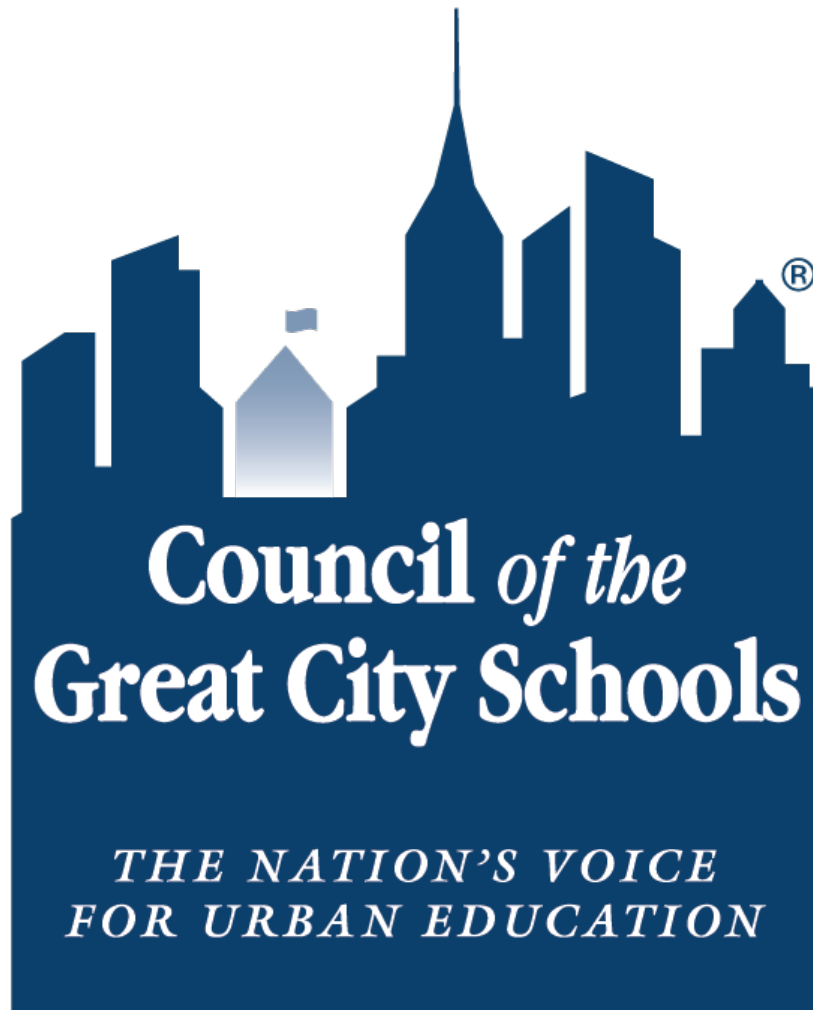


# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



## Strategic Plan, 2025-2030

# **Strategic Plan of the Council of the Great City Schools 2025-2030**

## **Organization**

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 78 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 35 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. In 2025, the organization's Executive Committee determined that these three main goals, along with the Council's vision and mission, remain consistent with the needs and priorities of urban schools and voted to adopt the strategic plan another five years, to be revisited again in 2030.

## **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.

We 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 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.

## Theory of Action of the Great City Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools works to build the capacity of urban school district teachers, leaders, administrators, and school boards to drive effective teaching and learning in large, diverse school systems. We do this by providing technical assistance, professional learning, resources, and a network of peer support, and by ensuring that urban schools have the financial resources, public support, and data they need to effectively lead, govern, and manage their districts. This systemic approach to improvement will result in improved outcomes and opportunities for students in our Great City Schools.

## Values and Commitments of the Great City Schools

The ongoing work of the Council is built on the following values and commitments:

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. This is evident in its annual reports, district-specific services, return on investment reports, policy positions, initiation of the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment, candid Strategic Support Team reviews of districts, tracking and reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and research reports, among other activities.
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 honesty and consistency in 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.

# Goals and Strategies of the Great City Schools

The Council pledges to build on the legacy of continuous improvement and collective action it has advanced over the years. The Council will remain committed to its three main goals between 2025 and 2030, adjusting its tactical efforts when necessary to ensure that it can address any emerging 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

To meet the goal of raising academic achievement for students in our Great City Schools, the organization will pursue a strategy based on three pillars: building the capacity of instructional leaders to provide high quality support, guidance, and resources to schools; addressing unfinished learning and the unmet social emotional learning needs of students; and supporting the academic growth of historically marginalized students, including students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.

### Tactics

1. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, annual in-person convenings, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for key district staff and leaders supporting teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student support services, English learner education, research, and assessment.
2. Provide instructional leaders with technical assistance, guidance, and tools to enable them to develop, evaluate, and implement high-quality districtwide curricula and instructional materials that reflect rigorous instructional standards and meet the diverse needs of learners. Reinforce this guidance through ongoing professional learning opportunities.
3. Develop resources and track data to support and inform ongoing improvement in student outcomes, ensuring a focus on addressing unfinished learning within Tier 1 instruction and nonacademic indicators such as student engagement, social/emotional learning, mental health needs, and chronic absenteeism. Advance understanding and use of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks to help educators provide academic and behavioral strategies to foster student success.

4. Conduct research on effective practices across urban school districts. Identify lessons that can be drawn and disseminate findings broadly via technical assistance visits, published resources, conferences, and professional development. Ensure data analysis focuses on supporting chronically low-performing students and historically marginalized students, including students of color, English learners, students living in abject poverty, and students with disabilities.
5. Conduct strategic support team reviews of instructional, English learner, and special education programming, as requested, to provide districts with findings and recommendations to improve academic outcomes for students.
6. Develop a process for sharing best practices and lessons learned in response to common problems of practice gleaned from the scores of Strategic Support Team reviews (SSTs) and technical assistance that the Council has provided over the years to help build member capacity more broadly.
7. Identify and disseminate effective initiatives for improving the academic outcomes of historically marginalized students. Track which member districts make the most progress, identify the factors driving these improvements, and highlight the lessons that can be learned and applied across Council member districts.
8. Track urban district performance on the Trial Urban District Assessment, state assessments, formative assessments, and the organization's Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to gauge progress and identify where additional support is needed. Continue to develop and refine systems that enhance the accessibility, analytic capacity, and use of urban district data to improve outcomes for students.
9. Provide guidance and feedback, based on district priorities and input, to help publishers and formative assessment providers develop high quality instructional materials and assessments, particularly for struggling students and English learners.
10. Expand the courses available on the Council's Professional Learning Platform, articulating the themes and recommendations from key Council resources such as the *Supporting Excellence* curriculum framework, *Addressing Unfinished Learning* guide, *Advancing Instruction and Leadership* professional development framework, and the *Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners*, to enhance instructional capacity in member districts.
11. Provide guidance and share best practices on wraparound services to students encouraging a holistic approach to education that addresses the diverse needs of students beyond academics, by integrating mental health support, nutrition

programs, after-school activities, family engagement initiatives, and access to high quality healthcare into school environments. Promote policies and practices that ensure students can thrive both inside and outside the classroom, recognizing that their academic success is closely tied to their overall well-being, and stronger connections between schools, families, and communities creates a support network that is essential for students' long-term success.

12. Document and disseminate promising practices and lessons learned from educator and school leader pipeline programs in districts around the country. Develop and share best practices in promoting and retaining district staff at all levels of the organization (e.g., paraprofessionals to teachers, teachers to administrators). Partner with colleges of education in the Great Cities in preparing the next generation of educators and diversifying the teacher force in urban schools to ensure understanding and representation of district needs and demographics.
13. Enhance and protect federal funding and regulatory flexibility for urban school systems in service of enhanced instruction and student support.

## Outcomes

- Improved district performance on NAEP, state and formative assessments, the Council's academic key performance indicators, and other indicators of academic improvement.
- Higher graduation rates and levels of college and career readiness.
- Improved academic outcomes for historically marginalized student groups, including students of color, ELLs, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty.
- Increased access to high-quality curricula, instruction, and materials that meet the needs of all learners.
- Increased recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders equipped with the skills necessary to support diverse learners in urban school settings.
- Continued targeting of federal funding for urban school systems in support of academic achievement.
- Increased flexibility in the regulatory language impacting 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

To meet the goal of effectively leading, governing, and managing our Great City Schools, the organization will pursue a strategy based on three pillars: expanding the adoption and implementation of Student Outcomes-Focused Governance; preparing the next generation of district leaders for the superintendency and cabinet roles; and providing targeted resources, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to help member school districts improve their academic and operational performance.

### Tactics

1. Provide ongoing support to districts implementing the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance (SOFG) framework through in-person and virtual coaching, helping them develop and monitor goals and guardrails that foster continuous improvement.
2. Provide technical assistance to district superintendents and school boards, by request, in a range of areas through shorter term efforts such as policy reviews, board self-evaluations, superintendent evaluations, and executive coaching support.
3. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, annual in-person convenings, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for key district staff and leaders, including, but not limited to, chief academic officers, chief accountability officers, human resource officers, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, chief information/technology officers, chiefs of schools, and directors of facilities, transportation, child nutrition, and safety and security.
4. Manage professional learning cohorts for aspiring, new, and veteran superintendents, school board members, their staff, and district leaders on implementing the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance framework to support their effectiveness as leaders in Great City Schools.
5. Continue to manage and administer the Michael Casserly Urban Executive Leadership Institute for aspiring, new, and veteran cabinet level staff (e.g., chief operations officers, chief financial officers, chief human resource officers, chief information/technology officers, chief academic officers, chiefs of schools), and

superintendents to prepare the next generation of district leaders through technical assistance, coaching, and access to networks of support.

6. Track and report district progress on non-academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Analyze results in order to identify and document practices that can be replicated to improve organizational effectiveness across member districts.
7. Conduct Strategic Support Team reviews (SSTs) to provide member school systems with technical assistance in areas such as academics and school management, organizational structure, staffing levels, human resources, facilities and maintenance, budget and finance, internal audit, information technology, safety and security, procurement, food services, and transportation.
8. Synthesize the results of the Council's many academic, operational, and organizational SSTs over the years to identify common problems of practice and share lessons learned to reach a broader audience and build member capacity.
9. Respond to ad hoc information requests, providing data and best practices and conducting customized surveys, evaluations, and research for member district staff.

## Outcomes

- Stronger, more effective district leadership and school board governance with a focus on student outcomes.
- Stronger, more effective academic and operational leadership across member school districts.
- Increased superintendent tenure.
- Increased operational and financial efficiency on key performance indicators across member districts.
- A cadre of high-quality, well-prepared superintendent candidates, ready to lead Great City Schools.
- A cadre of leaders ready to serve as Chief Academic Officers, Chiefs of Schools, Chief Performance Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Chief Human Resource Officers, Chief Operating Officers, and Chief Information/Technology Officers.
- A cadre of certified coaches prepared to support urban school boards.

## GOAL 3. TO BOLSTER THE PUBLIC’S CONFIDENCE IN URBAN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

### Strategy

Help improve the public’s perceptions of, support for, and confidence in public education by highlighting district successes and challenges, advocating on behalf of urban schools, and serving as a trusted source of information on district progress and improvement. Build the capacity of member school districts to engage and inform their communities about issues impacting urban public education through targeted resources, professional learning opportunities, and access to peer support networks.

### Tactics

1. Enhance the Council's outreach efforts to the public, communicating the progress of urban public schools and their role in strengthening communities. Increase public awareness of urban school improvement, Council publications, events, and commentary through an expanded social media presence and email outreach to a broader audience of thought leaders, policymakers, national organizations, and other K-12 education stakeholders.
2. Represent the interests, priorities, and successes of urban school systems across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government, including the White House and federal administrative and regulatory agencies. Advocate for increased flexibility and continued targeting of federal aid for major urban school systems through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and other key federal programs, while maintaining civil rights protections. Advocate for legal outcomes that support the continued viability of urban school districts.
3. Report on the effective use of local, state, and federal funding by urban school districts to address unfinished learning and support schools and students. Highlight districts that strategically use resources to improve student outcomes by aligning their budget, staffing, and programs with the specific needs of their students, including districts that use data-driven decision-making to analyze student performance and other relevant metrics to identify areas of need.
4. Cultivate and strengthen relationships with national and education media outlets to raise the national profile of the Council and position the organization as a go-to source for information on urban education. Increase the visibility of the Executive

Director in the media and at national education conferences, reinforcing his role as a thought leader in urban education.

5. Train school boards, through the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance Framework, to continuously monitor and assess goals and guardrails in their public meetings to ensure effective oversight and instill public confidence in the direction in which the school district is headed.
6. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, an annual in-person convening, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for district communications chiefs and staff.
7. Develop targeted communications toolkits and resources for districts with input and guidance from a cadre of former and current district communications directors.
8. Provide guidance and resources to help districts manage negative and biased media coverage and to tell their own stories of progress and success.

## Outcomes

- Enhanced public support and confidence in urban public schools.
- Increased confidence in the ability of urban school systems to effectively allocate resources and implement federal programs.
- Consideration of the needs and context of urban school district operations in federal policy and law.
- Effective Council communications to improve public perception of urban public schools.
- Effective district messaging and management of communications.

## Officers of the Council of the Great City Schools

Marcia Andrews, Chair of the Board  
Palm Beach County School Board Member

Sonja Santelises, Chair-elect of the Board  
Baltimore Schools Chief Executive Officer

Valerie Davis, Secretary/Treasurer  
Fresno School Board Member

Kelly Gonez, Immediate Past Chair  
Los Angeles School Board Member

Ray Hart, Executive Director

## **STATUS UPDATE**

# Status of Strategic Plan 2025-2030 Council of the Great City Schools March 2025

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

### Strategy:

To meet the goal of raising academic achievement for students in our Great City Schools, the organization will pursue a strategy based on three pillars: building the capacity of instructional leaders to provide high quality support, guidance, and resources to schools; addressing unfinished learning and the unmet social emotional learning needs of students; and supporting the academic growth of historically marginalized students, including students 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
1. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, annual in-person convenings, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for key district staff and leaders supporting teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student support services, English learner education, research, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shifted all role-alike groups to CGCS Communities, where collaboration, meeting updates, and document libraries are housed. The virtual, private platform allows member district staff to share best practices and seek advice from each other and Council staff. Additionally, in-person convenings are planned for Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Educators for May 2025; and Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders for July 2025; <a href="#">Fall 2024 and ongoing</a></li> <li>Hold monthly or quarterly calls with role-alike groups, including Chief Academic Officers, Chiefs of Schools, Chief Performance Officers, Research and Accountability Directors, English Learner Directors, and Directors of Mathematics, Science, English/Language Arts, and Social Studies/History. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
2. Provide instructional leaders with technical assistance, guidance, and tools to enable them to develop, evaluate, and implement high-quality districtwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host monthly <i>Instructional Spotlight</i> webinars to share best practices and highlight Council and district resources to improve instruction and student outcomes. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>curricula and instructional materials that reflect rigorous instructional standards and meet the diverse needs of learners. Reinforce this guidance through ongoing professional learning opportunities.</p>	
<p>3. Develop resources and track data to support and inform ongoing improvement in student outcomes, ensuring a focus on addressing unfinished learning within Tier 1 instruction and nonacademic indicators such as student engagement, social/emotional learning, mental health needs, and chronic absenteeism. Advance understanding and use of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks to help educators provide academic and behavioral strategies to foster student success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathered data from member districts to track changes in average daily attendance across the Council in January and February. <a href="#">February 2025</a></li> </ul>
<p>4. Conduct research on effective practices across urban school districts. Identify lessons that can be drawn and disseminate findings broadly via technical assistance visits, published resources, conferences, and professional development. Ensure data analysis focuses on supporting chronically low-performing students and historically marginalized students, including students of color, English learners, students living in abject poverty, and students with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported TUDA districts with release of NAEP 2024 <a href="#">Winter 2025</a></li> <li>Continuing data collection from EL directors <a href="#">Winter 2025</a></li> <li>Preparing sessions to highlight best practices in supporting chronically low-performing students at the 2025 Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders Conference. <a href="#">Winter and Spring 2025</a></li> </ul>
<p>5. Conduct strategic support team reviews of instructional, English learner, and special education programming, as requested, to provide districts with findings and recommendations to improve academic outcomes for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted special education Strategic Support Team reviews in Hillsborough (<a href="#">September 2024</a>) and Minneapolis (<a href="#">December 2024</a>).</li> <li>Conducted Academic Programming Strategic Support Team in Memphis-Shelby County. <a href="#">September 2024</a></li> </ul>
<p>6. Develop a process for sharing best practices and lessons learned in response to common problems of practice gleaned from the scores of Strategic Support Team reviews (SSTs) and technical assistance that the Council has provided over the years to help build member capacity more broadly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work toward this tactic has not yet begun.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Identify and disseminate effective initiatives for improving the academic outcomes of historically marginalized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing findings during the Achievement and Professional Development Task Force</li> </ul>



Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>students. Track which member districts make the most progress, identify the factors driving these improvements, and highlight the lessons that can be learned and applied across Council member districts.</p>	<p>meeting at the Annual Legislative and Policy Conference. <a href="#">March 2025</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing findings during the English Language Learners and Bilingual Education Task Force Meeting at the Annual Legislative and Policy Conference. <a href="#">March 2025</a></li> <li>• Updating <i>Between the Lines</i> to include NAEP 2024 data <a href="#">March 2025</a></li> </ul>
<p>8. Track urban district performance on the Trial Urban District Assessment, state assessments, formative assessments, and the organization’s Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to gauge progress and identify where additional support is needed. Continue to develop and refine systems that enhance the accessibility, analytic capacity, and use of urban district data to improve outcomes for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating NAEP dashboards on Council website to include NAEP 2024 data. <a href="#">Winter/Spring 2025</a></li> <li>• Collecting Academic KPI data from 2023-24 school year from member districts. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>9. Provide guidance and feedback, based on district priorities and input, to help publishers and formative assessment providers develop high quality instructional materials (HQIM) and assessments, particularly for struggling students and English learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning convenings to support a group of member districts with implementation of HQIM. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>10. Expand the courses available on the Council’s Professional Learning Platform, articulating the themes and recommendations from key Council resources such as the <i>Supporting Excellence</i> curriculum framework, <i>Addressing Unfinished Learning</i> guide, <i>Advancing Instruction and Leadership</i> professional development framework, and the <i>Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners</i>, to enhance instructional capacity in member districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop Canvas modules and courses related to English Learners. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Developed framework and design for Canvas modules related to implementation of <i>Supporting Excellence</i> and associated rubric. <a href="#">Winter/Spring 2025</a></li> <li>• Constructing modules related to mathematics standards’ prioritization and pathways <a href="#">Spring 2025</a></li> </ul>
<p>11. Provide guidance and share best practices on wraparound services to students encouraging a holistic approach to education that addresses the diverse needs of students beyond academics, by integrating mental health support, nutrition programs, after-school activities, family engagement initiatives, and access to high quality healthcare into school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to hold regularly scheduled role-alike Zoom meetings with district MTSS, Early Learning, and other relevant groups. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
<p>environments. Promote policies and practices that ensure students can thrive both inside and outside the classroom, recognizing that their academic success is closely tied to their overall well-being, and stronger connections between schools, families, and communities creates a support network that is essential for students' long-term success.</p>	
<p>12. Document and disseminate promising practices and lessons learned from educator and school leader pipeline programs in districts around the country. Develop and share best practices in promoting and retaining district staff at all levels of the organization (e.g., paraprofessionals to teachers, teachers to administrators). Partner with colleges of education in the Great Cities in preparing the next generation of educators and diversifying the teacher force in urban schools to ensure understanding and representation of district needs and demographics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened district human resources directors and support staff at the annual Chief Human Resource Officers Conference where a series of sessions highlighted recruitment and retention best practices for instructional faculty, including principals. <a href="#">February 2025</a></li> <li>• Support districts engaged in pathways work for teachers and principals, through partnerships with local colleges of education. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>13. Enhance and protect federal funding and regulatory flexibility for urban school systems in service of enhanced instruction and student support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking legislative priorities and budget proposals from the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Providing legislative updates and talking points with member district Superintendents, Board Representatives, and Legislative Liaisons. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Tracking federal court cases that may impact member districts and providing updates to General Counsels. <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.

### Strategy

To meet the goal of effectively leading, governing, and managing our Great City Schools, the organization will pursue a strategy based on three pillars: expanding the adoption and implementation of Student Outcomes-Focused Governance; preparing the next generation of district leaders for the superintendency and cabinet roles; and providing targeted resources, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to help member school districts improve their academic and operational performance.

### Tactics:

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
1. Provide ongoing support to districts implementing the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance (SOFG) framework through in-person and virtual coaching, helping them develop and monitor goals and guardrails that foster continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently providing 17 districts full SOFG coaching support through formal partnerships. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>Providing maintenance coaching support to several other districts who use the SOFG framework but no longer receive full coaching support. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
2. Provide technical assistance to district superintendents and school boards, by request, in a range of areas through shorter term efforts such as policy reviews, board self-evaluations, superintendent evaluations, and executive coaching support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide assistance to 35 districts (inclusive of those implementing SOFG) with a variety of requests including those involving policy review and recommendation to conflict resolution. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
3. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, annual in-person convenings, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for key district staff and leaders, including, but not limited to, chief academic officers, chief accountability officers, human resource officers, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, chief information/technology officers, chiefs of schools, and directors of facilities, transportation, child nutrition, and safety and security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shifted all role-alike groups to CGCS Communities, where collaboration, meeting updates, and document libraries are housed. The virtual, private platform allows member district staff to share best practices and seek advice from each other and Council staff.</li> <li>Held Chief Human Resources Officers Conference to share best practices across the member districts. <a href="#">February 2025</a></li> <li>Additionally, in-person convenings are planned for: Chief Operating Officers and Directors of Child Nutrition, Facilities, Safety &amp; Security, and Transportation in April 2025; Chief Information Officers in June 2025; Curriculum, Research, and Instructional Leaders in July 2025; and Chief Financial Officers in November 2025. <a href="#">Fall 2024 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold monthly or quarterly calls with role-alike groups, including: Chief Operating Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Chief Human Resources Officers, Directors of Safety &amp; Security, Directors of Facilities, Directors of Child Nutrition, Directors of Transportation, Chief Academic Officers, Chiefs of Schools, Chief Performance Officers, Research and Accountability Directors, English Learner Directors, and Directors of Mathematics, Science, English/Language Arts, and Social Studies/History. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>4. Manage professional learning cohorts for aspiring, new, and veteran superintendents, school board members, their staff, and district leaders on implementing the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance framework to support their effectiveness as leaders in Great City Schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established 3 SOFG learning cohorts – one for board members, one for staff members, and one for those seeking advanced engagement with the framework and aspire to coach. Cohorts meet throughout the year, and graduate in October with aspiring coaches continuing on to meet requirements for coaching certification. <a href="#">February 2025 and ongoing</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Continue to manage and administer the Michael Casserly Urban Executive Leadership Institute for aspiring, new, and veteran cabinet level staff (e.g., chief operations officers, chief financial officers, chief human resource officers, chief information/technology officers, chief academic officers, chiefs of schools), and superintendents to prepare the next generation of district leaders through technical assistance, coaching, and access to networks of support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the third cohort of superintendent institute in February 2025. They will meet in March, April, June, July, September, and October. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Planning for the 2026 launch of the Casserly Institute for Chief of Human Resources. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Developing framework and design for Canvas modules related to Casserly Institute for Chiefs of Human Resources and Chiefs of Information Technology. <a href="#">Winter/Spring 2025</a></li> </ul>
<p>6. Track and report district progress on non-academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Analyze results in order to identify and document practices that can be replicated to improve organizational effectiveness across member districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for the data collection for the 2023-24 non-academic KPIs. <a href="#">Spring 2025</a></li> <li>• Preparing a new reporting platform for the non-academic KPIs. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
<p>7. Conduct Strategic Support Team reviews (SSTs) to provide member school systems with technical assistance in areas such as academics and school management, organizational structure, staffing levels, human resources, facilities and maintenance, budget and finance, internal audit, information technology, safety and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed SSTs in Broward County (Procurement), Duval County (Human Resources), Anchorage (Procurement). <a href="#">Fall 2024</a>.</li> <li>• Planning SST for Orange County (Facilities). <a href="#">March 2025</a></li> </ul>

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
security, procurement, food services, and transportation.	
8. Synthesize the results of the Council's many academic, operational, and organizational SSTs over the years to identify common problems of practice and share lessons learned to reach a broader audience and build member capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward this tactic has not yet begun.</li> </ul>
9. Respond to ad hoc information requests, providing data and best practices and conducting customized surveys, evaluations, and research for member district staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ongoing support to district requests via email and through collaboration in CGCS Communities. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>

### GOAL 3. TO BOLSTER THE PUBLIC’S CONFIDENCE IN URBAN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

#### Strategy:

Help improve the public’s perceptions of, support for, and confidence in public education by highlighting district successes and challenges, advocating on behalf of urban schools, and serving as a trusted source of information on district progress and improvement. Build the capacity of member school districts to engage and inform their communities about issues impacting urban public education through targeted resources, professional learning opportunities, and access to peer support networks

#### Tactics:

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
1. Enhance the Council's outreach efforts to the public, communicating the progress of urban public schools and their role in strengthening communities. Increase public awareness of urban school improvement, Council publications, events, and commentary through an expanded social media presence and email outreach to a broader audience of thought leaders, policymakers, national organizations, and other K-12 education stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing <i>Urban Educator</i> bi-monthly to highlight member district news to a broader audience. <a href="#">March 2025 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Launching a blog series to promote public education. <a href="#">March 2025 and ongoing</a></li> <li>• Continuing to share content across social media platforms and monitor impressions and engagement. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
2. Represent the interests, priorities, and successes of urban school systems across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government, including the White House and federal administrative and regulatory agencies. Advocate for increased flexibility and continued targeting of federal aid for major urban school systems through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and other key federal programs, while maintaining civil rights protections. Advocate for legal outcomes that support the continued viability of urban school districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with Congressional Education Committee staff to share Council priorities and review latest NAEP TUDA results. <a href="#">Winter 2025</a></li> <li>• Submitted an <i>amicus curiae</i> in <i>Denver Public Schools v. Noem</i> in support of the Denver Public Schools. <a href="#">February 2025</a></li> <li>• Monitoring executive, legislative, and judicial actions impacting member districts and providing timely updates to Superintendents, Board Chairs/Representatives, and General Counsels. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Planning for the 2025 Legislative/Policy Conference to be held March 22-25 in Washington, DC. <a href="#">February/March 2025</a></li> </ul>
3. Report on the effective use of local, state, and federal funding by urban school districts to address unfinished learning and support schools and students. Highlight districts that strategically use resources to improve student outcomes by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launching a blog series to promote public education and highlight districts’ effective use of federal funds. <a href="#">March 2025 and ongoing</a></li> </ul>

Proposed Tactics to Meet Goals	Summary Status of Tactics to Meet Goals
aligning their budget, staffing, and programs with the specific needs of their students, including districts that use data-driven decision-making to analyze student performance and other relevant metrics to identify areas of need.	
4. Cultivate and strengthen relationships with national and education media outlets to raise the national profile of the Council and position the organization as a go-to source for information on urban education. Increase the visibility of the Executive Director in the media and at national education conferences, reinforcing his role as a thought leader in urban education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in SXSWEdu through a panel presentation including member superintendents moderated by the Executive Director. <a href="#">March 2025</a></li> <li>• Participated in AASA national conference discussion on superintendent leadership, with Executive Director serving as a panelist. <a href="#">March 2025</a></li> <li>• Shared recorded videos of the Executive Director to highlight support for federal funding of urban education on LinkedIn posts. <a href="#">January 2025 and ongoing.</a></li> </ul>
5. Train school boards, through the Student Outcomes-Focused Governance Framework, to continuously monitor and assess goals and guardrails in their public meetings to ensure effective oversight and instill public confidence in the direction in which the school district is headed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to governing teams actively involved with SOFG coaching (17 currently receiving full coaching support) according to their individual implementation timelines and to occur once they have established goals and guardrails. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Support districts as they develop a public monitoring calendar that outlines when each goal and guardrail will be monitored during a public meeting. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Provide guidance and coaching support to school boards in effective monitoring. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
6. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and promoting collaboration by hosting regular role-alike calls, an annual in-person convening, and an online community (via a closed virtual member platform) for district communications chiefs and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted regular Zoom calls with role-alike groups. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> <li>• Facilitated online discussions and sharing of best practices through <i>CGCS Communities</i> platform. <a href="#">Ongoing</a></li> </ul>
7. Develop targeted communications toolkits and resources for districts with input and guidance from a cadre of former and current district communications directors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward this tactic has not yet begun.</li> </ul>
8. Provide guidance and resources to help districts manage negative and biased media coverage and to tell their own stories of progress and success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward this tactic has not yet begun.</li> </ul>

## **PARTNERSHIPS**



# JOIN SHADES OF BLUE IN A QUEST TO CREATE A PIPELINE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PERSONNEL



**WHO:** Middle and high school students, teachers, administrators and parents

**WHAT:** **SHADES OF BLUE AVIATION SYMPOSIUM**

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 3, 2025  
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

**WHERE:** MARTIN STATE AIRPORT  
701 Wilson Point Road  
Middle River, Maryland, 21220  
(Located 30 minutes from Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport)

**WHY:** Current aviation projections forecast a worldwide shortage of hundreds of thousands of airline pilots, flight attendants, customer service representatives, ground crew, aircraft mechanics and technicians.

Individuals interested in aviation and aeronautics will receive information on the variety of careers available and qualification requirements.

**CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER**



UNITED STATES  
NAVAL ACADEMY  
Annapolis, Maryland

# CENTERS OF INFLUENCE



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNCIL  
OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS



JULY 28 - 31, 2025

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Directors of College Counseling and STEM curriculum coordinators from Council member districts, who interact with our nation's best and brightest middle and high school students are eligible to apply for a 3-night, 4-day visit to Annapolis. Find more details [here](#).

## VENUE SPECIFICATIONS

The conference is hosted by the Naval Academy on its grounds in Downtown Annapolis, MD.

## TRANSPORTATION, LODGING & LUNCH

This is a fully funded invitational travel, covering transportation, lodging and most meals. Participants need to get to and from their regional airports and USNA will take care of the rest.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Conference attendees will gain first-hand experience in regards to:

- The admissions process
- All aspects of the exceptional undergraduate education opportunities offered at the U.S. Naval Academy
- Academic, athletic, and residential facilities
- Meeting midshipmen, faculty, and staff
- The career options available as an officer in the Navy or Marine Corps

## GOALS

The goal is that participants return to their communities with a deeper understanding of USNA and help identify, mentor and encourage local students who demonstrate the interest and potential to become a midshipman (student) at the U.S. Naval Academy.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

If you must cancel your participation in the COI, we request you notify us no later than July 14



# WELCOME TO COI



UNITED STATES  
NAVAL ACADEMY  
Annapolis, Maryland



DAILY SCHEDULE FOR JULY 28 - 31, 2025



## MONDAY, JULY 28

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

11:00 AM

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Attendees flying to program arrive at BWI Airport

Shuttle provided from BWI Airport to Hotel

Bus transportation provided from BWI Airport to Hotel

Check-In / Registration at Hotel (Lobby)

Attendees driving to program arrive at Hotel

Welcome Reception at Hotel

## TUESDAY, JULY 29

6:45 AM - 7:45 AM

7:45 AM - 8:15 AM

8:15 AM - 8:25 AM

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Breakfast at Hotel

Bus from Hotel to USNA Visitor Center

Walk from Visitor Center to Ricketts Hall

Welcome & Program Notes (Terwilliger Center;  
Akerson Theater)

Welcome from the Dean of Admissions

Admissions Briefing

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Break
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Yard Tour
12:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Lunch at Naval Academy Club
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Walk from Naval Academy Club to Hopper Hall
2:00 PM - 2:45 PM	Nominations Briefing (Hopper 513)
2:45 - 3:30 PM	Summer Programs Briefing
3:30 PM - 3:45 PM	Break
3:45 PM - 4:30 PM	Academics Briefing
4:30 PM - 4:45 PM	Walk from Hopper Hall to Alumni Hall
4:45 PM - 5:15 PM	Bus from Alumni Hall to Hotel Personal Time / Dinner On Own

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

6:45 AM - 7:45 AM	Breakfast at Hotel
7:45 AM - 8:15 AM	Bus from Hotel to USNA Alumni Hall
8:15 AM - 8:30 AM	Walk from Alumni Hall to Rickover Hall
8:30 AM - 8:55 AM	Travel Vouchers & Program Notes (Rickover 103)
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM	Midshipmen Development Center Briefing
9:45 AM - 10:00 AM	Walk from Rickover Hall to Midshipmen Store / USNA Museum / Luce Hall
10:00 AM - 12:15 PM	Visit Midshipmen Store / Visit USNA Museum / Tour Ship's Bridge Simulator
12:15 PM - 12:30 PM	Walk from Midshipmen Store / USNA Museum / Luce Hall to Alumni Hall
12:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Lunch at Alumni Hall (Bo Coppedge Dining Room)
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Walk from Alumni Hall to Rickover Hall

2:00 PM - 2:45 PM

Midshipmen Panel (Rickover 103)

2:45 PM - 3:30 PM

Naval Academy Athletic Association Briefing

3:30 PM - 3:45 PM

Break

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

Remarks from the Superintendent

4:45 PM - 5:00 PM

Walk from Rickover Hall to Naval Academy Club

5:00 PM - 6:45 PM

Closing Reception at Naval Academy Club

6:45 PM - 7:00 PM

Walk from Naval Academy Club to Alumni Hall

7:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Bus from Alumni Hall to Hotel

## THURSDAY, JULY 31

6:00 AM

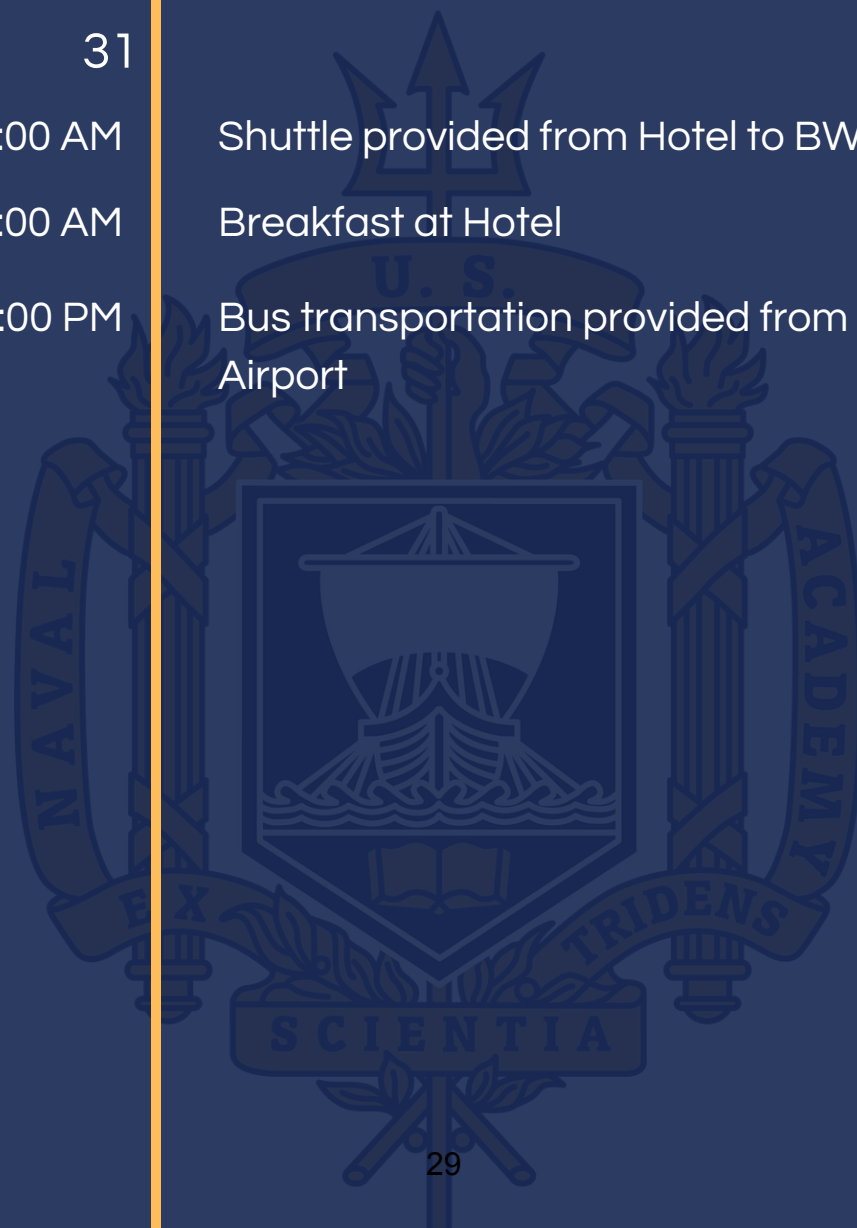
Shuttle provided from Hotel to BWI Airport

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Breakfast at Hotel

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Bus transportation provided from Hotel to BWI  
Airport



# OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS STEM OUTREACH PROGRAMS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS  
AVAILABLE DATES ARE: 10/27-10/28, 10/29-10/30, 11/12-11/13



STEM on Deck is an outreach program for middle and high school students from around the country. Students are provided the opportunity to explore advanced STEM concepts through real-world applications. The academic modules are led by USNA Faculty members and facilitated by Midshipmen, at USNA's state of the art classrooms and labs. Additionally, students will attend an Admissions Brief, tour the Yard, and have lunch with USNA Midshipmen.

WE ARE EXCITED TO HOST YOUR GROUP FOR A STEM ON DECK EVENT AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.

## EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

### ENGINEERING DESIGN CHALLENGES

Using the engineering design process, students are challenged to build a device based on physical principles and simple machines. Students work in collaborative teams to accomplish the task.

### ROBOTICS AND CODING

Students learn about robotics and coding as well as sensor technology and fundamentals of algorithms, logic, and programming.

### CODING AND ENCRYPTION

Coding and encryption are the basis for cybersecurity, critical for protecting sensitive information in many facets of our lives. Students explore coding and encryption methods including Morse code and cipher shifts as well as other substitution methods.

### ENGINEERING TOPICS

Students explore engineering areas such as aerospace, mechanical, electrical, bioengineering, & ocean engineering. For example, during Oceaneering students investigate buoyancy & ship design & build a hull using limited materials as well as create a simple object with neutral buoyancy. Chemical properties of water are explored using hands-on activities to explore surface tension and polarity.



# WELCOME TO



UNITED STATES  
NAVAL ACADEMY  
Annapolis, Maryland

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE OF A STEM ON DECK



### DAY 1

1:10 PM

Arrival at Airport

3:00 PM

Check In at Hotel

5:00 PM

Welcome Brief and Dinner at Hotel

### DAY 2

8:00 AM

Pick Up at Hotel

8:45 AM

Arrive at USNA

9 AM

Welcome Brief

9:30 AM

New Grad Q&A

10 AM

Visitor Center Movie

10:15 AM

Yard Tour

12 PM

Noon Formation

12:30 PM

Lunch at King Hall

1:20 PM

STEM Center Activities

3:40 PM

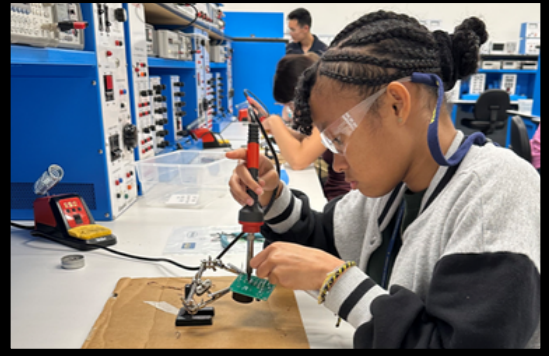
Gift Shop

4 PM

Depart USNA



## MAKING THE MOST OF STEM ON DECK



### PARTICIPATION

Up to twenty Middle school students, accompanied by a parent/guardian, may participate in the STEM on Deck program.

Contact information for chaperones and parents/guardians of students must be provided for travel and/or lodging arrangements. A point of contact must be identified to assist with the pre-planning and information gathering process.

### CHAPERONES

Your group has been authorized 4 chaperones to travel and stay with the youth at no charge. Chaperones are required to accompany students through the entire visit on and off the USNA campus.

### TRANSPORTATION

The USNA Admissions will coordinate and fund travel and lodging for the STEM on Deck program. Your POC will work with our Admissions staff and designated travel agency to collect required participant information (names and birthdates) in a secure manner.

Please do not email this sensitive information.

### ITINERARY

An itinerary will be sent once all of the participant information has been submitted. In addition, each participant is required to submit a media waiver.

### LODGING

The USNA Office of Admissions will coordinate and fund this aspect of the program while visiting the academy.

### CANCELATION POLICY

Upon email acceptance of the STEM on Deck invitation, the Admissions staff will initiate the travel and lodging reservation process for the visiting group. We require two weeks' notice from the start date of the program, in the event that you must cancel your group's visit to the USNA.





## PACKING LIST



## PACKING LIST

ATTIRE FOR 3-4 DAYS

LONG PANTS / SHORTS OR SKIRTS ARE NOT  
PERMITTED

SWEATSHIRT / LIGHT JACKET

COMFORTABLE, CLOSED TOED SHOES

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

TOILETRIES

ALLOWANCE FOR THE GIFT SHOP\*

\*(All meals and lodging will be taken care of. All gift shops are cashless establishments.)

**Dress code:** all participants must be dressed in school appropriated clothing that are tasteful and free of rips or tears. Due to safety reasons, only participants wearing closed toed shoes and dressed in long pants will be able to participate in the planned STEM modules.