



Urban Educator



2020-2021 School Year Kicks Off With Virtual Learning

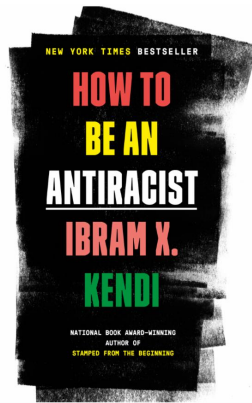
The nation's urban school districts kicked off the 2020-21 school year with most having students learning in a "distance," or remote, environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Starting school virtually is not what many districts hoped to be doing, but it's what they had to do in light of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools. "They worked extremely hard to ensure families had the resources and support to navigate remote learning. This work included developing extensive reopening plans with input from parents, staff and community members; and distributing to homes thousands of computer devices and hotspots, all while continuing to plan, prepare and stay flexible to make sure students received a high-quality education, no matter the setting."

In the midst of a school year unlike any other, big-city school districts also launched new programs, policies, schools and technologies. Here's a roundup of what some

urban school districts are offering:

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Virtual Fall Conference to Feature Bestselling Author

Ibram X. Kendi, a National Book Award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author, will address urban educators at the Council of the Great City Schools' 64th Annual Virtual Fall Conference, Oct. 13-17.

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LA School District Launches COVID-19 Testing and Tracing Program

Los Angeles Unified School District opened the school year with an extensive program aiming to do regular COVID-19 testing and contact tracing with all students and staff as well as families of those who test positive.

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New Superintendent in Austin, Interim Leader Named in Toronto

Texas' Austin Independent School District recently selected Stephanie Elizalde to lead the 80,000-student school district. Elizalde is the district's first Latina superintendent and succeeds Paul Cruz, who left the district to become a professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

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Back-to-School Message from the Chair of the Council



As someone who has been front-and-center as a policy-maker in urban public education for more than a dozen years, I thought I had seen quite a bit over the years.

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Council Applauds Federal Judge's Decision to Block Education Department's Effort to Divert Money from Public to Private Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools applauded the recent decision by a federal judge in Washington state to temporarily block the U.S. Department of Education's plan to divert hundreds of millions of dollars Congress intended to support public schools grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic to private schools.

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Legislative Column

Ignoring the Public-School Financial Crisis

In this election year, even the reopening of schools has become politicized. Yet the looming question of how schools will operate financially through the 2020-21 school year has been virtually ignored by our federal leaders.

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Guilford County Student Creates His Own Classroom

A first-grader at North Carolina's Guilford County Schools in Greensboro transformed



his entire bedroom into a classroom to have a better learning environment during virtual learning.

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[Charlotte, Shelby County Schools Roll Out Meal Bundle Programs](#) | [Former Norfolk School Board Member Dies](#) | [Urban Teachers Receive Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching](#) | [Healthiest Schools in the Nation Recognized](#)

Upcoming Events



64th Annual Fall Conference

The Council of the Great City Schools is holding its 64th Annual Fall Conference virtually.

When:

October 13 - October 17, 2020

[Register Link](#)



Executive Director
Michael Casserly

Editor
Tonya Harris
tharris@cgcs.org

Staff Writer
Joanne Coley
jcoley@cgcs.org

Chair
Michael O'Neill
Board Member, Boston

Chair-elect
Barbara Jenkins
Superintendent, Orange County
(Orlando)

Secretary-Treasurer
Ashley Paz
Board Member, Fort Worth

A newsletter published by the Council of the Great City Schools, representing 76 of the nation's largest urban public school districts. [Click here](#) to learn more. All news items should be submitted to Tonya Harris (tharris@cgcs.org).