



Council of the  
Great City Schools<sup>TM</sup>

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Council of the Great City Schools

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May 20, 2014

Mr. Robert W. Runcie  
Superintendent  
Broward County Public Schools  
600 Southeast Third Ave. 10th floor  
Ft. Lauderdale FL 33301

Dear Robert:

You will find an invoice for the 2014-15 dues to the Council of the Great City Schools enclosed with this letter. We encourage your prompt payment in order to keep your national organization in good financial standing in these difficult economic times.

Later this summer, you will receive reports on the Council's activities during the 2013-14 school year and services it provided to your district specifically and to the membership generally. These reports are designed to answer the question, "What did we get for our dues?"

The Council has been incredibly productive this year. It remains the most effective and aggressive advocate for urban public schools in the nation. A good example of that effectiveness was the Council's ability to soundly defeat an amendment to the Title I formula in the House of Representatives last July that would have stripped the membership of some \$551 million in federal aid. The amendment was strongly backed by many of the other national organizations as a way of moving federal resources out of urban areas into less poor suburban and rural communities. The Council's legislative prowess was critical in flagging the issue, analyzing the effects of the amendment, marshalling key Congressional allies, and organizing the field in a way that blunted these other groups and defeated this very damaging attempt to rob urban schools of the resources we need.

In addition, at the Council's initiation and urging, the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter to states this year confirming that local school districts would not violate federal supplanting rules if they used local funds for one year to fill the Title I deficit caused by sequestration. The result was much needed flexibility for our members to soften the impact of the across-the-board federal budget cuts.

Along with others, the Council also influenced the Administration to launch its initiative around Males of Color.

But the Council is not just about federal advocacy—as effective as it is in this arena. It is also about our ability to speak with a single voice about the successes, challenges, and needs of urban schools and the children we serve.

The group has made major contributions to the implementation of the new Common Core Standards in reading and math—even for districts in states who have not adopted the standards. The Council convened numerous meetings, conferences, and webinars to help members with implementation and to assist with developing lesson plans and materials, providing substantial networking opportunities along the way. The Council's 30-second public service announcement that is now running in English and Spanish on television and radio stations nationwide has been seen and heard over 230 million times nationwide, according to Nielsen ratings. Our three-minute video on the Common Core is posted on many of your websites and has been viewed untold millions of times explaining why the new standards are critical to our children's future. In addition, our Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core are being used by many of you to help your

parent communities understand what their children will be learning under the new benchmarks. Moreover, the Council published new tools on communicating the Common Core and questions that districts need to be asking themselves over the course of the school year as they implement the new standards. The Council was also particularly aggressive in pushing the new assessment consortia to include accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners.

In addition, the Council has now fully automated its ground breaking performance-management system, which allows member districts to compare themselves on nearly 500 "Key Performance Indicators" in major non-instructional areas. It is a major breakthrough, and is capturing the attention of people inside and outside of public education as a way of saving money and improving efficiency and effectiveness. And we are now expanding the system into the academic arena.

The Council also published new research on urban school gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, on principal leadership, and on turnaround schools. And the Council strengthened the capacity of its member districts with new Strategic Support Teams, which provided on-site technical assistance in areas ranging from instruction to staffing, special education to bilingual instruction, and food services to transportation. The teams are a perfect example of how urban school districts under the Council's umbrella are pulling together to help each other meet our toughest challenges.

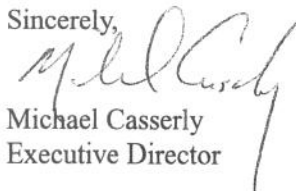
Finally, the organization continues to convene the highest quality forums and conferences to allow you to share your successes and learn from each other. Our annual conference in Albuquerque was hailed as our best ever, and our job-alike forums throughout the year allowed district staff members to exchange best practices.

To be sure, some of our positions are controversial, but no organization fights more aggressively or successfully for the nation's urban schools and urban schoolchildren than the Council of the Great City Schools. The Council remains the only independent education coalition located in Washington whose sole mission and purpose is the same as yours: the improvement of public education in our Great Cities.

The Council is a group "fully committed to its constituents" and is listed along with only the NEA, AFT, and the CCSSO, by the *Washington Almanac*, as one of the most effective education groups in Washington. In fact, the Council is considered one of the most powerful organizations on Capitol Hill in any field. *Lessons from the Hill* calls the Council "relentless" and critical to Washington's understanding of urban school needs. *USA Today* calls the Council "a crusader for urban education," the *New York Times* describes the group as "influential," and *Education Week* refers to us as "stalwart."

In short, the Council is an organization that belongs solely to urban educators for urban education and urban kids—all the time. That commitment is needed now more than ever as we implement the Common Core Standards, face continuing legislative and regulatory challenges, and handle the fracturing debate about public education's future. The many challenges we face will require urban schools to be more vocal, united, and forceful than ever. Our success can be traced directly to you, and to the strength of our alliance. Thank you for your commitment to the Council and our urban schoolchildren.

Sincerely,



Michael Casserly  
Executive Director

Cc: Mrs. Laurie Rich Levinson, CGCS Board Rep., Broward County Public Schools