



Statement on Refugees

By

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The Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the nation's largest urban school systems, is a longtime champion and strident supporter of immigrants and refugees from around the world. Over the years, our urban centers and schools have been on the front lines of countless waves of immigration, welcoming families and children who have fled war, poverty, and injustice. We continue to address the learning needs of a new generation of refugees from around the world, including Afghanistan and Haiti, who have been displaced from their countries because of political and economic tumult.

We recognize that these brave, young newcomers are an important part of our nation's diverse tapestry. As urban school communities have done in the past, we will open our doors and our hearts to those seeking refuge in our country. To families and friends in our communities who are watching with both hope and horror as refugees struggle in extremely harsh conditions and face poor treatment along our southern border, we offer what support we can.

These students have already faced unimaginable circumstances, and in the coming months and years will face the challenge and opportunity of learning a new language and culture, and of rebuilding their lives in a new country. Most will face the fear and grief of having lost loved ones or having left family behind. Some may come with interrupted formal education. And all will need our full commitment to help them realize a promising future.

The everyday heroes working in our big city schools will once again rise to the occasion, ensuring that these students and their families are treated with kindness and respect, that their experiences and backgrounds are acknowledged and honored, and that they receive the support and services they need to rebuild their lives. Urban educators are committed to supporting immigrant and refugee students not just because these students are in need, not just because it is our legal obligation, but because as a nation, we need them. As our history has demonstrated, the diversity, energy, and bravery newcomers bring make us stronger as a nation and contribute to America's growth and success.