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## **Urban Schools Provide Jobs and Reforms with Stimulus Funds, Report Shows**

### ***Major Education Job Cuts Looming for Upcoming School Year***

WASHINGTON – The nation's big-city school districts saved thousands of jobs, upgraded programs, and increased capacity to advance educational reforms with an unprecedented infusion of aid from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) signed into law by President Obama in February last year.

The economic stimulus package provided \$7.3 billion to 40 urban school districts responding to a survey, paid for some 50,000 full-time equivalent jobs this current school year, and allowed big-city school systems to increase services to urban schoolchildren, according to the Council of the Great City Schools in a new report titled *Investing Wisely and Quickly -- Use of ARRA Funds in America's Great City Schools* released today.

In the 2009-10 school year, ARRA funds paid for more than 13,500 jobs in the New York City school system, some 7,000 in the Los Angeles school district, and nearly 3,800 jobs in Chicago Public Schools, the nation's three largest public school systems.

All told in the current school year, the Council estimates that more than 65,000 jobs were paid for with ARRA support across the 65 urban public school systems that are members of the organization.

"ARRA funding has been a life saver for so many urban schools and children, it helped us expand capacity, and ensured that tens of thousands of critical education jobs were not eliminated in the big cities and across the country," says Michael Casserly, executive director of the big-city group.

The major urban school districts also utilized the federal stimulus package for a variety of instructional enhancements in professional development, early childhood initiatives, English language learner programs, summer enrichment, community engagement, behavior supports, assistive technology, among many other activities and services to bolster and sustain reform efforts.

"Urban school districts should be commended for the productive and responsible ways they used the federal stimulus dollars," adds Casserly. "Public education continues to be worth the investment of Congress, the Obama Administration, and citizens of the nation."

### **Upcoming Challenges**

Although ARRA has provided a "financial lifeline" this school year, urban schools face a major economic downturn in 2010-2011.

Information reported from 20 big-city school districts for the upcoming school year shows a budget gap of more than \$2.5 billion, affecting some 21,000 jobs.

Several large city school systems face triple-digit budget cuts -- Los Angeles (\$640 million); Chicago (\$600 million), New York City (\$493 million), Nevada's Clark County-Las Vegas (\$141 million), and Florida's Broward County-Fort Lauderdale (\$101.7 million).

The Council projects that its 65 member urban school districts will lose at least \$4 billion in state and local revenue between the 2009-10 school year and the upcoming 2010-11 school year, putting approximately 44,000 jobs in jeopardy without additional assistance.

"In many districts, the federal stimulus funds will be depleted in the coming year," stresses Casserly. "The economy is still not stable, and the worst of state and local education budget reductions may still be ahead."

The Council of the Great City Schools cited the results of the report to announce its support for the education jobs bills in Congress, sponsored in the U.S. Senate by Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and by David Obey (D-Wis.) and George Miller (D-Calif.) in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"This legislation is needed immediately if schools all across the nation aren't to suffer enormous cutbacks this upcoming school year," says Carol Johnson, superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and chair of the board of the Council.

The *Investing Wisely and Quickly* report includes city-by-city information on the uses of the federal stimulus funds for 2009-10.

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