

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



# ***Council of the Great City Schools***

***THE NATION'S VOICE FOR URBAN EDUCATION***

## **Strategic Plan, 2019-2024**

# Strategic Plan Of the Council of the Great City Schools 2019-2024

## Organization

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 72 of the nation’s largest urban public-school districts, founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961. The group was formed with 12 big-city school systems at a period in American history when the nation’s cities and their public schools were undergoing substantial transition and there was no formal national organization that could help address the challenges ahead.

The organization is governed by a board of directors that is composed of the superintendent and one school board member from each city. The Chair alternates each year between a superintendent and school board member. The board of directors elects a 24-member executive committee that is equally composed of superintendents and school board members and that oversees the operation, rules, and finances of the organization when the board is not in session.

The organization has been guided over the last 25 years by three broad goals: to educate all urban students to high standards; to lead, govern, and manage our urban schools efficiently and effectively; and to bolster public confidence in urban education.

## Strategic Planning

In late 2017, the leadership of the Council of the Great City Schools initiated a strategic planning process to guide the organization over the next five years. The process involved an extensive survey of the membership, a retreat by the organization’s executive committee, and a detailed analysis of organizational assets and liabilities by the group’s senior staff members. From survey results, the membership articulated several critical needs and priorities, including—

- ❖ Increasing the level of academic achievement throughout and across districts to ensure that students are graduating college and career ready
- ❖ Turning around the lowest performing schools
- ❖ Closing achievement gaps
- ❖ Balancing budgets while delivering quality instruction
- ❖ Strengthening the pipeline of effective educators
- ❖ Increasing public confidence in public schools

These priorities are consistent with the Council’s long-standing vision, mission, values, and goals.

## Vision of the Great City Schools

Urban public schools exist to teach students to the highest standards of educational excellence. As the primary American institution responsible for weaving the strands of our society into a cohesive fabric, we—the leaders of America’s Great City Schools—see a future where the nation cares for all children, expects their best, values their diversity, invests in their futures, and welcomes their participation in the American dream.

The Great City Schools are places where this vision becomes tangible and those ideals are put to the test. We pledge to commit ourselves to the work of advancing empathy, equity, justice, and tolerance, and we vow to do everything we can to vigorously resist the forces of ignorance, fear, and prejudice, as we teach and guide our students. We will keep our commitments, and with society’s support, cities will become the centers of a strong and equitable nation with urban public schools successfully teaching our children and building our communities.

## Mission of the Great City Schools

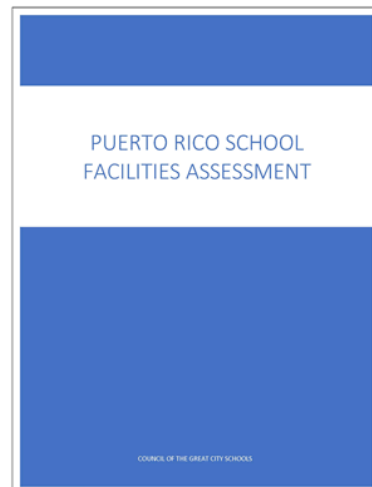
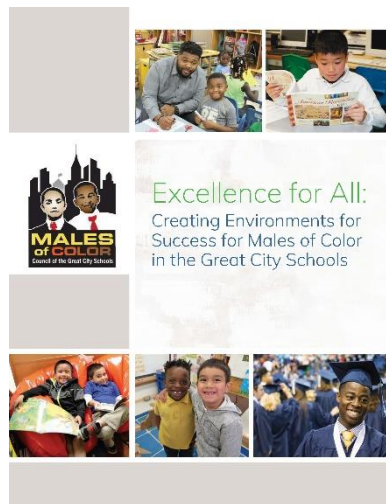
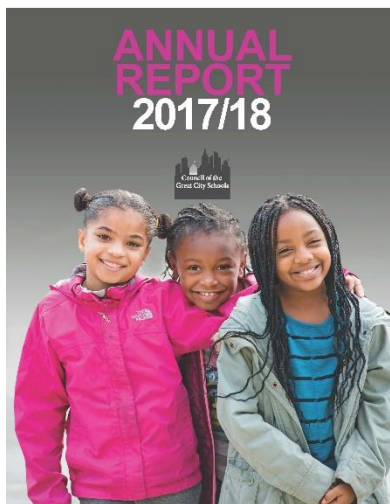
It is the special mission of America’s urban public schools to educate the nation’s most diverse student body to the highest academic standards and prepare them to contribute to our democracy and the global community.

## Values and Commitments of the Great City Schools

The ongoing work of the Council is built on the following values and commitments that we embrace both for and with our students:

1. *Leadership.* The Council of the Great City Schools is the nation’s premier leader in urban public education. This is true not only because the organization is unrivaled in the field in terms of the quality and innovation of its work, but because it seeks to make its schools the best in the country. In addition, the organization’s leadership is defined by its unwillingness to wait for anyone else to improve the quality of public education for us, instead harnessing the expertise of urban education practitioners across cities—as well as the voices of our communities and students—to take charge of our own, shared future and to show what is possible in our big-city public schools.
2. *Improvement.* The Council and its members embrace continuous improvement in the instructional and non-instructional services provided by the membership and the organization. In many ways, this long-standing commitment sets the organization apart from other national education associations who simply represent and defend their memberships or constantly change priorities. Over the years, the Council has pursued those traditional roles, but also sought to improve public education in the nation’s urban areas using the expertise of member districts in unique and collaborative ways.

3. *Accountability.* The Council has sought ways to demonstrate accountability for results and foster a culture of shared responsibility for the education of urban children. One can see this in its annual reports, district-specific services and return on investment reports, its policy positions on legislation like No Child Left Behind, its initiation of the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment, its hard-hitting Strategic Support Team reviews of districts, its research reports, and other activities and efforts.
  
4. *Equity.* The Council is a strong and outspoken voice for equity, equality, opportunity, and social justice. Over the years, the organization has repeatedly spoken out on the education-related issues of the day when others did not, and it has imbedded these values of equity into ongoing policy discussions, legislative positions, conference agendas and speakers, initiatives, reports and resources, and other activities.
  
5. *High Expectations.* The Council is unwavering in its demand for quality work from ourselves and our students. The organization strives in all its efforts to reflect the highest standards of expertise and performance in both students and adults. This commitment sets the organization apart from others and is evident in the group’s personnel, products, reports, research, conferences, recommendations, and communications.
  
6. *Integrity.* The organization is uncompromising in its veracity, consistency, and truthfulness in the pursuit of its mission—including the ability to self-critique. These qualities have helped build the organization’s reputation for forthrightness with the public, the media, and government. The group works from the assumption that if one builds a reputation for high quality and integrity then the organization attracts the right kind of attention and support.



## The Challenges Ahead for the Great City Schools

The nation's urban public schools face an extraordinarily difficult landscape over the next five years. These challenges might best be characterized as falling into the following categories—

- *Pressure for Better Academic Performance.* Despite improvements, the nation's urban school systems and the Council will encounter ever greater pressure to advance further. This pressure will come from many sources and will have multiple agendas, but ultimately the health and welfare of the nation depends on our ability to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps. The challenge to urban school systems will be to improve our outcomes as student needs remain high.
- *High Student Needs and Scarce Funding.* The needs of urban school students are expected to remain high over the next several years. There is no reason to think that poverty, language needs, disability status, and other challenges that students bring to school will fade over the next several years. In fact, even with a pull-back in immigration, there are likely to be substantial numbers of English learners, students living in poverty, and students with disabilities in urban schools. This dynamic may be further exacerbated by the rising gentrification and increasing polarization of the population.
- *Dominance of State Policy and Governance.* State authority in educational policy making has waxed and waned over the decades, but it is now resurgent and is expected to remain a prevalent force for the foreseeable future. This prevalence was codified in the latest authorization of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which essentially pulled the federal government back from any leading role in educational decision making. The challenge to urban schools will be to maneuver around or create common ground with a governing entity that may sometimes be hostile to urban interests. Either way, the historic bonds between the federal government and the nation's major urban areas is steadily eroding.
- *Rising Polarization and Partisanship.* The political landscape both in Washington and in state capitols has become debilitatingly partisan and antagonistic to public entities of every type. This partisanship is fed, in part, by rising distrust of public institutions and government *writ large*. The challenge for urban schools will involve remaining as bipartisan as possible and maintaining good relations with supporters in both political parties.
- *Appeal of Choice and Charters.* Choice and charter schools have been backed by a bipartisan base of proponents for some 25 years. Despite evidence of mixed efficacy, there is little indication that support will end anytime soon. While the Council supports effective charter schools—with appropriate local oversight and accountability, choice advocates and critics of public education have sought to portray them as a replacement—rather than a partner—for traditional public schools, essentially weaponizing them in an effort to dismantle the public-school system. In reality, our district public schools will remain the primary institution for serving the full range of diverse learners in urban areas for years to come. The challenge for districts, then, will be communicating the vital and enduring role public schools play in advancing educational, social, and economic opportunities.

- *Changing Press Imperatives.* Economic pressure on the media has resulted in substantial cuts in funding and staff for newspapers and television stations across the country. One of the consequences is a rise in sensationalized coverage of the perceived failures of government institutions in general—and public schools in particular— in order to build audience share. Journalists and news organizations are also increasingly partisan in their coverage, allowing their reporting of news to reflect underlying political agendas or allegiances. Finally, another consequence of funding and staffing cuts to traditional media outlets is the rise of alternative forms of media (including blogs and various social media platforms). This has meant an explosion in the sheer numbers and varieties of people who are now considered part of the press—a palpable challenge for communications directors and staff charged with building and maintaining relationships with the media and ensuring fair and accurate coverage of public schools.
- *Increasing Racial Divisions and Hostilities toward Immigrants.* Underneath many of the challenges already articulated is an emerging division in the American population defined by race, income, native language, class, national origin, and sense of victimization. These divisions are being fanned and encouraged in ways that are more open now than ever, and they show little sign of ebbing. This climate can be felt acutely in urban areas and big-city schools, which serve the highest numbers of diverse and immigrant students. The support for public education, moreover, requires a sense of shared responsibility for the nation’s future. This sense of common purpose appears to be fracturing, and the lack of unity will challenge public education and the nation in ways that are hard to predict.
- *Other challenges.* The nation’s urban public schools are also faced with challenges around the scarcity of diverse educators who are ready and willing to work in urban education, the waning of community partnerships in some locales, and pushback on high standards, standardized tests, and accountability.



# Goals and Strategies of the Great City Schools

The Council pledges to build on the legacy of continuous improvement and collective action it has constructed over the years to expand opportunities for all our children. The Council proposes to remain faithful to its three main goals between 2019 and 2024, adjusting its tactical efforts from time to time to ensure that it can address any new or foreseeable challenges. The strategies and tactics to be employed to achieve the organization’s goals include the following.

## GOAL 1. TO EDUCATE ALL URBAN SCHOOL STUDENTS TO THE HIGHEST ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

### Strategy:

Build the capacity of the membership to implement high standards and improve student achievement. This strategy will have three prongs: an emphasis on continuing *districtwide* academic improvements; a focus on turning around our chronically low-performing *schools*; and a concentration on supporting the academic growth of *student groups* that have been historically underserved, including males of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.

### Tactics:

1. Enhance and protect federal financial support and regulatory flexibility for urban school systems. Ensure continued targeting of federal aid for major urban school systems, protect major civil rights protections, and support local flexibility in program operations. Continue strong urban school advocacy in the nation’s capital.
2. Lead and support the continuing implementation of challenging college- and career-readiness standards. Maintain emphasis on successful implementation of common core standards or similar college- and career-readiness standards, high-quality assessments, and support for high standards of academic attainment for urban students.
3. Conduct continuing research on why and how some urban school *systems* improve faster than others, draw lessons, identify high-leverage approaches, and imbed emerging findings into the Council’s technical assistance, resources, conferences, and professional development. Synthesize lessons learned from the many Strategic Support Teams and technical assistance that the Council has provided over the years to help build member capacity to improve student achievement.
4. Support and improve *schools* in our cities that are identified as the lowest performing. Conduct additional research on strategies that districts are using to



- improve their lowest-performing schools, draw broad lessons, provide technical assistance to districts with these schools, and track trends.
5. Identify, develop, and emphasize effective initiatives for improving the academic attainment of males of color, English learners, students living in poverty, and *students* with disabilities. Track which member districts make the most progress for each student group, identify reasons for the improvements, and build member support around lessons learned.
  6. Pilot test methods of augmenting balanced literacy in urban schools and assess the effects of these strategies on reading performance. (The Council has piloted a new approach to balanced literacy in Nashville that showed promising results. The pilot is being expanded to San Antonio in the fall of 2018.)
  7. Track our performance on the Trial Urban District Assessment, state assessments, and the organization's Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to gauge progress and identify where additional emphasis is needed. Automate the academic KPIs for improved district access and usage. Begin tracking core-course participation rates among urban students and build strategies for enhancing the numbers of students successfully completing these courses, particularly in math.
  8. Pressure commercial organizations to improve the quality of their instructional products, particularly for struggling students and English learners, and enhance member use of Council tools, such as the Professional Learning Platform and Curriculum Framework, to improve academic achievement.
  9. Encourage social services and wrap-around supports for urban students—but not as a substitute for higher standards of instruction. Conduct research on district use of social-emotional and social support strategies and help assess the effects on academic attainment. Retain academic achievement as the organization's primary goal.
  10. Conduct research on the numbers and percentages of educators of color in member districts and begin developing strategies for increasing those numbers and percentages. Document and disseminate promising practices and lessons learned from educator pipeline programs in districts around the country.
  11. Partner with colleges of education in the Great Cities in preparing the next generation of educators and diversifying the teacher force in urban schools.
  12. Create a new urban school executive management training program for district instructional leaders to help improve academic leadership and programming.

13. Continue to convene regular meetings of chief academic officers, bilingual education directors, directors of teaching and learning, research directors, and special education directors to foster and enhance collaboration, mutual support, and ability to act collectively. Increase the numbers of member staff participating in these meetings and coordinate the agendas of the meetings with priorities of the executive committee and board of directors.

**Metrics:**

The Council will monitor and gauge progress on this goal by using the following metrics.

Outputs	Outcomes
1. Guidance and data to Congress on the need, value, and use of federal dollars in urban school systems.	Continued targeting of federal financial aid for urban school systems.
	Changes to regulatory language indicating increased flexibility for urban school districts.
2. a) A report analyzing factors contributing to urban school improvement.	Improved district performance on NAEP, state assessments, the Council’s academic key performance indicators, and other indicators of academic improvement.
b) A report synthesizing lessons learned across strategic support teams in academics and instruction.	Higher graduation rates and levels of college and career readiness.
3. Technical assistance and support for low-performing schools in the ten districts participating in the Wallace Foundation turnaround initiative.	Higher student performance in struggling schools across the ten Wallace Foundation turnaround initiative districts.
4. A report identifying and analyzing the characteristics and strategies of districts that have made strong progress improving outcomes for males of color, ELLs, students living in poverty, and students with disabilities.	Improved academic outcomes for historically underserved student groups, including males of color, ELLs, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.
5. An evaluation of the effects of the Balanced Literacy initiative in pilot districts, and dissemination of lessons learned.	Higher reading performance in Balanced Literacy pilot districts.
6. a) Annual reporting on district performance on NAEP, state assessments, and academic key performance indicators.	Improved district performance on NAEP, state assessments, the Council’s academic key performance indicators, and other indicators of academic improvement.
b) An automated system of academic KPIs for member use.	Improved district performance on NAEP, state assessments, the Council’s academic key

	performance indicators, and other indicators of academic improvement.
7. a) Greater number of companies and organizations producing high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials for ELLs and struggling students.	Improved academic outcomes for ELLs and struggling students.
b) An online Professional Learning Platform providing professional development for effective instruction of struggling students.	Improved academic outcomes for ELLs and struggling students.
8. Survey of district practices around social-emotional and social support strategies.	Appropriate metrics and linkages to academic achievement and completion.
9. a) A survey of the numbers and percentages of teacher of color in member districts.	Increased number of educators of color in member districts.
b) Summaries of promising teacher and leader pipeline programs across the country.	Stronger human capital strategies for identifying and developing educators in urban school systems.
10. Revitalized network of Great City Colleges of Education and boost participation.	Improved local collaboration, pipelines, and joint initiatives.
11. A new urban school executive management training program for district instructional leaders.	Stronger, more effective instructional leadership.
12. Annual meetings of chief academic officers, bilingual education directors, research directors, and special education directors.	A strong and growing network of academic leaders and staff across urban school districts.



**GOAL 2. TO LEAD, GOVERN, AND MANAGE OUR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
IN WAYS THAT ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF OUR STUDENTS AND ENHANCE  
THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS.**

**Strategy**

Build the capacity of urban school boards, superintendents, and managers to lead, govern, and manage our districts; improve the academic and operational performance of our school districts; and bolster the tenures of effective urban school leaders.

**Tactics:**

1. Expand the organization's work to strengthen the governing capacity of member school boards and bolster the working relations between boards and superintendents. This will involve new professional development and more technical assistance to sitting school boards and cross-district support of board teams, school board presidents, and new school board members on both effective governance and their roles in improving student achievement.
2. Provide technical assistance, ongoing mentoring, and support for member superintendents through a cadre of successful former superintendents. The Council will pursue additional financial support to provide mentors for new superintendents in the organization's membership, participate on new superintendent transition teams, and provide on-site orientation for new superintendents.
3. Revamp and expand the Council's urban school executive's management training program to include chief operating officers, chief financial officers, human resource directors, chief information officers, and key academic leaders. Coordinate this effort with the Casserly Institute.
4. Sustain and improve the Council's performance management system and its non-instructional key performance indicators. Analyze urban districts with exemplary governance and operations and use the results to track and improve school board governance, organizational and process effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and return-on-investment. Conduct additional analysis of progress on operational key performance indicators across districts and strategies that produce better results.
5. Continue to provide Strategic Support Teams (SSTs) and technical assistance to member school systems on management and operational issues. SSTs will focus on in the areas of organizational structure, staffing levels, human resources, facilities operations, maintenance and operations, budget and finance operations, information technology, safety and security, procurement, food services, and transportation.

6. Begin synthesizing the results of the Council’s many SSTs over the years to articulate lessons learned and best practices. The Council has conducted some **300** SSTs over the last 20 years. The results, in combination with the key performance indicators, have significantly improved operations across the Great City Schools. The Council will begin synthesizing lessons learned and best practices to allow the membership to sustain and improve the gains made over the years.
7. Convene regular meetings of operational and finance staff to foster and enhance collaboration, mutual support, and the ability to act collectively. Coordinate agendas of job-alike meetings of the human resource directors, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, and information technology directors with priorities of the executive committee and board of directors.
8. Continue responding to ongoing information requests, providing data and best practices, sharing data, and conducting customized research for member district staff.

**Metrics:**

The Council will monitor and gauge progress on this goal by using the following metrics.

Outputs	Outcomes
1. a) Cross-district professional development for board teams, school board presidents, and new school board members on effective governance.	Stronger, more effective urban school board leadership and increased board and superintendent tenure.
b) On-site technical assistance to sitting school boards on effective governance and their role in improving student achievement.	Stronger, more effective urban school board leadership and increased board and superintendent tenure.
2. Support for new urban district superintendents.	Stronger, more effective district leadership and increased superintendent tenure.
3. A re-envisioned urban school executive management training program for chief operating officers, chief financial officers, human resource directors, and chief information officers.	Stronger, more effective operational leadership.
4. a) An online performance management system and annual	Increased operational efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.

report on operational data and trends across districts.	
b) Analysis of operational practices among effective urban school districts.	Increased operational efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.
5. Technical assistance through Strategic Support Team reviews of district financial and operational functions.	Increased operational efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.
6. A report synthesizing lessons learned across strategic support teams in the area of finance and operations.	Increased operational efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.
7. Annual meetings of human resource directors, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, and information technology directors.	A strong and growing network of financial and operational leaders and staff across urban school districts.
8. On demand research and information on district management practices.	Increased operational efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.



### GOAL 3. TO BOLSTER THE PUBLIC'S CONFIDENCE IN URBAN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FOR RAISING OUR CHILDREN AND ENHANCING THEIR FUTURE.

#### Strategy:

Improve the public's perceptions of, support for, and confidence in public education by making progress academically and operationally, letting people know about that progress, and celebrating success. Negative is always louder than positive, so in service of this goal it will be necessary to listen to our critics and address our challenges but avoid spending much time or energy trying to persuade opponents. In sum, our strategy is to make progress and build the capacity of districts to communicate it; it's hard to fight success.

#### Tactics:

1. Enhance the Council's outreach efforts to the public, placing more explicit emphasis on the successes and progress of urban public schools, and our members' role in strengthening our communities. Place additional priority on finding and sharing examples of district, school, and student success across a broader public audience at the national level.
2. Develop and provide member districts with additional communications tools, platforms, and strategies for improving the public's perception of urban schools at the local level. In addition, create a prototype for districts to use to better communicate with the public in crisis situations, manage negative news, and build the capacity of the membership to tell their own stories of progress and success.
3. Assist districts in developing strategies and models for more effectively engaging parents and community stakeholders. Design a prototype for how urban school leaders could reconceive and enhance their public engagement initiatives and strengthen public trust in the institution.
4. Provide additional Strategic Support Teams to member districts to help improve their capacity to communicate with the public. These teams would consist of expert communications staff from peer districts that have particularly strong programs and initiatives.
5. Conduct polling on the public's perceptions of urban public schools and where and how targeted messaging might prove effective. Seek external funds to support polling like what the Council has done in the past to gauge the public's evolving confidence in urban public education.
6. Expand the Council's social media presence to reach a wider audience when

communicating the progress of urban public education. Step up the organization’s daily postings on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the numbers of ‘followers’ it has on social media outlets. Expand social media presence into Instagram. Increase use of memes, videos, and photos. Expand use of the Council’s #GreatCityGrads hashtag and connections to the #mybrotherskeeper hashtag.

7. Provide more comprehensive information to national and local community-based groups on the social services that our schools deliver to parents and the community. Distribute this information through national and local parent groups to help build support for their local public schools.
8. Continue conducting the biennial survey of member communications departments, their staffing levels, functions, responsibilities, funding, and the like. Moreover, expand the representation of districts at the annual meeting of the Council’s public relations executives.
9. Strengthen contacts with mainstream media, alternative media, and ethnic media and their reporters to ensure that the Council is called when they are writing stories relevant to urban education.
10. Carefully vet partnerships with external organizations around critical priorities identified by the membership.

**Metrics:**

The Council will monitor and gauge progress on this goal by using the following metrics.

Outputs	Outcomes
1. Identification and dissemination of stories on the successes and progress of urban public schools through <i>The Urban Educator</i> and other outlets.	Enhanced public support and confidence in urban public schools.
2. A guide for district communications leaders and staff on managing crisis communications.	More effective district messaging and management of crisis situations.
3. A guide for district communications leaders and staff on community, parent, and media engagement.	More effective district communication and engagement of stakeholders, and stronger customer satisfaction.
	Stronger parent and community buy-in and support for public schools.



4. Technical assistance through Strategic Support Team reviews of district communications and community engagement functions.	More effective district communication and engagement of stakeholders.
5. A survey of the public's perceptions of urban public schools.	More effective Council and district communications and messaging to improve public perception of urban public schools.
6. Increased social media presence for the Council.	Enhanced public support and confidence in urban public schools.
7. Tools for districts for increasing parent understanding and access to the social services provided by public schools.	More effective district communication and engagement of stakeholders.
	Stronger parent and community buy-in and support for public schools.
8. Biennial survey of member communications departments, including their staffing levels, functions, responsibilities, and funding.	More effective district communication and engagement of stakeholders.
9. Information and input into mainstream and alternative media coverage of education issues and urban school trends and progress.	Enhanced public support and confidence in urban public schools.
10. Approved partnerships that enhance the Council's support and services for member districts and students.	



# Officers of the Council of the Great City Schools

Larry Feldman, Chair of the Board  
Miami-Dade County School Board Member

Eric Gordon, Chair-elect of the Board  
Cleveland Metropolitan Schools Chief Executive Officer

Michael O'Neill, Secretary/Treasurer  
Boston School Committee Member

Felton Williams, Immediate Past Chair  
Long Beach School Board Member

Michael Casserly, Executive Director

**STATUS UPDATE**

# Status of Strategic Plan 2019-2024 Council of the Great City Schools January 2023

## GOAL 1. TO EDUCATE ALL URBAN SCHOOL STUDENTS TO THE HIGHEST ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

*To gauge progress on this goal, the Council will track student achievement trends and the closure of the performance gaps between students in Large City Schools and the Nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.*

### Strategy:

Build the capacity of the membership to implement high standards and improve student achievement. This strategy will have three prongs: an emphasis on continuing *districtwide* academic improvements; a focus on turning around our chronically low-performing *schools*; and a concentration on supporting the academic growth of *student groups* that have been historically underserved, including males of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.

### Tactics:

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>1. Enhance and protect federal financial support and regulatory flexibility for urban school systems. Ensure continued targeting of federal aid for major urban school systems, protect major civil rights protections, and support local flexibility in program operations. Continue strong urban school advocacy in the nation’s capital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filed successful amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court to block addition of citizenship question. <a href="#">April 2019</a></li> <li>• Held three legal webinars for members on the 2020 Census. <a href="#">May and October 2019</a></li> <li>• Disseminated Census material to members to encourage counts. Throughout <a href="#">2019 and 2020</a></li> <li>• Convened annual town hall meeting on ideas for spurring 2020 Census participation. <a href="#">October 2019</a></li> <li>• Set up website with resources for members. <a href="#">May 2019</a></li> <li>• Collaborated with other educational organizations to prevent cuts to Medicaid, Title II, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grants, and other programs. <a href="#">March 2019 – February 2020</a></li> <li>• Filed detailed regulatory comments on E-Rate (<a href="#">July 2019, August 2019, September 2021, April 2022, May 2022, September 2022</a>), supplement/supplant (<a href="#">February 2019</a>), school</li> </ul>

	<p>meals (<a href="#">September 2019</a>, <a href="#">March 2020</a>, <a href="#">March 2022</a>), equitable services (<a href="#">April 2019</a>, <a href="#">July 2021</a>, <a href="#">December 2022</a>), Title IX (<a href="#">January 2019</a>, <a href="#">June 2021</a>, <a href="#">September 2022</a>), and school discipline (<a href="#">July 2021</a>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remained vigilant to efforts to amend the Title I formula to dilute targeted funding. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Successfully organized national education organizations in support of higher annual education appropriations. <a href="#">March 2019</a></li> <li>• Initiated letter signed by member superintendents supporting new federal spending to cover COVID-19-related costs. <a href="#">April 2020</a></li> <li>• Aggressively supported and lobbied House and Senate for additional supplemental appropriations to cover COVID-related costs. <a href="#">March 2020 – February 2021</a></li> <li>• Gave multiple press interviews making the case for greater federal education spending. <a href="#">March – April 2020</a></li> <li>• Filed successful suit against the U.S. Department of Education on their rules to redistribute CARES Act funds to private schools. <a href="#">June 2020</a></li> <li>• Recommended to the Biden transition team and the new Secretary of Education that ED should enforce state MOE requirements. <a href="#">February 2021</a> Sent a second letter on the issue. <a href="#">May 2021</a></li> <li>• Successfully advocated in Congress to use the Title I formula to district American Rescue Plan funds. <a href="#">January – March 2021</a></li> <li>• Published <i>Investing American Rescue Plan Funds Strategically and Effectively</i> to help districts plan for using new federal COVID-relief aid. <a href="#">June 2021</a></li> <li>• Secured support from the Wallace Foundation to provide technical assistance to members on use of ARP funds. <a href="#">July 2021</a></li> <li>• Successfully advocated with the Biden-Harris Administration for additional Federal COVID resources for urban school districts. <a href="#">June – December 2021</a></li> <li>• Successfully advocated for expanded FEMA reimbursements for district COVID expenses. <a href="#">December 2021</a></li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocated for an assault weapon ban and school-based mental health supports. <a href="#">Spring 2022</a></li> <li>• Successfully advocated for large annual increases in federal appropriations for Title I resulting in an additional \$1.9 billion over FY 2022 and FY 2023. <a href="#">December 2022</a></li> <li>• Filed an amicus brief with the US Supreme Court arguing that narrowly-tailored race-conscious admissions policies remain necessary in higher education. <a href="#">July 2022</a></li> <li>• Submitted comments to the US Department of Education on recent Title IX regulations urging the removal of burdensome and inflexible requirements in a K-12 environment. <a href="#">September 2022</a></li> </ul>
<p>2. Lead and support the continuing implementation of challenging college- and career-readiness standards. Maintain emphasis on successful implementation of common core standards or similar college- and career-readiness standards, high-quality assessments, and support for high standards of academic attainment for urban students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed new report outlining the features of a high-quality curriculum. <a href="#">June 2017</a></li> <li>• Developed a self-assessment tool for the membership to assess their curriculum. <a href="#">December 2019</a></li> <li>• Drafted new professional development framework. <a href="#">April 2021</a></li> <li>• Testified before the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) on the alignment between NAEP and college- and career-readiness standards. Submitted detailed written comments. Effort was successful.</li> <li>• Testified again before NAGB on postponing the 2021 NAEP testing.</li> <li>• Maintained overall support for college- and career-readiness standards. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Met quarterly with Student Achievement Partnership on status of standards. <a href="#">Quarterly</a></li> <li>• Prepared and disseminated guides for the members on “unfinished learning” and data-driven school opening in the wake of COVID-19. <a href="#">June 2020</a></li> <li>• Recommended to the Biden transition team that accountability requirements on spring 2021 testing results be waived. <a href="#">Winter 2021</a></li> <li>• Collected data from the membership on what commercial reading and math materials they were using in the elementary grades. <a href="#">Spring 2019 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Submitted recommendation on the new NAEP reading frameworks and testified before the NAGB board.</li> <li>• Submitted comments on the Chair’s draft of the NAEP reading framework.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted a national reading summit with the Institute of Education Sciences.</li> <li>• Updating our report describing the features of a high-quality curriculum to include lessons learned about unfinished learning, the use of technology in instruction, and the inclusion of culturally responsive pedagogy and social emotional learning during instruction. <a href="#">Expected March 2023</a></li> <li>• Planning for a national mathematics summit with the Institute of Education Sciences <a href="#">Fall 2023</a></li> </ul>
<p>3. Conduct continuing research on why and how some urban school <i>systems</i> improve faster than others, draw lessons, identify high-leverage approaches, and imbed emerging findings into the Council’s technical assistance, resources, conferences, and professional development. Synthesize lessons learned from the many Strategic Support Teams and technical assistance that the Council has provided over the years to help build member capacity to improve student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finished a series of site visits to Council districts to determine what they were doing to make progress on NAEP. Write up of findings are in draft form.</li> <li>• Finalized the analysis of NAEP data on TUDA districts that were overcoming the effects of poverty and other barriers. <a href="#">Spring 2021</a></li> <li>• In the process of conducting a detailed statistical analysis to determine which districts are out-performing expectations. <a href="#">June 2021</a></li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Teams on special education in Albuquerque, Stockton, Clark County, Omaha, and Norfolk. SSTs pending in Norfolk.</li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Teams on bilingual education in Puerto Rico and Providence.</li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Team on instructional programming in Philadelphia and staffing in Atlanta.</li> <li>• Published major survey results on status of English learners in member districts. <a href="#">April 2019</a></li> <li>• Finished data collection on efforts in member cities to improve math and science results.</li> <li>• <i>Published Mirrors or Windows: How Well Do Urban Schools Overcome the Effects of Poverty and Other Barriers?</i> <a href="#">June 2021</a></li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Team in Atlanta and East Baton Rouge to support improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities and English language learners. <a href="#">Spring/Summer 2022</a></li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Teams in Boston Public Schools to review Special Education services and processes. <a href="#">Fall 2022</a></li> </ul>

<p>4. Support and improve <i>schools</i> in our cities that are identified as the lowest performing. Conduct additional research on strategies that districts are using to improve their lowest-performing schools, draw broad lessons, provide technical assistance to districts with these schools, and track trends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have collected data on the numbers of CSI schools in member districts.</li> <li>• Are participating in a new Wallace Foundation effort focused on turnaround schools in over 40 member districts. <a href="#">July 2021 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Are collecting preliminary data on district turnaround school efforts.</li> <li>• Have collected preliminary data on the effect of the increased state set-aside for turnarounds on urban school funding.</li> <li>• Are participating in a Wallace Foundation Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative to grow our implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices across member districts. <a href="#">November 2020 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>5. Identify, develop, and emphasize effective initiatives for improving the academic attainment of males of color, English learners, students living in poverty, and <i>students</i> with disabilities. Track which member districts make the most progress for each student group, identify reasons for the improvements, and build member support around lessons learned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up internal system with NAEP and KPI data to track districts making substantial progress with males of color. <a href="#">Spring 2021</a></li> <li>• Continue to analyze data on the value-add of urban school districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Established a females of color task force and convened an initial meeting at fall conference. June and October 2019</li> <li>• Have collected new data on the status of males and females of color. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have drafted goals for females of color task force. <a href="#">Spring 2020</a></li> <li>• Conducted Strategic Support Teams to review special education programming in Omaha, Norfolk, Atlanta, East Baton Rouge, and Boston. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Published new data analysis specifically focusing on the needs of males and females of color in large urban districts. <a href="#">March 2022 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Created research consortia to analyze assessment results in districts to better understand where progress among traditionally marginalized student groups is improving fastest. <a href="#">Spring 2022</a></li> <li>• Released <i>District Considerations for Universal Dyslexia Screening: Ensuring Appropriate Implementation and Instruction for English Learners</i> to provide guidance and considerations for dyslexia screening for English learners <a href="#">November 2022</a></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing data dashboards to compare NAEP performance over time across participating TUDA districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Developing a document to share foundational literacy skills development for English learners and criteria for selecting quality instructional materials that address the needs of English learners. <a href="#">Expected March 2023.</a></li> </ul>
<p>6. Pilot test methods of augmenting balanced literacy in urban schools and assess the effects of these strategies on reading performance. (The Council has piloted a new approach to balanced literacy in Nashville that showed promising results. The pilot expanded to San Antonio in the fall of 2018.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched initiative in San Antonio to test theory about how to produce better literacy results in the early grades with balanced literacy approaches.</li> <li>• Collaborated with Student Achievement Partners to publish the report <i>Shifting Early Literacy Practices: The Story of an Early Reading Pilot in San Antonio Independent School District</i> <a href="#">May 2021</a></li> </ul>
<p>7. Track our performance on the Trial Urban District Assessment, state assessments, and the organization’s Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to gauge progress and identify where additional emphasis is needed. Automate the academic KPIs for improved district access and usage. Begin tracking core-course participation rates among urban students and build strategies for enhancing the numbers of students successfully completing these courses, particularly in math.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have augmented KPIs to collect additional data on special education and staff demographics. <a href="#">Fall 2021</a></li> <li>• Have automated the Academic KPIs and launched the newest round of KPI data collection for 2021. <a href="#">October 2022</a></li> <li>• Have augmented KPIs to collect additional data on English language learners <a href="#">March 2020</a></li> <li>• Have augmented the KPI data to collect additional data on the diversity of teachers and administrators <a href="#">March 2022</a></li> <li>• Have not yet expanded into course-participation rates beyond AP course-taking.</li> <li>• Participating in discussions and planning with the National Assessment Governing Board and National Center for Education Statistics in preparation for the release of the 2022 TUDA results in fall 2022. <a href="#">Ongoing, release date set for October 24, 2022</a></li> <li>• Participated in the release of the 2022 TUDA results in October 2022, providing support to the participating districts with their releases and speaking at the national release event with NCES and NAGB. <a href="#">October 2022</a></li> </ul>
<p>8. Pressure commercial organizations to improve the quality of their instructional products, particularly for struggling students and English learners, and enhance member use of Council tools, such as the Professional Learning Platform and Curriculum Framework, to improve academic achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the ELL math materials joint procurement initiative. <a href="#">May 2019</a></li> <li>• Expanded number of videos in the Professional Learning Platform and increased participation rates. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have begun preliminary tracking of district results using the PLP. Results in Guilford County are particularly encouraging. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have collected commercial instructional product information from members for grades K-5. <a href="#">Spring 2019</a></li> <li>• Secured additional foundation support to continue work to improve curriculum and materials. <a href="#">September 2021</a></li> <li>• Started a virtual webinar series to connect publishers to districts directly to better articulate the instructional materials needs of students and teachers. <a href="#">May 2019 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>
9. Encourage social services and wrap-around supports for urban students—but not as a substitute for higher standards of instruction. Conduct research on district use of social-emotional and social support strategies and help assess the effects on academic attainment. Retain academic achievement as the organization’s primary goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published a guide for the membership on best practices in mental health and social-emotional learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. <a href="#">Spring 2020</a></li> <li>• Published three new Spotlight reports on various aspects of social/emotional and mental health needs of students and staff as a result of COVID-19. <a href="#">May 2021</a></li> </ul>
10. Conduct research on the numbers and percentages of educators of color in member districts and begin developing strategies for increasing those numbers and percentages. Document and disseminate promising practices and lessons learned from educator pipeline programs in districts around the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have collected preliminary data from the membership on demographics of superintendents, principal supervisors, principals, assistant principals, and teachers.</li> <li>• Have completed a final draft of the Council’s new professional development framework. <a href="#">April 2021</a></li> </ul>
11. Partner with colleges of education in the Great Cities in preparing the next generation of educators and diversifying the teacher force in urban schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed to the Board of Directors adding a representative from a Historically Black College or University to the Executive Committee as a non-voting member. <a href="#">Completed Fall 2022</a></li> <li>• Outreach to institutions serving a large number of Hispanic students underway. <a href="#">January 2023 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>
12. Create a new urban school executive management training program for district instructional leaders to help improve academic leadership and programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have sketched out the preliminary components of the Casserly Institute for district instructional leaders. <a href="#">Fall 2022</a></li> <li>• Finalizing funding to create training courses for staff at various levels of the organization to expand the Casserly Institute. <a href="#">Fall 2022</a></li> <li>• Hired Michael Hinojosa as Superintendent in Residence to lead our work with district superintendents across the country. <a href="#">July 2022</a></li> <li>• Held a Superintendent convening to gather feedback from current Great City superintendents on how best to support</li> </ul>

	incoming, current, and experienced district leaders and their teams. <a href="#">June 2022</a>
<p>13. Continue to convene regular meetings of chief academic officers, bilingual education directors, directors of teaching and learning, research directors, and special education directors to foster and enhance collaboration, mutual support, and ability to act collectively. Increase the numbers of member staff participating in these meetings and coordinate the agendas of the meetings with priorities of the executive committee and board of directors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have continued regular meetings of chief academic officers, chiefs of schools, bilingual education directors, directors of teaching and learning, and research directors. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have not yet explicitly tied agendas for meetings to executive committee priorities.</li> <li>• Held calls every week with job-alike groups since mid-March 2020 to coordinate COVID-19 responses and strategy. Held nearly 2000 ZOOM calls between mid-March 2020 and the end of June 2022. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Significantly expanded our support calls to include curriculum leads in mathematics, science, English language arts/reading, and social studies. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Expanded calls to include mental health/SEL staff across districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>

**GOAL 2. TO LEAD, GOVERN, AND MANAGE OUR URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WAYS THAT ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF OUR STUDENTS AND ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS.**

*To gauge progress on this goal, the Council will monitor the tenure of superintendents in urban member school districts.*

**Strategy**

Build the capacity of urban school boards, superintendents, and managers to lead, govern, and manage our districts; improve the academic and operational performance of our school districts; and bolster the tenures of effective urban school leaders.

**Tactics:**

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>1. Expand the organization’s work to strengthen the governing capacity of member school boards and bolster the working relations between boards and superintendents. This will involve new professional development and more technical assistance to sitting school boards and cross-district support of board teams, school board presidents, and new school board members on both effective governance and their roles in improving student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the Harvard-Great City Schools Accelerating Board Capacity Institute. First sold-out cohort met on July 28-31, 2019. Second cohort for 2020 was postponed because of the pandemic but rescheduled for 2021. The 2022 session was held in July 2022 with 65 representatives from 12 member districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Sketched out new school board audit service for the membership. <a href="#">Fall 2021</a></li> <li>• Provided on-site technical assistance to school boards in some 30 cities since January 1, 2019. <a href="#">Winter 2019 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Hired a new Director of Governance.</li> <li>• Have expanded the organizations governance work and technical assistance to member boards of education. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Currently supporting cohorts of school boards in 26 member districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Currently supporting member school boards in 24 districts with full governance support. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Currently reviewing plans to support member school boards in 7 districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Provided technical assistance, professional development, and coaching to 35-member district school boards during the 2020-21 program year. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Developed a nine-month professional development program for new school board members, school board chairs, school board</li> </ul>

	secretaries, and school board coaches. <a href="#">Ongoing</a>
2. Provide technical assistance, ongoing mentoring, and support for member superintendents through a cadre of successful former superintendents. The Council will pursue additional financial support to provide mentors for new superintendents in the organization’s membership, participate on new superintendent transition teams, and provide on-site orientation for new superintendents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting bi-weekly support calls for all superintendents with targeted support for new and interim superintendents. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Incorporating within the Casserly Institute support for superintendents from a cadre of leadership coaches. <a href="#">Began Summer 2022 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>
3. Revamp and expand the Council’s urban school executive’s management training program to include chief operating officers, chief financial officers, human resource directors, chief information officers, and key academic leaders. Coordinate this effort with the Casserly Institute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched a revamped urban school executive management program under the Casserly Institute banner in <a href="#">Spring 2019</a> with IT directors and CFOs. Have not yet included COOs and HR directors. (Program was delayed during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 program years because of the global pandemic.)</li> <li>• Launching Casserly Institute to support a cohort of potential superintendent candidates with virtual and in-person sessions planned. <a href="#">Winter/Spring 2023</a></li> </ul>
4. Sustain and improve the Council’s performance management system and its non-instructional key performance indicators. Analyze urban districts with exemplary governance and operations and use the results to track and improve school board governance, organizational and process effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and return-on-investment. Conduct additional analysis of progress on operational key performance indicators across districts and strategies that produce better results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted the 2019 data collection on the Council’s non-instructional KPIs and released the results at the annual fall conference in Louisville in 2019 and the virtual fall conference in 2020. Have not conducted any additional analysis on results. <a href="#">October 2019 and October 2020</a></li> <li>• Continued collection and analysis of operational KPI data through the fall of 2021. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Published Operations and Academic KPI reports in October 2021. <a href="#">October 2021</a></li> <li>• Initiating post-pandemic revision of the operations key performance indicators to reflect new expectations for school district divisions. <a href="#">Spring 2021</a></li> <li>• Captured feedback from COOs and their teams on potential revisions to the KPIs, to be enacted for the 2023-24 school year. <a href="#">November 2022</a></li> </ul>
5. Continue to provide Strategic Support Teams (SSTs) and technical assistance to member school systems on management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have conducted numerous SSTs since January 1, 2019, including facilities (Buffalo, Broward County, and Rochester), IT (El Paso, Guilford</li> </ul>

<p>and operational issues. SSTs will focus on in the areas of organizational structure, staffing levels, human resources, facilities operations, maintenance and operations, budget and finance operations, information technology, safety and security, procurement, food services, and transportation.</p>	<p>County, Aurora, Kansas City, Broward County, and Charlotte), business operations (Clark County, Rochester, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg), transportation (Boston, Seattle, and Rochester), human resources (Milwaukee, Birmingham, Columbus, Kansas City, St. Louis, Rochester, and Cincinnati), organization and finance (Hawaii, San Antonio, Hillsborough County, Houston, and Rochester), safety (Boston and Houston) and others. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded the Council’s support of information technology to begin sharing best practices in cyber security and interoperability to build on the lessons learned about the important role IT plays across our systems. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>6. Begin synthesizing the results of the Council’s many SSTs over the years to articulate lessons learned and best practices. The Council has conducted some <b>350</b> SSTs over the last 20 years. The results, in combination with the key performance indicators, have significantly improved operations across the Great City Schools. The Council will begin synthesizing lessons learned and best practices to allow the membership to sustain and improve the gains made over the years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have begun preliminary drafting of this synthesis. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>Published guides for the membership on school reopening in the wake of COVID-19 in the areas of transportation, facilities, security, IT, and budget. <a href="#">June and December 2020</a></li> </ul>
<p>7. Convene regular meetings of operational and finance staff to foster and enhance collaboration, mutual support, and the ability to act collectively. Coordinate agendas of job-alike meetings of the human resource directors, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, and information technology directors with priorities of the executive committee and board of directors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have continued regular meetings of HR directors, COOs, CFOs, and CIOs directors. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>Have not yet explicitly tied agendas for meetings to executive committee priorities. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>Continue to hold regular Zoom calls with CFOs, COOs, and others to strategize on school opening in the wake of COVID-19. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>Held in-person CIO and CFO/HR Directors meetings in February and March, respectively, after a two-year hiatus due to the global pandemic. <a href="#">Spring 2022</a></li> <li>Held COO and Directors of Support Services meeting in <a href="#">November 2022</a></li> <li>Scheduled to conduct in-person CFO/CHRO meeting in February and CIO meeting in June. <a href="#">Winter/Spring 2023</a></li> </ul>

<p>8. Continue responding to ongoing information requests, providing data and best practices, sharing data, and conducting customized research for member district staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have continued responding to ongoing information requests. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have conducted a survey of membership on interoperability challenges.</li> <li>• Have conducted a survey of the membership on bonding policies and issues in the membership.</li> <li>• Have conducted over 30 surveys of membership about a variety of operational, facilities, and safety requests from other member districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have recruited 21 member districts to participate in the Council’s interoperability project.</li> <li>• Have created research consortia for districts using the same benchmark assessments – NWEA’s MAP, Curriculum Associates’ iReady, and Renaissance Learnings’ Star assessments. <a href="#">Spring 2022</a></li> </ul>
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**GOAL 3. TO BOLSTER THE PUBLIC’S CONFIDENCE IN URBAN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FOR RAISING OUR CHILDREN AND ENHANCING THEIR FUTURE.**

*To gauge progress on this goal, the Council will monitor the recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders in large city school districts, with a particular focus on teachers and leaders from traditionally underrepresented populations.*

**Strategy:**

Improve the public’s perceptions of, support for, and confidence in public education by making progress academically and operationally, letting people know about that progress, and celebrating success. Negative is always louder than positive, so it will be necessary to listen to our critics and address our challenges but avoid spending much time or energy trying to persuade opponents. In sum, our strategy is to make progress and build the capacity of districts to communicate it; it’s hard to fight success.

**Tactics:**

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>1. Enhance the Council’s outreach efforts to the public, placing more explicit emphasis on the successes and progress of urban public schools, and our members’ role in strengthening our communities. Place additional priority on finding and sharing examples of district, school, and student success across a broader public audience at the national level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have prioritized success stories in both communications and research functions. <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>• Had members share methods at the PRE conference on how they spread good news and progress with their communities. <b>July 2022</b></li> <li>• Beginning efforts to better disseminate Council products. <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>• Commissioned an external audit of Council social media practices.</li> <li>• Received grant funding and in-kind services to develop a new Council website to provide greater access to products and resources.</li> <li>• Highlighted district successes as a part of the National Coalition to Advance Student Success, in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers and Chiefs for Change. <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>• Contracted with the Hatcher Group to lead a 12-month digital-focused marketing campaign around our district investments in Federal ARP resources. <b>Spring 2022</b></li> <li>• Sharing member district ARP investment successes through communications campaigns across agencies in Washington, DC and through the nation media. <b>Ongoing</b></li> </ul>



<p>2. Develop and provide member districts with additional communications tools, platforms, and strategies for improving the public’s perception of urban schools at the local level. In addition, create a prototype for districts to use to better communicate with the public in crisis situations, manage negative news, and build the capacity of the membership to tell their own stories of progress and success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have digitized the <i>Urban Educator</i> and described dozens of success stories in the beginning-of-the-year newsletter. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Developed a communications guide for TUDA districts with advice on how to approach and frame messaging of the 2022 results. <a href="#">October 2022</a></li> </ul>
<p>3. Assist districts in developing strategies and models for more effectively engaging parents and community stakeholders. Design a prototype for how urban school leaders could reconceive and enhance their public engagement initiatives and strengthen public trust in the institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote a report on communicating with parents, the public, and stakeholders on COVID-19 and district strategies. <a href="#">September 2020</a></li> </ul>
<p>4. Provide additional Strategic Support Teams to member districts to help improve their capacity to communicate with the public. These teams would consist of expert communications staff from peer districts that have particularly strong programs and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action yet on this tactic.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Conduct polling on the public’s perceptions of urban public schools and where and how targeted messaging might prove effective. Seek external funds to support polling like what the Council has done in the past to gauge the public’s evolving confidence in urban public education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action yet on this tactic.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Expand the Council’s social media presence to reach a wider audience when communicating the progress of urban public education. Step up the organization’s daily postings on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the numbers of ‘followers’ it has on social media outlets. Expand social media presence into Instagram. Increase use of memes, videos, and photos. Expand use of the Council’s #GreatCityGrads hashtag and connections to the #mybrotherskeeper hashtag.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have dedicated one staff person in the office to post social media messages every day. Have seen uptick in followers, although the list is still modest in size. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Have conducted a third-party audit of Council social media practices with recommendations for next steps.</li> </ul>

<p>7. Provide more comprehensive information to national and local community-based groups on the social services that our schools deliver to parents and the community. Distribute this information through national and local parent groups to help build support for their local public schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have started sharing examples and district highlights with Advisory Group members of the National Coalition to Advance Student Success. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>8. Continue conducting the biennial survey of member communications departments, their staffing levels, functions, responsibilities, funding, and the like. Moreover, expand the representation of districts at the annual meeting of the Council’s public relations executives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalized the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Survey of member communications offices and released the results at the 2019 Public Relations Executive’s meeting. <a href="#">July 2019</a></li> <li>• Saw record attendance at the Council’s most recent in-person PRE conference. <a href="#">July 2022</a></li> <li>• Have launched a survey of Council-member communications operations.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Strengthen contacts with mainstream media, alternative media, and ethnic media and their reporters to ensure that the Council is called when they are writing stories relevant to urban education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are reviewing and updating mailing lists of mainstream and alternative media. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Conducting brown bag sessions with national media outlets to share background on the needs and concerns of urban school districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>10. Carefully vet partnerships with external organizations around critical priorities identified by the membership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This continues to be done on an ongoing basis, particularly with input from the executive committee. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Held a Zoom call with member PRE’s and the Department of Education communications and marketing staff.</li> <li>• Held conference calls with communications staff from the US Department of Education. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Hold regular conference calls and meetings with staff from the US Department of Education, the White House, and Congress. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Hired a new Director of Strategy and Partnerships to support growing the Council’s partnerships with at the national level with organizations that support schools locally. <a href="#">November 2021</a></li> <li>• Hired a new Partnerships Specialist to assist with partnerships and provide support to key Council staff members. <a href="#">December 2022</a></li> <li>• Initiated a new partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to develop guidelines for interactions between</li> </ul>

	<p>school districts, local police departments, and the community. <a href="#">January 2022</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Began initial outreach to the Housing and Urban Development Department to see how we can support Public Housing Authorities serving Great City School students. <a href="#">Winter 2022</a></li><li>• Had initial discussions with Kaplan about their request to provide SAT tutoring and college counseling services to Council members at no charge. <a href="#">November 2022</a></li></ul>
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**MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW MATERIALS**



# SUPPORTING AMERICA'S GREAT CITY SCHOOLS:

A Summary of Member Benefits,  
Services, and Products



**Council of the Great City Schools**

THE NATION'S VOICE FOR URBAN EDUCATION



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## ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

The Council of the Great City Schools brings together the nation's largest urban public school systems in a coalition dedicated to the improvement of education for children in the inner cities. The Council and its member school districts work to help our schoolchildren meet the highest standards and become successful and productive members of society.

The Council keeps the nation's lawmakers, the media, and the public informed about the progress and problems in big-city schools. The organization does this through legislation, communications, research, and technical assistance.

The organization also helps to build capacity in urban education with programs to boost academic performance and narrow achievement gaps; improve professional development; and strengthen leadership, governance, and management.

The Council of the Great City Schools accomplishes its mission by connecting urban school district personnel from coast to coast who work under similar conditions. Staff with responsibilities for curricula, research and testing, finance, operations, personnel, technology, legislation, communications, and other areas confer regularly under the Council's auspices to share concerns and solutions and discuss what works in boosting achievement and managing operations.

In addition, joint efforts with other national organizations, corporations, and government policymakers extend the Council's influence and effectiveness outside member school districts to the larger, interdependent world that will ultimately benefit from the contributions of today's urban students.

Since the organization's founding in 1956, geographic, ethnic, language, and cultural diversity has typified the Council's membership. That diversity propels the coalition forward to see that all citizens receive an education that will equip them with the skills and knowledge to compete successfully in the world marketplace and to enhance the quality of their lives in a society changing with phenomenal speed. The wellspring of accomplishments and innovations rising from our inner cities testifies to the resounding benefits of investment in the nation's urban centers and in their public schools.





## OUR VISION

Urban public schools exist to teach students to the highest standards of educational excellence. As the primary American institution responsible for weaving the strands of our society into a cohesive fabric, we—the leaders of America’s Great City Schools—see a future where the nation cares for all children, expects their best, appreciates their diversity, invests in their futures, and welcomes their participation in the American dream.

The Great City Schools are places where this vision becomes tangible and those ideals are put to the test. We pledge to commit ourselves to the work of advancing empathy, equity, justice, and tolerance, and we vow to do everything we can to vigorously resist the forces of ignorance, fear, and prejudice, as we teach and guide our students. We will keep our commitments, and as we do and as society supports our endeavors, cities will become the centers of a strong and equitable nation, with urban public schools successfully teaching our children and building our communities.

## OUR MISSION

It is the special mission of America’s urban public schools to educate the nation’s most diverse student body to the highest academic standards and prepare them to contribute to our democracy and the global community.





## OUR GOALS

- To educate all urban school students to the highest academic standards.
- To lead, govern and manage our urban public schools in ways that advance the education of our children and inspire the public's confidence.
- To build a confident, committed and supportive urban community for raising the achievement of urban public schoolchildren

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

School districts located in cities with populations over 250,000 and student enrollments over 35,000 are eligible for membership in the Council of the Great City Schools. Membership is also open to those districts serving a state's largest city, depending on its urban characteristics.

The **Board of Directors** is composed of the superintendent and one board of education member from each member district, making the Council the only national educational organization so constituted and the only one whose purpose and membership is solely urban.

The board meets twice a year to determine and adopt policies. It elects a 24-member executive committee, which exercises governing authority when the board is not in session.

The Board of Directors has established five special task forces to address major issues facing the membership. These include **English Language Learners and Bilingual Education Task Force** to focus on issues around the education of English language learners.

A **Task Force on Achievement and Professional Development** was established to eliminate gaps in the academic achievement of traditionally marginalized communities (e.g., race/ethnicity, disability status, English learner status).

A **Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management, and Finance** addresses concerns about issues surrounding urban school leadership and management. **Black and Latino Young Men and Boys Task Force** works to implement the pledge the membership took to improve conditions and outcomes for these

students. And the organization has recently initiated a **Black and Latina Young Women and Girls Task Force** to strengthen its commitment to equity.

Three subcommittees of the Executive Committee provide support in financial and organizational areas:

**By-Laws:** Defines the Council’s mission, responsibilities, and composition within the framework of applicable laws and regulations.

**Audit:** Reviews and studies budgetary matters and ensures that revenues are properly managed.

**Membership:** Determines eligible cities for membership and recruits, screens, and recommends new members.

The Executive Committee is also made up of representatives from **Historically Black Colleges and Universities** and deans from the **Great City Colleges of Education**.



## WHAT MEMBERS GET FOR THEIR DUES



Access to the Council's network of urban public school leaders and staff to gain insights, get answers to questions, and share successes. This includes access to a member-only website with resources.



Access to the Council's team of experts in education legislation, policy, and regulations to ensure member districts have the updated information on federal policy developments and can address special advocacy needs.



Access to coaching and technical assistance to school boards to support their governance role in the district.



Access to leadership support for Superintendents and their executive teams to improve leadership and management.



Access to Council award programs and scholarships honoring special achievements in urban education, presented at conferences and meetings throughout the year.



Access to timely updates and summaries on key policies issued or under consideration by the U.S. Congress, the White House, and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department

of Education, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Assessment Governing Board, Centers for Disease Control, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and others.



Use of the Council's strategic support teams to review instructional programs, special education, bilingual education, budget and finance operations, business services, and other functions of member district school systems to ensure they are operating effectively and efficiently.



Access to the role-alike conferences and Zoom meetings held throughout the year with Great City Schools' superintendents, school board representatives and chairs, chief academic officers, chief financial officers, chief operating officers, bilingual education directors, special education directors, general counsels, transportation directors, food service directors, facilities directors, chief information officers, security directors, chiefs of schools, chiefs of curriculum for core content areas, equity officers, social and emotional learning directors, and others.



Access to the Council's digital monthly newsletter, *Urban Educator*, reporting the latest developments in urban schools across the country and providing an outlet for member districts to showcase their successes and progress. [Click here to subscribe to \*Urban Educator\*](#).



Representing urban schools to ensure a strong voice for urban public education on national task forces, commissions, advisory groups, and meetings of other K-12 organizations.



Access to the Council's unique performance management system and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), allowing districts to compare operations and academic outcomes on over 500 measures with peer districts.



Access to the Council's online [jobs board](#), allowing members to advertise their vacant administrative positions.



Ability to participate in the Council's research projects and have access to all the organization's analyses, special reports, case studies, research briefs, surveys, and data.



Technical assistance and guidance for member districts participating in the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment.



Receipt of a district-specific annual report that itemizes services that the Council provides to the member district and the return-on-investment districts get for their dues.



Voting rights for the superintendent and one school board representative on the Council's Board of Directors, which meets twice each year during our Legislative Conference in the spring and our Annual Fall Conference.



Complimentary registration for the superintendent and school board representative to the Council's Annual Legislative Meeting and Fall Conference.



Guidance and technical assistance to solve operational problems with federal grant programs.



# **DETAILED OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL SERVICES AND PRODUCTS**

## COUNCIL SERVICES



### We help member districts with Legislative and Advocacy Services by:

- Providing legislative advocacy for urban schools before all branches of the federal government, bringing millions of dollars in extra federal support to urban school districts each year.
- Providing ongoing briefings on the status of federal funding, updates to federal regulations and waivers, and other key legislative policies and actions at the federal level impacting member districts.
- Hosting exclusive legal webinars with external counsel, Husch Blackwell, on issues affecting urban school districts, including navigating the conversations on race and First Amendment considerations in the age of social media.
- Submitting comments to federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, to advocate for maximum funding and flexibility for member districts.
- Intervening in federal court cases on behalf of member school districts, including submitting amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court when appropriate.
- Creating partnerships, as needed, with other advocacy groups to promote issues facing urban education.



### We help member districts with Research Services by:

- Conducting statistical analyses, research, and surveys on the conditions, successes, and challenges of urban schools, to inform policy and decision-making in member districts. Recent research topics include teacher recruitment and retention; teacher workforce diversity; and the impact of federal relief funds in member districts.
- Serving as a clearinghouse for research, data, and information on issues concerning urban schools, including publishing reports on why some urban school districts see faster improvements than others.
- Advancing the effective use of assessment and performance data in urban schools.
- Supporting districts participating in TUDA by conducting analyses of NAEP data to identify effective strategies that led to improvements on NAEP scores and convening meetings of the TUDA Task Force to advise the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
- Providing technical assistance to member districts on assessment systems, student information systems, research and evaluation practices, data visualizations and dashboards, and the strategic use of data





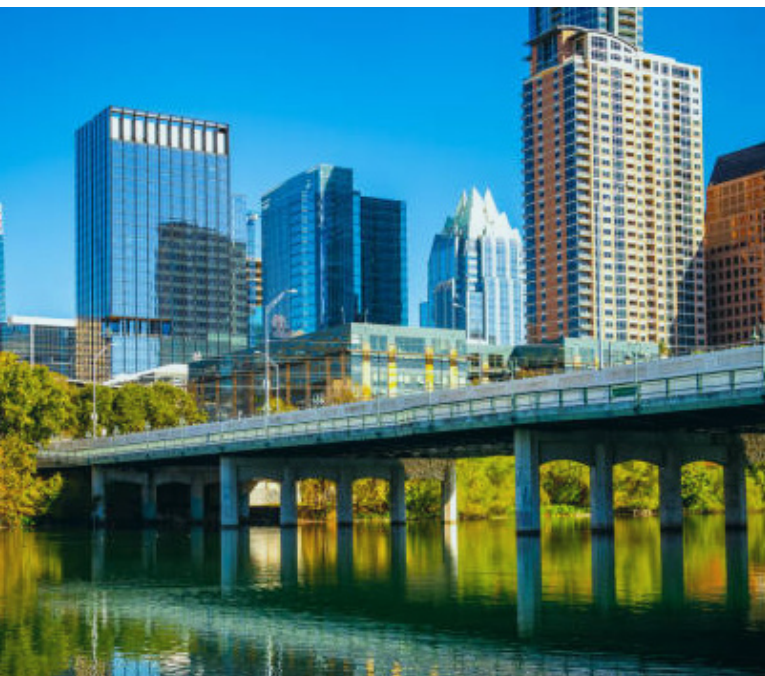
in districts. This includes convening regular meetings with member districts using three of the leading formative assessments.

- Providing research and guidance for the Council’s Task Force on Black and Latino Young Men and Boys and the Task Force on Black and Latina Young Women and Girls.
- Analyzing results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPI) data, and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) data to assess disproportionality and academic progress among young men and women of color across Council member districts.



**We help member districts with Communication Services by:**

- Developing major public relations initiatives that focus attention on urban education priorities, rally public support, and articulate the needs and direction of urban schools. This includes issuing press releases on Council activities as well as statements on critical current events impacting the lives of urban students.
- Highlighting member district achievements through Council publications, websites, and social media channels.



- Writing articles and opinion pieces in nationally circulated newspapers and magazines, as well as generating broadcasts and commentary on television, radio, and social media in support of urban schools.
- Creating and disseminating Public Service Announcements to highlight the progress of urban schools and to inform the public on issues critical to member districts.
- Offering technical assistance to member school districts on working effectively with the press and establishing successful communications operations.
- Hosting an annual National Town Hall Meeting on urban issues of the day, as part of the Annual Fall Conference.
- Providing a social media toolkit for member districts to share messages about district successes.



**We help member districts with Achievement and Professional Development Services by:**

- Assessing the quality of the instructional program of our member districts with a focus on improving Tier 1 instruction by providing strategic support and professional development.
- Reviewing special education programs to ensure equitable access to high

quality instruction in the least restrictive environment.

- Convening meetings with district representatives and educational publishers to build a shared understanding of district needs and the gaps in current resources.
- Collaborating with district staff and external partners to design and implement tools to support curriculum and instruction in member districts.
- Providing support to districts on curriculum initiatives using the Council’s resource *Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum* and its accompanying curriculum quality assessment rubric.
- Connecting the work of the Council to the work done by leading mathematics, science, history/social science, and literacy organizations to keep the membership informed and to help shape the work of those organizations in addressing urban education.
- Developing key academic performance indicators to allow districts to benchmark instructional progress and to promote effective instructional investments.
- Supporting member districts with scaling the use of diverse and complex texts and tasks during core instruction within and outside the classroom.



**We help member districts with Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education Services by:**

- Providing support, materials, analyses, and tools to highlight and address the academic needs of English learners (Els).
- Providing updates and summaries of various policies regarding grading and promotion for English learners and instruction in foundational skills.
- Developing a series of hybrid courses through our Professional Learning Platform (PLP) to support professional development and elevate instruction for Els in ELA/ELD, mathematics, and writing.
- Providing annual opportunities for district El staff to meet with educational publishers to review and provide feedback on instructional materials for Els.
- Providing technical assistance to Council member districts on how to support newcomer students, including refugee students and students with interrupted formal education.
- Meeting with officials from federal agencies to communicate member district needs related to serving Els, including welcoming refugees into member districts and communities.



### **We help member districts with Leadership, Governance, and Management Services by:**

- Providing technical assistance and professional development to improve the management and operations of member districts.
- Hosting the annual Harvard/CGCS Accelerating Board Capacity Institute, providing professional development and leadership and governance training to delegations of member district leaders and school boards.
- Providing training, coaching, and guidance to district leaders and school board members as a part of the Dr. Michael Casserly Urban School Executive Leadership Institute.
- Providing School Board training, support, and guidance to cohorts of school board members, board chairs, board support staff, and board coaches.
- Providing coaching and other supports for superintendents in member districts, under the direction of the Council's Superintendent-in-Residence.
- Providing specialized professional development to urban school executives to build the pipeline of rising district administrators.



### **We provide Strategic Support Teams for districts.**

The Council provides in-depth district assessments, technical assistance, and peer reviews to its members. For each Strategic Support Team, the Council assembles a group of experts, including Council staff and current or retired member district staff. The Teams conduct on-site and virtual interviews with key district staff and may also visit schools and classrooms. At the end of the review, the district receives a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations. A sample of past reports is available on the [Council's website](#). Reviews are conducted in the following areas:

- Curriculum and Instruction (e.g., reading and math programming; instructional strategy and organization; professional development; low performing schools; accountability systems; special education; bilingual education; and other areas as requested);
- Management and Operations (e.g., organizational structure; staffing levels and personnel operations; procurement; finance and budget operations; management information systems; technology; interoperability; facilities management; governance; transportation; food services; and other areas as requested);
- Research and Assessment (e.g., testing; research department structure; data

collection and use; program evaluation; and other areas as requested);

- Communications (e.g., department structure; marketing; internal communications; community outreach; publications; and media relations); and
- Federal Programs (e.g., Titles I, II, III, IV; afterschool programs; use of federal funds; and program alignment).

 **We host member districts at Convenings and Conferences.**

The Council convenes two major conferences each year: the spring Legislative and Policy Conference and the Annual Fall Conference of the Great City Schools. For these two meetings, all conference registration fees are waived for Council member superintendents and the school board representative to the Council.

**Spring Legislative and Policy Conference:** a forum held in Washington, D.C., each March for the membership to discuss recent developments in federal legislation and funding and to advocate the policy positions of urban public schools.

**Annual Fall Conference:** a general forum held each fall in one of the member cities for the entire membership to discuss special issues in urban education and to share information and best practices across districts to improve outcomes for urban students.

Additionally, the Council hosts a series of job-alike meetings. These meetings are held in Council member cities and member district staff are invited to learn from outside experts and share best practices among their colleagues.

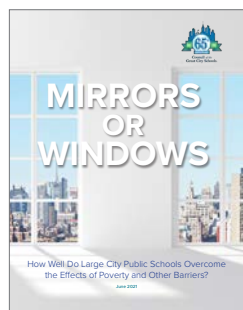
- Bilingual, Immigrant, Refugee Education Directors
- Chief Financial Officers
- Chief Human Resources/Talent Development Directors
- Chief Information Officers
- Chief Operating Officers
- Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders
- Public Relations Executives



## COUNCIL PRODUCTS

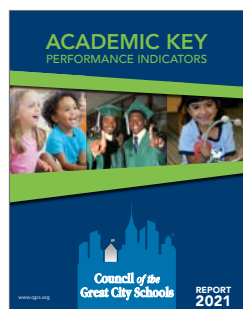
Throughout the year, the Council publishes reports and periodicals to inform the membership, highlight best practices, and share research findings. Additionally, [press releases](#) are issued to call attention to major releases or provide Council input on major issues. Examples of recent publications are listed below.

### Research



[Mirrors or Windows: How Well Do Large City Public Schools Overcome the Effects of Poverty and Other Barriers?](#) Over the last twenty years of district-

level assessments on the Nation's Report Card, the participating urban school districts have narrowed the achievement gap in mathematics and reading by about 50 percent. The *Mirrors or Windows* study found that urban students are making significant progress academically, despite having to overcome the effects of poverty. *June 2021*

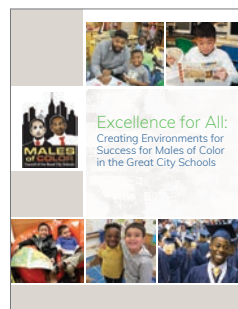


[Academic Key Performance Indicators, 2021 Report.](#)

The 2021 report presents an updated set of data through school year 2019-20. This report presents several different ways

that member districts can analyze the data

themselves by disaggregating results, showing trends, and combining variables. This year, a companion online dashboard was released to members that added the ability to conduct several comparisons and analysis beyond what is presented in the printed report. *October 2021*



[Excellence for All: Creating Environments for Success for Males of Color in the Great City Schools.](#)

This report contributes to the ongoing dialogue of raising our expectations

for males of color and provides a resource for school districts seeking to build or recalibrate their initiatives to improve the academic outcomes of young men and boys of color. Throughout the report there are exemplars of initiatives from across the nation's big cities as well as promising practices in various areas. *October 2017*



[Call for Change: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcome of Black Males in Urban Schools.](#) The purpose of this study is to bring much-needed attention to

the comprehensive challenges of Black males in the United States. *October 2010*



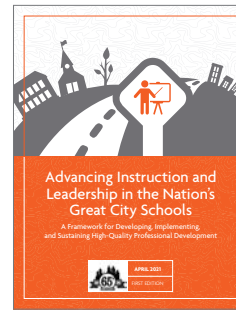
Today's Promise, Tomorrow's Future: The Social and Educational Factors Contributing to the Outcomes of Hispanics in Urban Schools.

The study focuses on the lives of Hispanic students in big-city schools from early childhood to adulthood and analyzes distinctions between Hispanic and Latino English language learners. *October 2011*

Additionally, the Research Department has presentations on the following topics, available upon request:

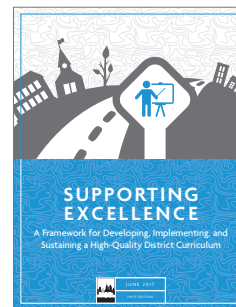
- Black and Latina Young Women and Girls Task Force. As part of this Task Force, the Council provides annual reports on trends in student performance and engagement among Black and Latina young women and girls in our districts. *September 2021*
- The State of Unfinished Learning and Student Recovery. These presentations provide updates to member districts on the academic recovery students are making since the pandemic-related school closures during the spring of 2020 and parts of the 2020-21 school year. *March 2022*
- American School District Panel Reports. Custom reports are provided for member districts showing how they responded in aggregate to a series of surveys seeking feedback on education policy and practice. *April 2022*

## Achievement and Professional Development



Advancing Instruction and Leadership in the Nation's Great City Schools: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining High-Quality Professional Development.

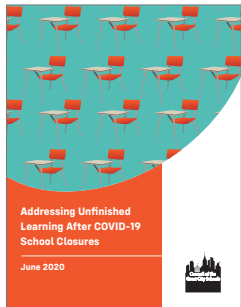
This guide aims to present district instructional leaders and staff with a core set of criteria for what high-quality professional development entails. It focuses on practical issues of district-level implementation in multiple teaching and learning environments and provides clear, concrete guidance for district leaders in selecting, designing, implementing, and sustaining high-quality professional development. *April 2021*



Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Development, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.

A framework that provides instructional leaders and staff with a core set of criteria for what a high-quality curriculum entails. This guide annotated samples and exemplars from districts across the country. It also provides actionable recommendations for developing, implementing, and continuously improving upon a district curriculum, ensuring that it reflects shared instructional beliefs and

common and high expectations for all students.  
*July 2017 (Second Edition coming October 2022)*



[Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures](#). This resource highlights how to address unfinished learning by focusing on key transition grades and

the importance of identifying the essential content for the grade. This approach provides the space and opportunities to provide just in time supports for all students while they engage in grade level work, and acquire facility with academic language demands, skills and concepts to accelerate their learning. To illustrate these approaches, the document provides examples of just-in-time scaffolds to accelerate student learning in mathematics and English language arts. *June 2020*



[Shifting Early Literacy Practices: The Story of an Early Reading Pilot in San Antonio Independent School District](#). This publication is the result of a collaboration between CGCS and Student

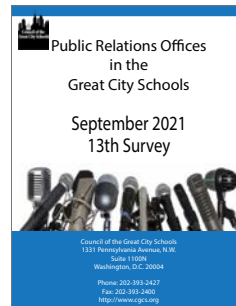
Achievement Partners and includes reflections, guidance, and tools developed during a school district pilot focused on “Early Reading Accelerators.” The work has the potential to shape literacy vision and transform reading practices across the country. *May 2021*

## Communications



[Communications Toolkit for Reopening Schools after COVID-19: Recommendations for Communication Departments](#). Provides sample communication

materials drawn from urban school districts across the country, and recommendations for effective messaging during the COVID-19 crisis, from initial reopening through the challenges that will arise during the 2020-21 school year. *September 2020*



[Public Relations Offices in the Great City Schools](#).

In an effort to determine the structure and function of Public Relations offices in member districts, the Council distributes a survey

every other year requesting information on these offices. The first one was published in 1997, and the reports are available upon request. *September 2021*



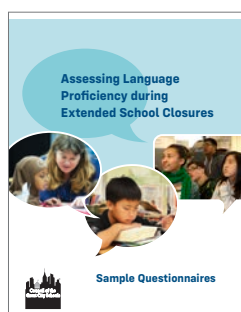
## English Learners



### Connecting 3Ls™ to English Language Development Standards and Frameworks.

This publication makes explicit connections between the 3Ls™

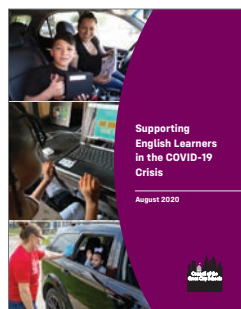
(Learning, Language, and Literacy) approach to instruction for English learners (ELs) and the English Language Development (ELD) standards and frameworks adopted to guide instruction for ELs. *September 2021*



### Assessing Language Proficiency during Extended School Closures.

This document provides sample questionnaires across grade bands that are designed to provisionally

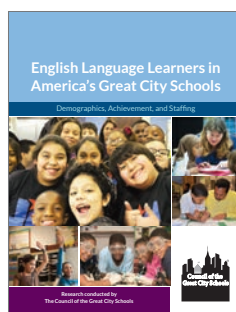
identify students as English learners (ELs) during the COVID-19-related school closures, which impede the administration of face-to-face screening protocols. *May 2020*



### Supporting English Learners in the COVID-19 Crisis.

This guide is the ninth in a series developed by the Council of the Great City Schools to help districts as they prepare

to reopen schools in the 2020-21 school year. *August 2020*



### English Language Learners in America's Great City Schools.

This report presents the results of a two-year study to gather data on the fastest-growing demographic group in the

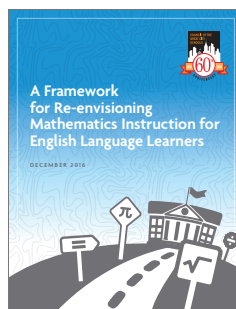
nation's schools. It updates most of the data presented in the Council's first-ever study on English language learner (ELL) programs that was released in 2013. *April 2019*



### Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for English Language Learners.

Presents the Council's criteria for determining whether English language

arts materials are compatible with college and career standards and appropriate for English language learners. *May 2017*

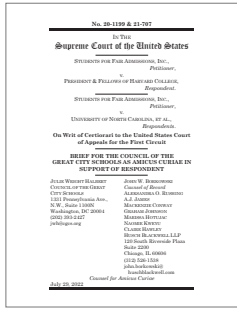


### A Framework for Re-envisioning Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners.

The overarching purpose of this document is to define a vision for mathematics

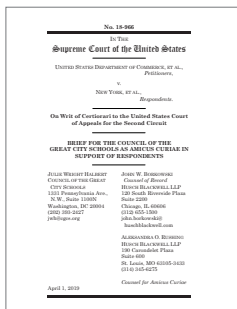
instruction that explicitly attends to the needs of ELLs, addressing the interdependence of language and mathematics. *December 2016*

## Legislative



### [CGCS Amicus Brief in the United States Supreme Court on the Higher Education Admissions Cases: Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows](#)

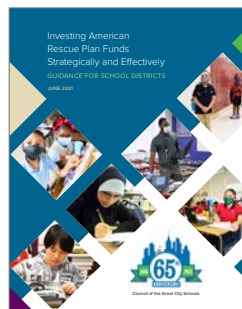
[of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina, et al.](#) An Amicus Brief submitted to advocate for the Council members before the Supreme Court. *August 2022*



### [CGCS Amicus Brief in the United States Supreme Court on the Citizenship Question: United States Department Of Commerce, et al. v. New York, et al.](#)

An Amicus Brief submitted to advocate for the Council members before the Supreme Court. *April 2019*

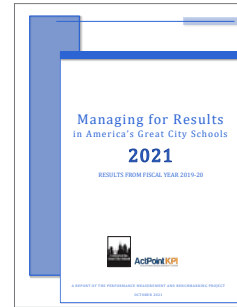
## Governance and Management



### [Investing American Rescue Plan Funds Strategically and Effectively: Guidance for School Districts.](#)

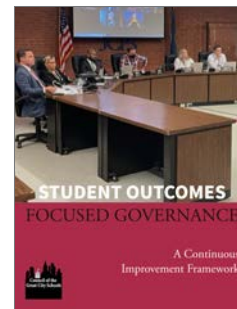
This document lays out a framework for the nation's large city school systems to spend federal relief funds strategically and effectively. It sets out overarching goals for the use of funds; articulates broad investment

strategies; defines principles for the effective use of funds; and asks a series of questions that leaders and stakeholders should ask themselves as they embark on planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts. *June 2021*



### [Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools, 2021, Results from Fiscal Year 2019-2020.](#)

This annual report, first released in 2002, tracks performance measures across member districts, allowing members to benchmark their work and improve business operations. *October 2021*



### [Student Outcomes-Focused Governance: A Continuous Improvement Framework.](#)

The framework is built around six research-informed competencies that describe school board behaviors and the degree to which they create the conditions for improvements in student outcomes: Vision & Goals; Values & Guardrails; Monitoring & Accountability; Communication & Collaboration; Unity & Trust; and Continuous Improvement. *October 2021*





## AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**Green-Garner Award** is the Council's annual urban education award for outstanding leadership by a superintendent or school board member.

**Queen Smith Award for Commitment to Urban Education** is the Council's annual award for outstanding service to urban education among professional educators and teachers.

**Dr. Michael D. Casserly Educational Justice and Courage Award** is the Council's annual award to a person who has made outstanding contributions in the field of K-12 urban education by taking a courageous and passionate stance on the issue of educational justice and equality. As a part of this award, the recipient identifies one student from a member district to receive a \$10,000 scholarship to pursue higher education.

**Dr. Shirley S. Schwartz Urban Education Impact Award** is the Council's annual award for exemplary partnerships between universities and urban school districts.

**CGCS – Bernard Harris Scholarships in Math and Science** are the Council’s annual scholarships to graduating African American and Hispanic seniors in member school districts who plan to pursue college majors in STEM fields (in collaboration with the Harris Foundation).

**Research and Assessment Leadership Award** is the Council’s annual award for an outstanding urban school official who exemplifies leadership, innovation, and commitment to improving student achievement.

**Making Strides Together Award** is the Council’s annual award to an outstanding urban school official who exemplifies leadership, innovation, commitment, and professionalism in improving instructional quality and raising student achievement.

**Valeria Silva Award for Outstanding Contributions to ELL Achievement** is the Council’s award for an outstanding district administrator or school principal who has made significant and lasting contributions to improving the academic achievement for English learners (ELs).

**Distinguished Service Award** is the Council’s annual award to a chief operating officer in a member school district who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in a non-instructional operating area.

**Bill Wise Award** is the Council’s annual award to a Chief Financial Officer in a member school district who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in financial management.

**Information Technology Leadership Award** is the Council’s annual award to a Chief Information Officer for outstanding leadership in the area of information technology and/or management information services.

**Award for Excellence in Financial Management:** the Council’s award to recognize Council member districts that meet the highest standards of financial accountability and performance.



## COUNCIL STAFF

### Administration

Raymond Hart, *Executive Director*

Alka Pateriya, *Director of Strategy and Partnerships*

Teri Trinidad, *Director of Administration,  
Finance & Conferences*

Amanda Corcoran, *Special Projects Manager*

Alisa Adams, *Finance Manager*

Alexis Vann, *Manager of Conferences*

Michell Yorkman, *Manager of Conferences  
and Partnerships*

Gregory Bacon, *Administrative and  
Conference Specialist*

Eric Vignola, *Manager of Software Engineering*

Marilyn Banks, *Administrative Assistant*

Michael Casserly, *Strategic Advisor*

### Communications

Tonya Harris, *Director of Communications*

Joanne Coley, *Communications Manager*

Kalin Hicks, *Communications Specialist*

### Curriculum and Instruction

Karla Estrada, *Chief Academic Officer*

Denise Walston, *Chief of Curriculum*

Robin Hall, *Chief of Schools*

Ricki Price-Baugh, *Senior Advisor*

### Legislation and Policy

Manish Naik, *Director of Legislative Services*

Moses Valle-Palacios, *Manager of Legislative Services*

Julie Wright Halbert, *General Counsel*

Gabriela Uro, *Director of ELL Policy & Research*

David Chi-Wai Lai, *Special Projects Manager*

### Governance and Leadership

AJ Crabill, *Director of Governance*

Michael Hinojosa, *Superintendent-in-Residence*

### Management Services

Willie Burroughs, *Director of Management Services*

Robert Carlson, *Senior Advisor*

### Research

Akisha Osei Sarfo, *Director of Research*

Brian Garcia, *Research Manager*

Chester Holland, *Research Manager*

## LIST OF MEMBER DISTRICTS

Albuquerque	El Paso	Omaha
Anchorage	Fayette County, KY	Orange County, FL
Arlington	Fort Worth	Palm Beach County, FL
Atlanta	Fresno	Philadelphia
Aurora	Guilford County, NC	Phoenix Union
Austin	Hawaii Department of Education	Pinellas County, FL
Baltimore	Hillsborough County, FL	Pittsburgh
Birmingham	Houston	Portland
Boston	Indianapolis	Providence
Bridgeport	Jackson	Puerto Rico
Broward County, FL	Jefferson County, KY	Richmond
Buffalo	Kansas City	Rochester
Charleston	Long Beach	Sacramento
Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC	Los Angeles	St. Louis
Chicago	Memphis-Shelby County, TN	St. Paul
Cincinnati	Miami-Dade County, FL	San Antonio
Clark County, NV	Milwaukee	San Diego
Cleveland	Minneapolis	San Francisco
Columbus	Nashville	Santa Ana
Dallas	New Orleans	Seattle
Dayton	New York City	Toledo
Denver	Newark	Tulsa
Des Moines	Norfolk	Washington, D.C.
Detroit	Oakland	Washoe County, NV
Duval County, FL	Oklahoma City	Wichita
East Baton Rouge		Winston-Salem/ Forsyth County, NC



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