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Ray Hart Named to Lead National Urban School Coalition

Long-serving Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools to Step Down

WASHINGTON, March 22 – Ray Hart, the current research director for the Council of the Great City Schools, was named this weekend by the group’s executive committee as the new Executive Director of the national urban education coalition.

Hart currently serves as Director of Research for the Council, where he is responsible for working collaboratively across the membership to identify and analyze major trends, patterns, successes, and challenges in urban education nationwide. He was instrumental in developing and launching the organization’s Academic Key Performance Indicators, and has led the Council’s efforts around the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and its males of color initiatives.

Prior to joining the Council, Dr. Hart was a Fellow at ICF International. He also served as Executive Director in the Atlanta Public Schools, where he led the redesign of the research and assessment division. Hart has a bachelor’s degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from Cleveland State University, and a PhD in research, measurement, and statistics from Kent State University.

Michael O’Neill, the organization’s Chair of the Board and vice president of the Boston School Committee, made the announcement at the Council’s virtual Legislative/Policy Conference.

In his remarks, O’Neill noted the Search Committee, which was established by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and chaired by Eric Gordon, the CEO of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, conducted an extensive search over the course of more than one year, aided by the search firm of Isaacson, Miller. “As expected from the national reputation of the Council, there was considerable interest in the role and a number of interviews were

conducted with very highly qualified candidates. After significant review, the Search Committee unanimously recommended, and the Executive Committee unanimously agreed, that Dr. Hart is the right person to lead the Council forward. We were energized by his commitment to our work, his involvement in the Council's success to date and his eagerness to continue to focus on equity for all the youth our member districts serve," said O'Neill.

"It is an honor and privilege to be named to this position," said Hart. "My gratitude to the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and the organization for this opportunity is beyond words. I look forward to working with the talented staff of the Council to serve the students and staff in our member districts and help grow the organization's reputation, impact, and influence."

Dr. Hart replaces Michael Casserly, 72, who has been with the Council for 44 years this summer, nearly 30 years of which he has served as the Council's Executive Director. Casserly will remain with the group as a Strategic Advisor. Hart assumes his responsibility as Executive Director on July 1.

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