

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP**

# **COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS**

## **Subcommittee on Membership**

**2024-2025**

### ***Subcommittee Goal***

To review criteria and applications for membership, and recruit and retain members.

### ***Chair***

Shavonna Holman, Omaha School Board

### ***Members***

Roger Leon, Newark Superintendent  
Joyce Wilkerson, Philadelphia School Board

### ***Ex Officio***

Marcia Andrews, Palm Beach County School Board

# COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

## Membership by Region

March 2025

East (E)	Midwest (MW)	Southeast (SE)	West (W)
Boston	Arlington (TX)	Atlanta	Albuquerque
Bridgeport	Aurora	Baltimore	Anchorage
Buffalo	Austin	Birmingham	Fresno
Cincinnati	Chicago	Broward County	Hawaii
Cleveland	Dallas	Charlotte	Las Vegas
Columbus	Denver	Charleston	Long Beach
Dayton	Des Moines	East Baton Rouge	Los Angeles
Detroit	El Paso	Guilford County	Oakland
Newark	Fort Worth	Jackson	Phoenix
New York City	Houston	Jacksonville	Portland
Philadelphia	Indianapolis	Lexington (KY)	Sacramento
Pittsburgh	Kansas City	Little Rock	San Diego
Providence	Milwaukee	Louisville	San Francisco
Rochester	Minneapolis	Memphis-Shelby Cty	Santa Ana
Toledo	Oklahoma City	Miami-Dade County	Seattle
	Omaha	Nashville	Washoe County
	San Antonio	New Orleans	
	St. Louis	Norfolk	
	St. Paul	Orlando	
	Tulsa	Palm Beach	
	Wichita	Puerto Rico	
		Richmond	
		St. Petersburg	
		Tampa	
		Washington D.C.	
		Winston-Salem/Forsyth County	
15	21	26	16

## **CURRENT MEMBER APPLICATIONS**

September 12, 2024

Dear Dr. Hart,

Thank you for inviting us to submit a formal membership request to the Executive Committee of the Council of the Great City Schools. We are honored that the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) has been given this opportunity and are greatly interested in becoming a member of your organization.

MMSD is the second largest school district in the state of Wisconsin and serves more than 25,200 students across 52 schools. MMSD is located in the City of Madison, which is home to approximately 270,000 people. The city is expected to grow by another 100,000 people by 2050.

Our student demographics are diverse with approximately 60% of our students identifying in a state-defined racial category. In 1970, that number was 13%. Our demographic breakdown is:

Black/African-American	18%
Asian	7%
Hispanic/Latino	25%
White	39%
Two or more races	10%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	less than 1%

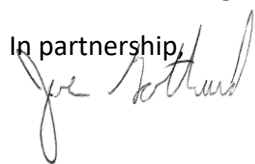
Of this, 16% of students receive special education services, 47% are economically disadvantaged and 27% are English language learners. Twenty-three of our schools offer bilingual classes.

Having served on the Council's Executive Committee, I am familiar with the valuable work the Council does to support the educational needs of our Urban youth through legislation, research and media relations. I have seen and experienced first-hand the powerful impact the Council has had and will continue to have on ensuring students receive the education they deserve to help them be successful.

MMSD's commitment to students' education, racial equity and inclusion, along with our diverse demographics and vision that every school will be a thriving school that prepares every student to graduate ready for college, career and community align well with the Council's work. I am hopeful that MMSD can join the Council as its 79th urban school district member.

Please reach out to us if there are further questions or additional information is needed. We look forward to hearing the Committee's decision.

In partnership,



Joe Gothard, Ed.D.



Nichelle Nichols

Superintendent

President, Board of Education



**DURHAM**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent  
511 Cleveland Street / Durham, North Carolina 27701  
919-560-2000

Dr. Ray Hart  
Executive Director  
Council of the Great City Schools  
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 1100N  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Dr. Hart,

On behalf of Durham Public Schools (DPS), I am honored to formally express our interest in becoming a Council of the Great City Schools member. As one of North Carolina's largest and most diverse public school districts, DPS shares the Council's mission to promote excellence in education for all students, particularly those in urban school systems.

With over 31,000 students and 57 schools, we serve a community that is a microcosm of the challenges and opportunities large urban districts face nationwide. Durham is the second fastest-growing city in North Carolina, home to nearly 300,000 residents.

Our district is committed to fostering equity, raising academic standards, and addressing the unique needs of diverse student populations, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. By joining the Council, DPS will benefit from the shared knowledge, resources, and advocacy efforts that the Council provides to its member districts.

Over the past several years, Durham Public Schools has made significant strides in implementing innovative programs to support student achievement, teacher development, and community engagement. We have also worked to close achievement gaps and ensure every student can access a high-quality education. However, we recognize the importance of collaboration with other large districts to strengthen our efforts and learn from best practices nationwide.

Membership in the Council would allow DPS to collaborate with peer districts on critical issues such as equity, school finance, and curriculum development. We are particularly interested in the Council's support in addressing the challenges of educating students in urban settings and are eager to contribute to the organization's collective knowledge and success.

Our participation in the Council will enhance our work in Durham and help us better serve our students, families, and community. We would be honored to be

considered for membership and look forward to the opportunity to engage with and contribute to the Council's important work.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to joining the Council of the Great City Schools and working together to improve educational outcomes for urban students nationwide.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony S. Lewis, Ph.D.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Anthony S. Lewis, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Millicent Rogers", with a stylized, cursive script.

Millicent Rogers  
Chair, DPS Board of Education





Dr. Norma Fernández  
Chief School Administrator

## JERSEY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

346 Claremont Avenue  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07305



nfernandez2@jcboe.org  
201.915.6201

February 10, 2025

Dr. Ray Hart  
Executive Director  
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 1100N  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Dr. Hart,

On behalf of the Jersey City Public Schools (JCPS), I am honored to formally express our interest in becoming a member of the Council of the Great City Schools. As the second largest school district in New Jersey, the 71st most populous incorporated place in the nation, and the most ethnically diverse city in the United States, we share the Council's mission to promote excellence in education for all students regardless of ethnicity or social or economic background.

With over 29,000 students and 45 schools, we serve a community in a densely populated city that is a microcosm of the diversity around the world. In Jersey City, 43% of the residents were born outside the country, and 52% speak another language. Our student body is highly diverse, with thirty-seven percent (37%) coded as Hispanic/Latino American, twenty-six percent (26%) African American, seventeen percent (17%) Asian-American, fifteen percent (15%) Caucasian, three percent (3%) multiracial, one percent (1%) Pacific Islander, twelve percent (12%) are English Language Learners, and fifteen (15%) are students with disabilities. Additionally, seventy-eight percent (78%) are eligible for free and reduced meals.

We build on our students' strengths by providing a rigorous academic curriculum, personalized learning, and parent and community partnerships. Our goal is that every one of the scholars, regardless of ethnicity or social or economic background, achieves the highest academic excellence through effective instructional practices that recognize the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity in our school populations. During the last few years, three JCPS schools have been named Blue Ribbon Schools. According to US News and World Report, McNair Academic High School is ranked #6 in New Jersey and #79 in the nation, together with five other schools ranked at the highest levels. We have also invested heavily in our students' social and emotional well-being by establishing mental health clinics, training all educators in trauma-informed practices, and creating seven community schools.

Jersey City Public Schools have a long history. We celebrated our 150th anniversary two years ago, with 53% of the buildings built between 90 and 120 years ago, and they have been used as gathering places for multiple presidents and national figures. Nonetheless, last year, we celebrated a historic partnership to reduce carbon footprint through an Energy Saving Improvement Program (ESIP) that will afford the district eighty-eight million dollars (88 million) in savings over the next twenty years and that will be reinvested into our facilities, benefiting our students and the community.

We are committed to inspire and prepare all scholars to address global challenges and reach their fullest potential in a diverse, ever-changing world. Membership in the Council would allow the JCPS to collaborate and learn from peer districts on critical issues and best practices in school finance, curriculum development, equity, and social justice as we educate our urban students.

I am hopeful that the Jersey City Public School District can join as a member of the Council of Great City Schools.

Best regards,



Dr. Norma Fernández  
Chief School Administrator



Noemí Velázquez  
President of the Jersey City Board of Education