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Council of the Great City Schools

1331 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W., Suite 1100N, Washington, D.C. 20004

cgcs.org

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CONTACT: Henry Duvall

(202) 393-2427 or hduvall@cgcs.org

Statement on the Trump Administration's Preliminary Education Budget

By

**Michael Casserly, Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools**

WASHINGTON -- The Council of the Great City Schools opposes the FY 2018 budget blueprint for the U.S. Department of Education issued today by the Trump administration. A strong and productive nation requires a significant investment in its public schools and public school students, and this new funding proposal falls far short of that goal.

This FY 2018 budget blueprint, moreover, comes on the heels of Congress's failure to pass the long-delayed FY 2017 appropriations bills. The nation's public schools are well into their budget planning for the upcoming school year without clarity about federal funding levels for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other federal education programs.

As it is, increased state-level set-asides under ESSA are likely to result in virtually every school district in the country losing Title I funding for the 2017-18 school year, the first year of the new ESSA program, even if funding were frozen. Instead of plugging the hole created by the increased state set-asides, the proposed FY 2018 budget creates a \$250 million voucher program, eliminates aid for teachers, and suggests increasing Title I only to fund a "portability" effort that is likely to dilute the targeting of federal aid for high-poverty schools.

The bi-partisan enthusiasm over the enactment of ESSA 15 months ago was not built on an expectation that federal education funding would be reduced.

Urban school districts across the country are working hard to make the new law a success, and are willing to be held accountable for its results. But the new Administration and Congress need to do their parts in both the FY 2017 appropriations and the FY 2018 budget to ensure that the promise of ESSA is made real.

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