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Council of the Great City Schools

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FOR RELEASE

July 5, 2022

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Los Angeles School Board President to Lead Urban Schools Coalition

WASHINGTON, July 5 – Kelly Gonez, school board president for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), becomes chair of the Council of the Great City Schools’ Board of Directors for a one-year term, effective July 1.

The 150-member board is composed of the superintendent and a school board member from each of the 76 big-city school districts represented by the Council, the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools.

A former teacher in LAUSD, Gonez has served on the Los Angeles school board since 2017, where she has championed the needs of the most historically underserved students. She has authored policies leading to increased services for homeless students and to remove barriers to college for all high-needs students. Gonez has also helped to increase investment in early childhood education and pioneered the expansion of ethnic studies for all students in the school district, including as a high school graduation requirement. In 2014, she was appointed by President Obama to serve as an education policy advisor.

She succeeds Barbara Jenkins, superintendent of the Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Fla. Jenkins will assume the position of immediate past chair.

Guadalupe Guerrero, superintendent of Oregon’s Portland Public Schools, becomes chair-elect, and Darrel Woo, school board member for Sacramento City Unified School District, has been elected to the secretary-treasurer post.

“As urban schools continue to address pre- and post-pandemic unfinished learning, Kelly’s wealth of experience in urban public education and her deep commitment to serving underrepresented students will be a tremendous asset,” said Council Executive Director Ray Hart. “She and the new team of officers will ensure that the Council remains focused on providing outstanding leadership and helping the nation’s urban school districts provide students with a high-quality education that prepares them for the college or career path of their choice.”

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