accountable to our students and families.”

A \$500,000 grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation recently gave the Council a boost in providing assistance to urban school districts to ensure that the federal stimulus funds are spent effectively, productively and transparently.

The Council has developed a web site for urban districts to post their plans and query each other on the use of stimulus funds. It's also publishing a guide and providing advice and counsel to the school systems.

The coalition of the nation's urban school systems finds a variety of promising ways districts are using the stimulus money in addition to saving jobs:

- Alaska's Anchorage School District is preparing students for postsecondary education, training and careers to help meet the state's workforce needs;
- Boston Public Schools plans to support the district's strategic plan, *Acceleration Agenda*, to help English language learners close the achievement gap; and
- Pittsburgh Public Schools plans to strengthen *Pathway to Promise*, a ninth-grade readiness program designed to ease the transition between eighth and ninth grades.

The Council is still compiling detailed information on how urban school districts are using their stimulus dollars.

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