

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 67 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. National advocacy, service, and capacity building shape the bulk of activities carried out on behalf of the urban schools by the CGCS.

Research findings, symposiums and best practices are shared through the CGCS's annual conferences, designed to engage school districts in meaningful and reflective ways. This year, the 58th Annual Fall Conference was held from October 22-26 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The agenda included timely sessions on a variety of topics aimed at helping urban districts prepare for online assessments and new standards, student and campus safety, budgetary resourcefulness, and improving classroom instruction among others. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) was prominently featured in this year's agenda as our Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Judith Marte, provided me with assistance in preparing a session designed to share best financial practices. Additionally, members of M-DCPS's Facilities and Maintenance Department, Mr. Jaime Torrens, Chief Facilities Officer, and Carl Nicoleau, Assistant Superintendent of Maintenance Operations, served as members of The Deferred Maintenance Task Force Project and had their findings, aimed at reversing the cycle of deterioration in the nation's public schools, published for this conference. Additionally, the work of our Instructional Technology department under the direction of Ms. Sylvia Diaz, the Office of Educational Transformation under the administration of Dr. Pablo Ortiz, and other select M-DCPS administrators within our cohort was also shared and well received.

Throughout the year and as one of the 67 CGCS member districts, Miami-Dade is able to access services in the areas of legislation and advocacy, research, communications, teaching and learning, and leadership management, among others offered by the council. Through this membership, Miami-Dade is able to share concerns and solutions with education counterparts coast-to-coast, capitalize on our strength in numbers, and build our expertise. Most recently, Miami-Dade joined with several other CGCS members in a pledge aimed at increasing the achievement of young men and boys of color. This pledge was celebrated at an event in Washington DC as an official White House event attended and moderated by President Obama who introduced the national initiative, 'My Brother's Keeper'.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County accept the Council of Great City Schools 58th Annual Fall Conference materials and update as provided by its Board appointee and Council Executive Board member.