



2019 ANNUAL REPORT 2020





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Brooklyn College School of Education

ANNUAL REPORT PREPARED BY:

Joanne Coley, Communications Manager
Tonya Harris, Director of Communications
Tanya Borman-Voit, Graphic Design Consultant
Photography by: Alex Jones and Clarence Tabb Jr.

Photo Credits/Details:

Cover Photo: Top Row, left: Student from Miami-Dade County Public Schools; right: Student from Des Moines Public Schools
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

“What I am most proud of, though, is the Council’s voice, as fierce advocates for racial and social justice for our nation’s children—and therefore for us all!”

Eric Gordon

June 30, 2020

It has been my true honor to have served as this year’s chair of the Council of the Great City Schools and to work alongside our Executive Director and the amazing Council team on so many important pieces of work. Over the last year, the Council has completed the development of the interactive Academic KPIs dashboard, worked closely with the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) to align the NAEP math frameworks with the career and college readiness standards, completed the development of Curriculum Quality Rubrics, worked in several of our member districts on balanced literacy, launched the Taskforce on Black and Latina Young Women and Girls, completed the English Language Learner procurement project and the ELL Professional Learning Platform, created the Harvard-Great City Schools Accelerating Board Capacity Institute, and so much more!

In March, when COVID-19 hit the United States full force, the Council again rose to the challenge – a challenge that none of us had ever seen or experienced – and continues to lead us through the public health emergency created by coronavirus as well as leading the country on fighting for the critical resources our member districts need as we face the looming economic crisis. Since mid-March, the Council team has not only completed the regular work of the organization, but it has also convened weekly job-alike learning sessions for nearly every job within our organizations and created briefing reports to support English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and the social-emotional and mental health of our students, families and educators (with more reports to come). It has also fought to ensure CARES Act dollars get to our most needy students and that more resources are provided through the proposed HEROES Act and what are sure to be future stimulus packages as well.

What I am most proud of, though, is the Council’s voice, as fierce advocates for racial and social justice for our nation’s children--and therefore for us all! As it always has, the Council once again gave voice to those who far too often are voiceless with a full-throated condemnation of the killing of another unarmed Black man, another in a long list of lives lost to racism in America. But unlike so many others, who also put out statements condemning police violence, Michael Casserly convicted us as educators of America’s children of color to double down on our own efforts to end institutional racism in our education systems. If any good can come of our COVID-19 experience it might, just might, be that the vast inequities in our country brought on by years of racial discrimination and social injustice were violently exposed for all to see, even to those who have tried so hard for so many years not to see them. And if this moment of civil unrest is to become a movement, I am comforted in knowing that the Council will be leading the way!

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not specifically acknowledge Dr. Michael Casserly who has decided to step out of the Executive Director role in the coming year after over 43 years of service to this cause! We are fortunate that, in the years ahead, Mike will continue to serve as a strategic advisor to the organization he remade. I am humbled to have had the opportunity to work aside him this year to grow, nurture, and protect the legacy Mike leaves – a legacy called the Council of the Great City Schools!

Eric Gordon
Chair of the Board, 2019-20

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



June 30, 2020

I am most pleased and proud to present this annual report to the membership on the activities of the Council of the Great City Schools during the 2019–20 program year.

The Council had another amazing and productive year, but it was also a year filled with unique challenges. The outbreak of the coronavirus, the closure of schools, the police killing of George Floyd and so many other African Americans, the collapse of the economy and the prospect of sizable budget cuts, massive unemployment, and the challenge of reopening schools as the pandemic still lurks has made this a year like no other. Still, the organization and its member urban school districts persist in our efforts to boost student achievement, improve leadership and management, and strengthen public confidence—the three pillars of our joint work.

The organization had numerous achievements this year. First, the Council designed and delivered a new program with Harvard University to provide professional development for our school board members and superintendents. Second, we automated our new academic Key Performance Indicators after several years of testing them. Third, we played a central role in getting the National Assessment Governing Board to realign its NAEP math frameworks with college- and career-readiness standards. Fourth, we expanded our Professional Learning Platform to help our districts with struggling learners and finalized our joint procurement initiative. Fifth, we developed and published a well-received rubric by which members could assess their curriculum for standards-alignment and quality.

The end of the year, of course, was marked by COVID-19 and the closure of our schools. In response, the Council launched weekly

conference calls with school board members, superintendents, chief academic officers, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, bilingual directors, special education directors, testing and research directors, communications directors, and others to share ideas and talk through solutions. We also formed working groups to tackle numerous issues related to the disease and jointly published a series of guides to help our districts support schools, staff, and students in the short and long term.

On top of those accomplishments, the Council published its annual *Managing for Results* report with nearly 500 key performance indicators. We continued to fiercely advocate for the interests of urban schools and students on Capitol Hill and in the agencies. And we continued to provide our hard-hitting Strategic Support Teams to our members.

Finally, the Council held a phenomenal annual conference in Louisville that was clearly one of our best, and I announced that I would be stepping aside as executive director.

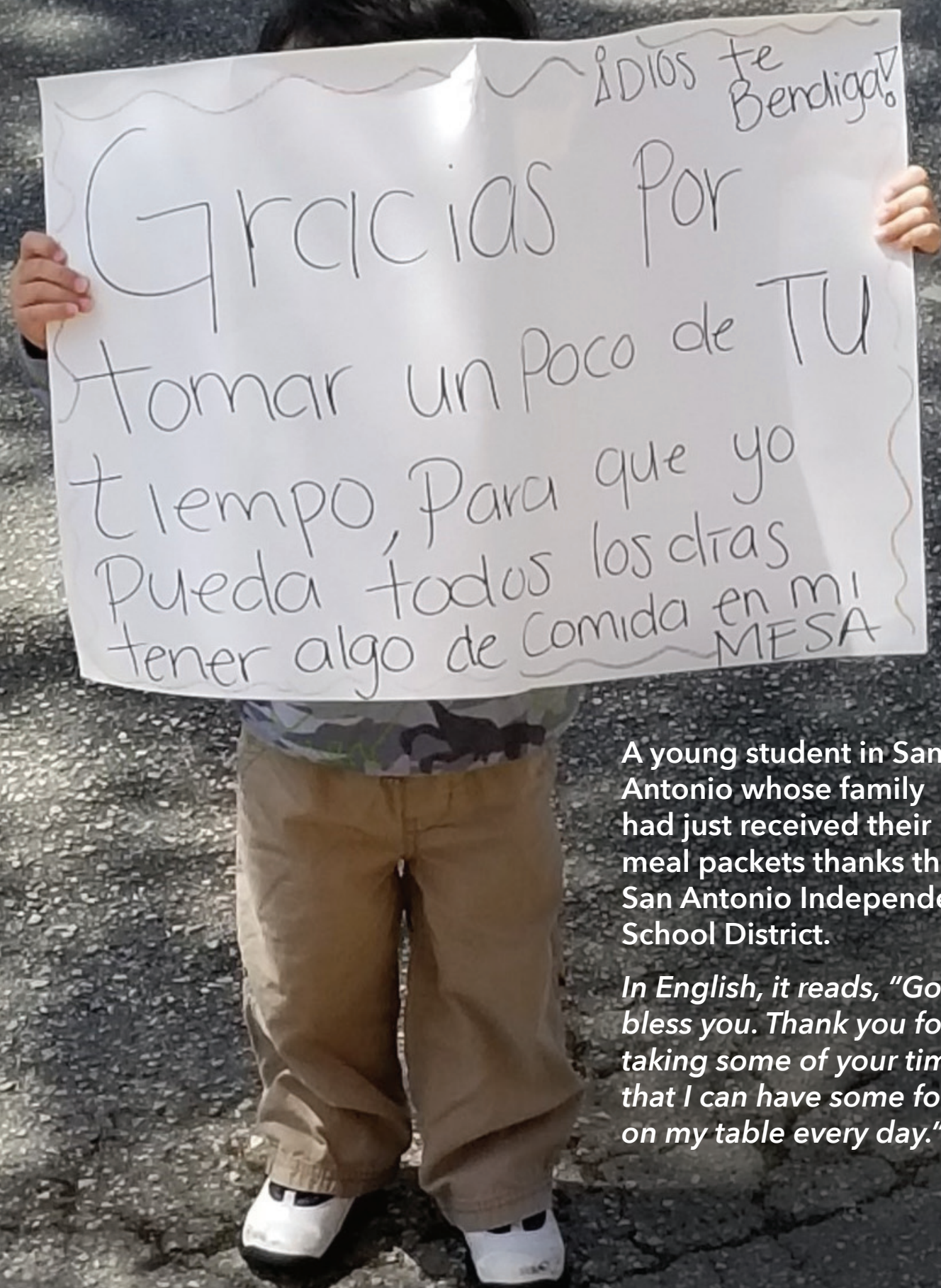
I thank Eric Gordon for his extraordinary leadership this year in chairing the board of directors and executive committee. He was exactly the right person to lead the organization at this time, and he performed beautifully. We are all much in his debt. Thank you.

And I thank the Council's exceptional staff, who continue to perform at the top of their games and astonish everyone with their productivity. Thank you for a great year.

Michael Casserly
Executive Director

“ The organization and its member urban school districts persist in our efforts to boost student achievement, improve leadership and management, and strengthen public confidence—the three pillars of our joint work. ”

Michael Casserly



A young student in San Antonio whose family had just received their meal packets thanks the San Antonio Independent School District.

In English, it reads, "God bless you. Thank you for taking some of your time so that I can have some food on my table every day."

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



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.



Presidential historian Jon Meacham, center, poses with the Council leadership, left to right, Chair-elect Michael O'Neill, Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Jenkins, Chair Eric Gordon, Council Executive Director Michael Casserly, Michael O'Neill's wife Rana, Fort Worth school board member Ashley Paz and Past chair Larry Feldman.



Rodney Robinson, 2019 National Teacher of the Year, is interviewed by Richmond Schools Superintendent Jason Kamras. Robinson is a teacher in the Richmond school district.



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



Juan Cabrera, superintendent of Texas' El Paso Independent School District, facilitates a session at the Annual Fall Conference.



Fresno school board member Valerie Davis presents information at the Fall Conference. Harvard's John Kim listens intently.

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 an **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 students by race. 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.

In addition to these governing bodies, a network of deans of the **Great City Colleges of Education** and staff liaisons from various school district departments encourage information exchange with counterparts in other cities. Common concerns in areas such as student achievement, public relations, technology, human resources, finance, research, legislation, special education, and curriculum connect urban education personnel from member cities to share the ideas and experiences of the larger group.





Albuquerque board member David Percy participates in a session at the Fall Conference in Louisville.



Birmingham Schools Superintendent Lisa Herring facilitates a session at the Annual Fall Conference.

Characteristics & Conferences

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

Total Student Enrollment 8.2 million

Hispanic.....	44%
African American	27%
White	18%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%
Alaskan/Native American/Other	2%
Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility	71%
English Language Learners	16%
Students With Individualized Education Plan (IEP's)	15%
Total Number of Teachers	470,756
Student-Teacher Ratio	17:1
Number of Schools	13,772

CONFERENCES

Public Relations Executives Meeting
July 11-13, 2019
Washington, DC

Annual Fall Conference
October 23-27, 2019
Louisville, KY

Chief Financial Officers Conference
November 12-15, 2019
Austin, TX

HRD/Personnel Directors & Chief Information
Officers Meeting
February 16-20, 2020
Las Vegas, NV



ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE



Educators can enhance the conversation by talking about civic responsibilities and a duty to be informed and vote. There's a social compact that goes along with being a citizen of our great country.



Valerie Jarrett



More than 1,000 big-city school superintendents, senior administrators, deans of education and board members convened in Louisville, Ky., for the 63rd Annual Fall Conference, October 23-27, hosted by Jefferson County Public Schools.

Council Chair Eric Gordon, in his welcoming address, called for conferees to “critically examine our current structures and practices from the lens of structural racism.” Gordon also identified key issues and struggles that many urban districts deal with in their work to give every student a solid education that will allow them to be fully prepared for the next chapter of their lives.

How do you get people to participate in the 2020 Census? That was the question addressed at a Town Hall moderated by NPR national correspondent Hansi Lo Wang. The panel included leaders from big-city school districts; a representative from the U.S. Census Bureau; and advocates for immigrants, children, and people of color. The panelists agreed that increased participation in the census is of paramount concern, and that special focus needs to be on these demographic groups.

Rodney Robinson, the 2019 Teacher of the Year, spoke about how educators must treat every child with special care and that a one-size fits all model does not work in education. As a teacher at a youth detention facility in Richmond, Va., Robinson sees the effect of the school-to-prison pipeline firsthand and ended his address with a call for advocacy. “We must fight for the future of all kids in America,” he stated.

Conferees also heard from Valerie Jarrett, former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, who discussed the importance of civic engagement and how important it was for young people to participate in the electoral process. Educators, she said, can enhance the conversation by talking about civic responsibilities and a duty to be informed and to vote. “There’s a social compact that goes along with being a citizen of our great country,” said Jarrett.

Also addressing the conference was presidential biographer Jon Meacham who urged urban educators to teach America’s children well, as the future of the republic depends on their learning the lessons of history.

“You are the front line of democracy to whom -- no pressure -- ultimately the fate of the republic has been entrusted,” Meacham said in his speech. “There’s nothing more American, more essential than our commitment, however uneven and however unrealized, to the education of the populace.”

The conference featured more than 70 sessions, including a session from the Toronto District School Board and the New York Department of Education on effective equity practices. The largest districts in Canada and the United States, respectively, discussed efforts they have made to implement equitable practices such as New York’s Equity and Excellence for All agenda, which includes K-3 and Pre-K for All. And John Malloy, the director of education for the Toronto school district, discussed ongoing efforts to raise awareness around discrimination against black and indigenous students.



NPR Reporter Hansi Lo Wang, right, moderates the Town Hall Meeting at the 63rd Annual Fall Conference on the importance of the 2020 Census. Participants, left to right, Naomi Wyatt, School District of Philadelphia; Deborah Stein, Network Director, Partnership for America's Children; Antonio Plascencia Jr., Los Angeles Unified School District; Trent Mosley, Cleveland Metropolitan School District; Jeri Green, National Urban League; Lizette Escobedo, NALEO Educational Fund; and Michelle Ellison, U.S. Census Bureau.



Council Executive Director Michael Casserly gives remarks at a press conference announcing the 2019 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results in reading and mathematics.



Walnut Street School in Des Moines invited parents and students to cover their windows with *Black Lives Matter* artwork.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATIONS

The Council of the Great City Schools works to give the public and the press a balanced and accurate view of the challenges, developments, and successes of urban public schools. In 2019-20 the Council—

- Created a website, <https://www.cgcs.org/corona>, featuring district instructional resources, materials, action plans and other information on what Council member districts are doing in response to COVID-19.
- Issued more than a dozen press releases on Council activities, including the Council's letter to Congress requesting education funding, which garnered coverage in more than 60 newspapers and television stations.
- Held a weekly conference call with communication directors from urban school districts to share information and best practices for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.
- Participated in the release of the 2019 Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results in reading and mathematics.
- Hosted an *Education Week* listening tour featuring the newspaper's editor-in-chief and urban-education leaders at the Council's Annual Fall Conference in Louisville.
- Coordinated a national town hall meeting on "The Importance of the 2020 Census," moderated by NPR Reporter Hansi Lo Wang.
- Fielded scores of inquiries from national and regional media outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Education Week*, CNN and *USA Today*.
- Converted the *Urban Educator*, the Council's award-winning newsletter, to a digital format and emailed eight issues.
- Published the organization's 2019-20 Annual Report.
- Hosted the 19th Annual Public Relations Executives Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Coordinated the CGCS-Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships Program.
- Managed the organization's Blue Ribbon Corporate Advisory Group.

LEGISLATION

In voicing its proposals and ideas to Congress and other federal policymakers, the Council helps shape legislation to strengthen the quality of schooling for the nation's urban children. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Advocated successfully for the use of the Title I formula to distribute \$13 billion in CARES Act funding to school districts.
- Supported a second round of COVID-19 stimulus funding for school districts, and secured \$58 billion for K-12 schools, in the House of Representatives-approved HEROES Act.
- Engaged in efforts to overturn the Education Department's guidance designed to provide increased funding for private school students under the CARES Act.

- Hosted an online meeting in March 2020 in lieu of the Annual Legislative/Policy Conference, followed by multiple briefings for member districts every week to provide updates and answers to questions on federal funding and flexibility available for schools.
- Raised concerns to the Federal Communications Commission about the timing of the March 2020 E-Rate filing deadline in advance of COVID-19 school district closures, resulting in a five-week extension for applicants nationwide.
- Advocated successfully against the Administration's proposed cuts in federal funding for teachers, professional development, student safety, and afterschool programs, and for substantial increases in Title I, Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other education programs in the final FY 2020 funding bill.
- Supported including school infrastructure grants and tax credits in national infrastructure legislation under consideration in multiple congressional committees.
- Hosted multiple webinars, conference calls, and information sessions on the importance of Census 2020, and provided outreach materials, school board resolutions, and related information to members.
- Submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture opposing the revision of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility, which could result in the loss of free meal eligibility for hundreds of thousands of students nationwide.
- Submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture supporting additional regulatory simplification and streamlining in the school meal and summer food programs.
- Provided comments to the Education Department opposing new interpretations of Title I "equitable services" and burdensome federal data collection and reporting, as well as recommendations on ESSA provisions for Title I schoolwide programs, parental right-to-know provisions, and State consultation requirements.
- Submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Treasury's Internal Revenue Service on the closure of tax loopholes used for private school scholarship programs.
- Opposed the Administration's Education Freedom Scholarship proposal, which would provide \$5 billion in federal tax credits for donations that could be used for private school tuition.
- Joined an *amicus* brief opposing the use of tax credit scholarships at religious schools in the *Espinoza vs. Montana Department of Revenue* case before the Supreme Court.
- Filed regulatory comments with the Federal Communications Commission supporting more flexible use of E-Rate funds and opposing the consolidation of funds with other Universal Service programs.
- Hosted a series of legal webinars with Husch Blackwell on issues affecting urban school districts, including the Census "citizenship question" decision in the Supreme Court, new federal regulations on Title IX, First Amendment religious liberty issues, and alcohol and drug use in schools, and hosted the inaugural meeting of the Great City Schools' General Counsels.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

- Fielded scores of legislative questions and interceded for member school districts to resolve problems with various federal agencies.

RESEARCH

Timely data collection and analysis allow the Council to prepare comprehensive reports, predict trends, and assess the effects of various policies, reforms, and practices on student performance. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Coordinated weekly COVID-19 research, evaluation, and assessment meetings with member districts to discuss district needs and plans for responding to the pandemic.
- Wrote the report, *“Ensuring a Data-Driven Approach to Reopening Schools After COVID-19: Recommendations for Research and Assessment,”* to clarify the role of research departments in school districts’ responses to the pandemic.
- Relaunched www.edwires.org to coordinate document and information sharing among district leaders across member districts.
- Coordinated the development of the Urban Educators Speak About Racism blog for Council district staff to share their experiences with and combatting racism in their communities.
- Assisted strategic support teams reviews in the areas of curriculum, research, English language learner instruction, supports for young men of color, and student achievement overall.
- Completed national survey report for the Wallace Foundation, in partnership with Mathematica and Vanderbilt University, on principal supervisors in urban school districts.
- Presented findings from the principal supervisor survey at a Wallace Foundation national convening of district superintendents, chief academic officers, chief of school officers, researchers, and other educational personnel.
- Collected, analyzed, and reported on the Council’s Academic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of student achievement, attendance, suspensions, course participation, AP attainment, graduation rates, special education trends, and principal and teacher demographic data.
- Automated and piloted an online data dashboard for the Council’s Academic KPIs that contains longitudinal data collected across years.
- Served as the lead evaluator on a Kellogg Foundation grant to improve early literacy achievement in the San Antonio schools.
- Conducted research on urban school progress on the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Provided technical support to districts on NAEP and other National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) results during the U. S. Department of Education Assessment Workshops.
- Convened the Trial Urban District Assessment Task Force to advise the National Assessment Governing Board and the National Center for Education Statistics. The Task Force consists of 10 representatives from Council member districts providing recommendations and feedback on the development and operation of the TUDA program.
- Represented urban school district interests at meetings of the National Assessment Governing Board, National Academies of

Science, American Educational Research Association, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, National Center for Education Statistics, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Network of Education Research – Practice Partnerships, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, National Association of Assessment Directors, Directors of Research and Evaluation, Council of Chief State School Officers, Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, and the Educational Testing Service.

- Responded to numerous member requests for statistical information and research assistance.
- Managed the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the Council’s Operational Key Performance Indicators.
- Provided technical assistance to member districts on setting up or enhancing programs for males of color.
- Analyzed NAEP and Academic KPI data to assess the progress of young men and women of color across Council member districts. The analysis was shared at meetings of the Council’s Black and Latino Young Men and Boys Task Force and Black and Latina Young Women and Girls Task Force, and in the Annual Academic Key Performance Indicators report.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Improving the performance of all students and closing achievement gaps is one of the Council’s most important priorities. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Convened a committee composed of chief academic officers, curriculum leaders, directors of special education and English language learners programming, and others to review and provide feedback on the Curriculum Quality Rubric prior to the release of the rubric. The rubric was designed to support implementation of the Council’s resource *Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum*.
- Collaborated with Student Achievement Partners, the Kellogg Foundation, and the San Antonio Independent School District to implement an early reading accelerators pilot project to improve early reading skills.
- Collaborated with member districts on strategic planning for implementing the first phase of the Early Reading Accelerators Pilot in their respective districts during the FY20-21 school year.
- Conducted site visits to districts that have shown substantial gains on NAEP among disadvantaged students and students of color in order to document shared characteristics and strategies.
- Conducted site visits to districts that have shown substantial gains on NAEP among disadvantaged students and students of color in order to document shared characteristics and strategies.
- Convened the Achievement and Professional Development Task Force at the Annual Fall Conference.
- Participated on NAEP Visioning Panels for Reading and Mathematics facilitated by WestEd to update the NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessment Frameworks, respectively.
- Planned and hosted a webinar, in partnership with OpenSciEd, for Council district science leaders to share and discuss information

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

about quality middle school units written by several of the writers of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

- Convened a committee composed of chief academic officers, researchers, and other experts in the field to develop detailed guidance about high-quality professional development for member districts.
- Collaborated with Achieve to survey member districts about the state of science education and conducted follow-up interviews with several districts leaders to highlight best practices.
- Collaborated with strategic partners in supporting urban districts with standards implementation and school turnarounds.
- Provided strategic support teams in the areas of instruction (Philadelphia) and special education (Clark County).
- Provided districts with on-site and virtual support on their curriculum initiatives using the Council's resource *Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum*.
- Connected districts with their peers to answer requests for information on a host of academic issues.
- Connected the work of the Council to work done by leading mathematics and literacy organizations to keep the membership informed and to help shape the work of those organizations in addressing urban education.
- With the advent of COVID-19 school closures, convened weekly virtual meetings where CAOs could confer with their peers on rapidly evolving issues. Elevated planning issues to consider.
- Populated a private EdWires site with documents shared by member districts to facilitate the development of surveys and plans.
- Established a CAO Task Force to provide districts guidance on addressing unfinished learning and defining models for instruction in the fall of 2020.
- Worked with expert consultants to write and release a guide on how to address unfinished learning in the 2020-21 school year.
- Worked with CCSSO and Student Achievement Partners to review their publications intended to support districts in articulating priority content.
- Attended member COVID-19 meetings to understand the issues they faced in their district roles and bring academic considerations to their attention or to respond to their questions.

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL FINANCE

The Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management and School Finance addresses the quality and tenure of leadership and management in and funding of urban schools. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Designed a professional development program with the Harvard Business School for Council school board members and superintendents.
- Provided on-site technical assistance and professional development on effective governance to numerous member boards of education and superintendents.

- Managed two programs of professional development for mid-level managers who aspire to become Chief Financial Officers and Chief Information Officers as part of the Michael Casserly Urban School Executive Institute.
- Conducted strategic support team reviews for Birmingham City Schools, Broward County, Columbus, Guilford, Hawaii, Indianapolis, and the San Antonio Independent School District.
- Convened meetings of member district Chief Financial Officers, Internal Auditors, Risk Managers, Procurement Directors, and Human Resources Directors.
- Convened the Leadership, Governance, Management and Finance Task Force at the Annual Fall Conference.
- Published *Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools* with an expanded set of operational key performance indicators.
- Facilitated virtual task force meetings of Chief Financial Officers, Chief Operating Officers, Chief Information Officers, Chief Human Resources, and Directors of Transportation, Facilities, Safety, Security and Emergency Management, Food Services and Risk Management.
- Wrote a guide for member districts to help them implement facilities, transportation, and security protocols during the pandemic.
- Fielded numerous requests to recommend people for key administrative positions and responded to member requests for management and operational information and services.

BILINGUAL, IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE EDUCATION

America's urban schools serve more than 26 percent of the nation's English language learners. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Finalized the Council's inaugural Professional Learning Platform (PLP) with 11 courses and more than 400 videos to help members work with struggling students.
- Maintained and applied periodic updates to the inaugural courses on Complex Thinking and Communication as part of the Council's professional learning platform available to all member districts at a deeply discounted rate. The updates include the finalized Foundations course, a five-course pathway for ELA, a re-designed set of five mathematics courses, and new course features and resources (e.g., guides on complex text and juicy sentences, additional videos, etc.).
- Hosted a virtual district-sponsored training session for the PLP ELA courses attended by approximately 27 educators and administrators, a live district-sponsored training session for the ELA courses, and a live district-sponsored training session for the mathematics courses.
- Hosted three virtual sessions for district presentations on the implementation of the 3Ls approach.
- Assisted several districts in planning the roll out of the Council's professional development courses on Complex Thinking and Communication in addition to providing technical support to previously subscribed districts.
- Filmed additional classroom footage in Guilford County Schools to include videos from elementary, middle and high school in the Council courses.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

- Finalized the Council's joint procurement program for ELL math materials.
- Conducted a Strategic Support Team review of English Learner programs for Providence Public Schools.
- Hired a new member to the ELL Team to handle the more than 1,000 video clips for use in the existing course and forthcoming courses.
- Provided Clark County Public Schools with a timeline and brief summary of Council support for the review of its ELL services and the development of its ELL Master Plan.
- Conducted numerous queries, by member request, on multiple issues and policies related to serving ELLs and immigrant children and youth in Council-member districts.
- Conducted survey on Foundational Literacy Skills approaches for ELLs used in member districts.
- Held meetings with *Education Week* staff to assist them in understanding the national ELL data sets and publications.
- Conducted a presentation for Council member procurement directors on the Council's Joint Procurement Project to acquire quality instructional materials for mathematics that address the needs of English learners.
- Convened two meetings of the Task Force on Bilingual, Refugee, and Immigrant Education.
- Participated in the National English Learner Roundtable convened by the Office of English Language Acquisition of the Department of Education.
- Participated in two in-person meetings for partners on the Pathways to Academic Success Education Innovation and Research (EIR) expansion grant project convened by the National Writing Project site at University of California, Irvine.
- Presented on the CGCS PLP courses at the summer 2019 meeting on the Pathways to Academic Success Education Innovation and Research (EIR) expansion grant project.
- Assisted Long Beach Unified School District in understanding the scope of the Pathways to Academic Success Education Innovation and Research (EIR) expansion grant project and the role of the Council in helping to secure LBUSD participation.
- Conducted over fourteen weekly ZOOM meetings with ELL Program directors to share information and provide mutual assistance to address ELL needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assisted Boston Public Schools with the review of state guidance for provisional screening of ELLs during the school closures due to the corona virus pandemic.
- Developed a set of sample questionnaires to be used by school districts as a provisional screener for ELLs.
- Supported the Early Literacy Accelerator project of the Academic Team in San Antonio.
- Participated in the initial planning for the launch of the Black and Latina Young Women and Girls Task Force.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Council works to manage its resources and ensure the integrity of its programs. In 2019-20, the Council—

- Conducted an external audit of the organization's 2018-19 spending and received unqualified audit results for FY2018-19.
- Coordinated travel and financials for 13 Strategic Support Teams, 12 School Board Retreats, and 8 Conferences and Meetings.
- Convened the Annual Fall Conference in Louisville, KY as well as multiple meetings and forums throughout the year.
- Maintained the online conference registration and hotel reservation system for all meetings.
- Negotiated hotel contracts for eight peer-to-peer meetings, and hotel contracts for the Fall Conference in Orlando, FL for 2022.
- Managed the Dr. Shirley Schwartz Urban Impact Scholarship Program and the Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships.
- Negotiated a full refund and no liability cancellation for 10 cancelled meetings from March 2020 to July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Re-negotiated and re-scheduled the 2020 COO and BIRE meetings.
- Arranged work-from-home technology for staff during the pandemic lockdown.
- Implemented an alternative to payables processing during lockdown.
- Negotiated and executed a new three-year contract for technology support.
- Reviewed options for the renewal of medical, dental, life and disability insurances.
- Applied and received a CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program loan.
- Assisted the CGCS Officers in the identification of a firm to conduct the search for a new Executive Director.

AWARD PROGRAMS

“There is nothing that is more important than what we, each one of us, do every single day. We fight against ignorance, we fight against the naysayers, we fight against budget [troubles], but we never give in.”

Lawrence Feldman

GREEN-GARNER AWARD

During the annual fall conference, the Council bestows the Green-Garner Award upon a past or present member district superintendent or board of education member in recognition of exceptional service to urban schools and students. The award is the nation's highest urban education honor and it pays tribute to the memory of Richard R. Green, former Minneapolis Superintendent and New York City Public Schools chancellor, and Edward Garner, a businessman and former school board president of the Denver Public Schools.

The award, sponsored by ARAMARK K-12 Education, Cenergistic and Scholastic Inc., includes a \$10,000 scholarship to be presented to a senior in the winner's school system.

Larry Feldman, a school board member with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, was presented with the award at the 2019 Fall Conference in Louisville.

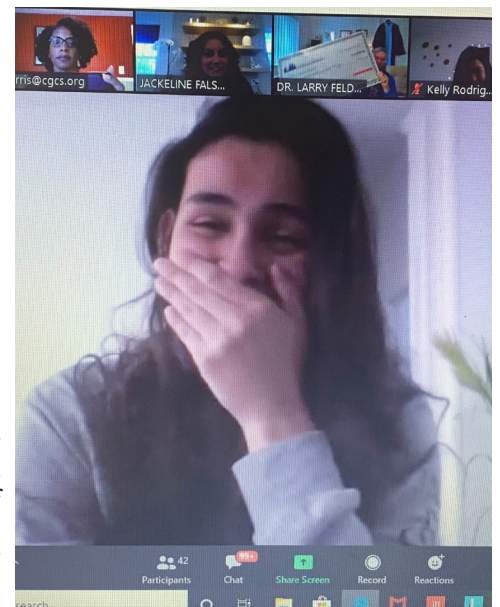
Feldman has served on the Miami-Dade County school board since 2008, and under his leadership he helped the school system overcome financial challenges and contributed to efforts in increasing student achievement.

A former teacher, assistant principal and principal in the Miami-Dade County school district, Feldman has contributed to improving urban education nationally. He is the immediate past chair of the Council of the Great City Schools' Board of Directors.



Larry Feldman holds his Green-Garner Award and is congratulated by, left to right, Michael O'Neill, chair-elect of the Council of the Great City Schools, Karen Mitchal of Aramark K-12 Education, Tai Chapman of Scholastic, Inc., and Gary Clark of Cenergistic.

Laura Garcia, a 2020 graduate of South Dade Senior High School in Miami, was presented with the 2020 Green-Garner \$10,000 college scholarship at a virtual awards ceremony. The valedictorian of her senior class, Garcia will attend the University of Florida in the fall and major in English.



Green-Garner Award Winners

1990	James Griffin, Retired Member	St. Paul School Board
	Timothy Dyer, Former Superintendent	Phoenix Union High School District
1991	Paul Houston, Former Superintendent	Tucson Public Schools
1992	Richard Wallace Jr., Superintendent Emeritus	Pittsburgh Public Schools
1993	Constance Clayton, Superintendent	School District of Philadelphia
1994	Holmes Braddock, Board Member	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
1995	Curman Gaines, Superintendent	St. Paul Public Schools
1996	James Williams, Superintendent	Dayton Public Schools
1997	Maxine Smith, Retired Board Member	Memphis City School Board
1998	Gerry House, Superintendent	Memphis City Public Schools
1999	Rod Paige, Superintendent	Houston Independent School District
	Judy Farmer, Board Member	Minneapolis Public Schools
2000	Eric Smith, Superintendent	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
2001	Barbara Byrd-Bennett, Superintendent	Cleveland Municipal School District
2002	John Simpson, Superintendent	Norfolk Public Schools
2003	Arthur Griffin, Board Member	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
	Franklin Till, Superintendent	Broward County Public Schools
2004	Tom Payzant, Superintendent	Boston Public Schools
2005	Anna Dodson, Board Member	Norfolk Public Schools
2006	Beverly Hall, Superintendent	Atlanta Public Schools
2007	Elizabeth Reilinger, Board Member	Boston Public Schools
2008	Pascal Forgione, Superintendent	Austin Independent School District
2009	Emmett Johnson, Board Member	Atlanta Public Schools
2010	Arlene Ackerman, Superintendent	The School District of Philadelphia
2011	Candy Olson, Board Member	Hillsborough County Public Schools
2012	Carol Johnson, Superintendent	Boston Public Schools
2013	Denise Link, Board Member	Cleveland Metropolitan School District
2014	Terry Grier, Superintendent	Houston Independent School District
2015	Bill Isler, Board Member	Pittsburgh Public Schools
2016	Eric Gordon, Chief Executive Officer	Cleveland Metropolitan School District
2017	Felton Williams, Board Member	Long Beach Unified School District
2018	Alberto Carvalho, Superintendent	Miami-Dade County Public Schools
2019	Lawrence Feldman, Board Member	Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Queen Smith Award For Commitment to Urban Education

Eric Hale, a kindergarten and first-grade teacher in the Dallas Independent School District, was the winner of the 2019 Queen Smith Award for Commitment to Urban Education. The \$5,000 award is sponsored by the Macmillan/McGraw Hill Publishing Company.

Shirley S. Schwartz Urban Education Impact Award

The Council of the Great City Colleges of Education, an affiliate group of deans working with big-city school leaders, presented the Dr. Shirley S. Schwartz Urban Education Impact Award to Omaha Public Schools and the University of Nebraska at Omaha for establishing the Career Advancement and Development of Recruits and Experienced Teachers (CADRE) Project. The award honors an outstanding partnership between a university and urban school system and is named in honor of the Council's director of special projects who died in March 2009.

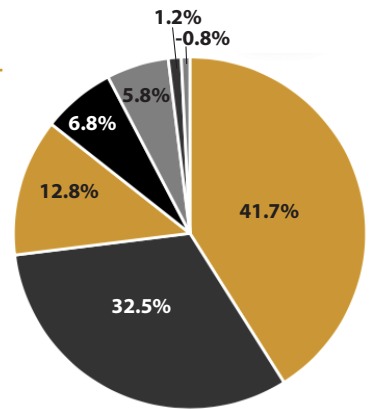
FINANCIAL REPORT

AUDITED REPORT FY 18-19

ESTIMATE FY 19-20

REVENUE

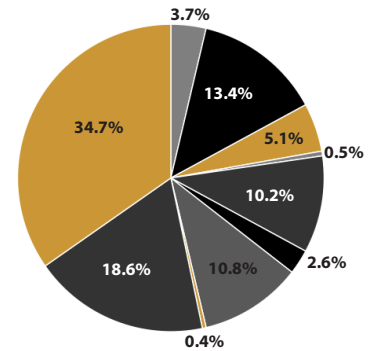
Membership Dues	\$3,102,986	\$3,208,032
Grants & Contracts	2,367,683	2,505,665
Sponsor Contributions	1,406,395	986,140
Registration Fees	542,550	521,107
Interest and Dividends	472,110	446,649
Royalties and Other Income	56,740	95,156
Net Gain on Investments	59,207	63,323
Total Revenue	\$8,007,671	\$7,699,786



- Membership Dues 41.7%
- Grants and Contracts 32.5%
- Sponsor Contributions 12.8%
- Registration Fees 6.8%
- Interest and Dividends 5.8%
- Royalties and Other Income 1.2%
- Net Gains on Investments -0.8%

EXPENSES

Public Advocacy	\$404,680	\$281,030
Legislative Advocacy	798,594	1,012,000
Research	179,784	384,291
Curriculum & Instruction	48,516	39,162
Executive Leadership	588,581	768,767
Member Management Services	201,850	196,060
Admin & Financial Management	766,966	812,802
Fundraising Activities	34,485	31,196
Conferences & Meetings	1,828,056	1,401,871
Categorical Projects	2,104,131	2,615,997
Total Expenses	\$6,991,606	\$7,543,176



- Public Advocacy 3.7%
- Legislative Advocacy 13.4%
- Research 5.1%
- Curriculum & Instruction 0.5%
- Executive Leadership 10.2%
- Member Management Services 2.6%
- Admin & Financial Management 10.8%
- Fundraising Activities 0.4%
- Conferences & Meetings 18.6%
- Categorical Projects 34.7%

Change in Net Assets	\$1,016,064	\$156,609
Net Assets, Beginning	\$8,569,298	\$9,585,362
Net Assets, Ending	\$9,585,362	\$9,741,972

SPONSORS

THE COUNCIL THANKS THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2019-2020

BLUE RIBBON CORPORATE ADVISORY GROUP

American Reading Company	ETS	Public Consulting Group
Amplify Education	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	Scholastic, Inc.
Aramark K-12 Education	Illuminate Education, Inc.	SchoolMint
Blackboard	K12 Insight	Scribbles Software
Cenergistic	LEGO Education	Texas Instruments
ClassLink	Lexia Learning	Waterford Institute
Curriculum Associates	Mawi Learning	Wilson Language Training
Discovery Education	McGraw Hill Education	
Dreambox Learning	Pearson	

2019 Public Relations Executives Meeting

Blackboard
Finalsite
Gaggle
K12 Insight
Peachjar
SchoolMint
TeacherLists
West Corporation
(SchoolMessenger)
Qualtrics

2019 Annual Fall Conference

ABM
Achieve 3000
Allovue
Alice
American Education
Amplify
Aramark
Bellxcel
Bulb Digital Portfolios
Camelot Education
Cenergistic
ClassLink
Cigna
Communities in Schools
Curriculum Associates
Discovery Education
Dreambox Learning
ESS
Goalbook
Great Minds
Frontline Education
FuelEducation
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Illuminate Education

ImagineLearning
Innive
Infor
IPC Global
K12 Insight
Kronos
LEGO Education
Lexia Learning
Mawi Learning
McGraw Hill Education
Nearpod
Naviance
Newsela
Oracle
Otus
Peachjar
Pearson
PowerSchool
Public Consulting Group
Renaissance
Revolution Foods
Scholastic, Inc.
SchoolMint
Schoology
Sodexo
Teaching Strategies
Tebo & Associates
Texas Instruments
TCG Advisors
Think Cerca
ThoughtExchange
Whetstone
Wilson Language Training
Xello
Xan Education

2019 Chief Financial Officers Meeting

Accenture
Allovue
Amazon Business
Cenergistic
CherryRoad Technologies
Duff & Phelps
E & I Cooperative Services
EqualLevel
Gaggle
Gallagher
Gallagher Bassett
ENA
Innive
K12 Insight
Kronos
Oracle
PFM
Plante Moran
Questica
SAP Software Solutions
Sedgwick
Sodexo
Tyler Technologies

2020 HRD/Personnel

Directors Meeting
CherryRoad Technologies
Curriculum Associates
ESS
Frontline Education
K12 360
K12 Insight
Kronos
Nimble
Public Consulting Group
PowerSchool

Publications



Operational Issues in the Reopening of Schools during the COVID-19 Crisis, Facilities, Transportation, and Security

June 2020

This “How-to Guide” shares recommendations from a series of working groups.

Addressing Mental Health and Social-Emotional Wellness in the Covid-19 Crisis- A Resource Guide for School Districts

Spring 2020

This guide presents a set of overarching principles and strategies to address the social-emotional and mental health needs of both students and adults during the COVID-19 crisis.

Assessing Language Proficiency During Extended School Closures, May 2020

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.

Curriculum Quality Rubric: A Self-Assessment Tool for Districts, December 2019

This is a companion resource to Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.

Academic Key Performance Indicators 2019 Report

October 2019

This report focuses on the data collection and analysis of Academic KPIs.

Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools 2019

October 2019

This is the Council's annual report on more than 500 Key Performance Indicators of operational performance in the nation's urban schools.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in Providence Public Schools, September 2019

The report examines such areas as the district's vision and goals for ELLs.



After serving the Council of the Great City Schools for 43 years, including 28 years as executive director, Michael Casserly announced he will step aside at the end of December 2020.

Council Staff

ADMINISTRATION

Michael Casserly, Executive Director
Teri Trinidad, Director of Administration,
Finance & Conferences
Alisa Adams, Finance Manager
Alexis Vann, Manager of Conferences
Michell Yorkman, Manager of Conferences and Partnerships
Gregory Bacon, Administrative and Conference Specialist
Marilyn Banks, Administrative Assistant

COMMUNICATIONS

Tonya Harris, Director of Communications
Joanne Coley, Communications Manager
Kalin Hicks, Communications Intern

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Ricki Price-Baugh, Director of Academic Achievement
Robin Hall, Director of Language Arts and Literacy
Denise Walston, Director of Mathematics

GOVERNANCE

AJ Crabill, Director of Governance

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Jeff Simering, Director of Legislation
Manish Naik, Manager of Legislative Services
Julie Wright Halbert, Legislative Counsel
Gabriela Uro, Director of ELL Policy and Research
David Lai, Special Projects Manager
Monique DeLeon, ELL Specialist

MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Robert Carlson, Director of Management Services

RESEARCH

Ray Hart, Director of Research
Renata Lyons, Research Manager
Moses Palacios, Legislative and Research Manager
Eric Vignola, Programmer/Technology Specialist

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Amanda Rose Corcoran, Special Projects Manager

2019–2020 COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBER DISTRICTS

(AS OF MARCH 2020)

SCHOOL DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT	BOARD MEMBER	SCHOOL DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT	BOARD MEMBER
Albuquerque	Raquel Reedy	David Percy	Los Angeles	Austin Beutner	Kelly Gonez
Anchorage	Deena Bishop	Elisa Vakalis	Manchester	John Goldhardt	Joyce Craig
Arlington	Marcelo Cavazos	Kecia Mays	Miami-Dade County	Alberto Carvalho	Lawrence Feldman
Atlanta	Meria Carstarphen	Leslie Grant	Milwaukee	Keith Posley	Larry Miller
Aurora	Rico Munn	Kyla Armstrong- Romero	Minneapolis	Ed Graff	Siad Ali
Austin	Paul Cruz	Geronimo M. Rodriguez, Jr.	Nashville	Adrienne Battle (Interim)	Rachel Anne Elrod
Baltimore	Sonja Santelises	Martha James-Hassan	Newark	Roger Leon	Josephine Garcia
Birmingham	Lisa Herring	Cheri Gardner	New Orleans	Henderson Lewis Jr.	N/A
Boston	Brenda Cassellius	Michael O'Neill	New York City	Richard Carranza	N/A
Bridgeport	Michael Testani (Acting)	Joseph Sokolovic	Norfolk	Sharon Byrdsong (Interim)	Rodney Jordan
Broward County	Robert Runcie	Laurie Rich Levinson	Oakland	Kyla Johnson-Trammell	Jumoke Hinton Hodge
Buffalo	Kriner Cash	Sharon M. Belton-Cottman	Oklahoma City	Sean McDaniel	Paula Lewis
Charleston County	Gerrita Postlewait	Eric Mack	Omaha	Cheryl Logan	Shavonna Holman
Charlotte-Mecklenberg	Earnest Winston	Elyse C. Dashew	Orange County	Barbara Jenkins	Teresa Jacobs
Chicago	Janice Jackson	Sendhil Revuluri	Palm Beach County	Donald E. Fennoy II	Marcia Andrews
Cincinnati	Laura Mitchell	Melanie Bates	Philadelphia	William Hite, Jr.	Joyce Wilkerson
Clark County	Jesus Jara	Linda Cavazos	Pinellas County	Michael Grego	Carol Cook
Cleveland	Eric Gordon	Denise Link	Pittsburgh	Anthony Hamlet	Sylvia Wilson
Columbus	Talisa Dixon	Jennifer Adair	Portland	Guadalupe Guerrero	Amy Kohnstamm
Dallas	Michael Hinojosa	Justin Henry	Providence	Harrison Peters	Nicholas Hemond
Dayton	Elizabeth Lolli	William E. Harris, Jr.	Puerto Rico	Eligo Hernandez Perez	N/A
Denver	Susan Cordova	Allegra "Happy" Haynes	Richmond	Jason Kamras	Linda Owen
Des Moines	Thomas Ahart	Krystin Delagardelle	Rochester	Terry Dade	Van Henri White
Detroit	Nikolai Vitti	Iris A. Taylor	Sacramento	Jorge A. Aguilar	Darrel Woo
District of Columbia	Lewis Ferbee	N/A	St. Louis	Kelvin Adams	Joyce Roberts
Duval County	Diana Greene	Lori Hershey	St. Paul	Joe Gothard	Mamy Xiong
El Paso	Juan Cabrera	Bob Geske	San Antonio	Pedro Martinez	Patti Radle
Fort Worth	Kent Scribner	Ashley Paz	San Diego	Cindy Marten	John Lee Evans
Fresno	Robert Nelson	Valerie Davis	San Francisco	Vincent Matthews	Mark Sanchez
Guilford County	Sharon Contreras	Byron Gladden	Santa Ana	Jerry Almendarez	Valerie Amezcua
Hawaii	Christina Kishimoto	Catherine Payne	Seattle	Denise Juneau	Eden Mack
Hillsborough County	Jeff Eakins	Melissa Snively	Shelby County	Joris Ray	Kevin Woods
Houston	Grenita Lathan	Judith Cruz	Stockton	John Deasy	Kathleen Garcia
Indianapolis	Aleesia Johnson	Elizabeth Gore	Toledo	Romules Durant	Robert Vasquez
Jackson	Errick Greene	Barbara Hilliard	Toronto	John Malloy	N/A
Jefferson County	Martin Pollio	Diane Porter	Tulsa	Deborah Gist	Shawna Keller
Kansas City (MO)	Mark Bedell	Nate Hogan	Washoe County	Kristen McNeill	Marlena Raymond
Long Beach	Christopher Steinhauser	Felton Williams	Wichita	Alicia Thompson	Ron Rosales

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1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1100N
Washington, DC 20004
tel: 202-393-2427 fax: 202-393-2400