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New Report Identifies Ways to Build Safer Schools and Communities

WASHINGTON, November 14 – The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) today jointly released a report that provides schools and police new and innovative approaches aimed at improving student safety in schools and communities.

[Building Safer Schools and Communities](#) presents findings and recommendations from the Joint Task Force on School Safety and Justice, launched in February 2022. Composed of district superintendents, school police leaders, and community police chiefs, the task force worked together over the course of one year to develop, identify, and share effective practices, tools, and resources. The report is both a culmination of this work and a joint action plan for moving forward with a focus on shifting mindsets and reframing relationships and practices related to schools, police, and communities.

Building Safer Schools and Communities proposes a framework for action built on the following three pillars:

- Expand mental health support and social emotional skills development for students, families, and communities.
- Rethink school discipline policies and practices to ensure fair and equitable practices for all students.
- Promote community partnerships and broad-based collaboration to ensure student safety and support.

Recommendations to Improve Student Safety

- School districts should support the mental health of students, staff, and communities by adopting or developing a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and related materials. These types of curriculums provide a roadmap to students and parents/caregivers for social emotional wellbeing and academic success.
- School districts should review restorative practices and consider implementing them as an approach to conflict resolution and an alternative to out-of-school suspensions.
- School districts, communities and law enforcement should work in unison to ensure student support and safer communities. This can include establishing relationships with community

organizations, such as local PTAs, and convening regular meetings with city leadership (the mayor, city council chair, etc.), the police chief, and the school district superintendent to discuss and review community safety and violence prevention efforts on an ongoing basis.

“With firearm-related injuries as the most common cause of injury-related death for children and youth ages 1 to 24 in the United States, the Council and its member school districts cannot reduce gun violence in the nation’s urban schools and communities alone,” said Council Executive Director Ray Hart. “We believe the joint findings and recommendations we propose with the IACP offer a roadmap for the nation’s education and law enforcement leaders to work together to navigate the complex challenges of improving school and community safety. These efforts will not only help change the lives of the 7.8 million urban schoolchildren and families we serve, but—ultimately—will improve the future of our country’s public education system—and our entire nation.”

“As violent crime, gangs, drugs and bullying continue to plague our youth, they are faced with insurmountable challenges both within their schools and surrounding communities,” said IACP President Wade Carpenter. “In partnership with CGCS, the IACP is pleased to provide this blueprint for the field to aid in providing a safer environment for our schoolchildren to learn and grow. It is my hope that this is just one of many steps to come as police and school districts continue working together to serve and protect our future generations.”

The Joint Task Force on School Safety and Justice created *Building Safer Schools and Communities* to serve as a foundation for dialogue and joint action. As a next step, the members invite national, state, and local leaders to create coalitions focused on implementing solutions to reduce crime and violence in their communities.

[Download the report.](#)

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About CGCS

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 78 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge in order to deliver the best possible education for urban youth. www.cgcs.org

About IACP

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is the world’s largest and most influential professional association for police leaders. With more than 33,000 members in over 170 countries, the IACP is a recognized leader in global policing, committed to advancing safer communities through thoughtful, progressive police leadership. Since 1893, the association has been serving communities by speaking out on behalf of law enforcement and advancing leadership and professionalism in policing worldwide. www.theiacp.org/