

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED, AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 68 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. Throughout the year and as one of the 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.

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 59th Annual Fall Conference was held from October 7-11 in Long Beach, California. The agenda included sessions on a variety of topics aimed at helping urban districts use data to increase student achievement and operational efficiency, as well as share best practices related to school finance, leadership, governance and management. Of special note, the outstanding contributions of our School Board Chair, Mrs. Perla Tabares Hantman, were recognized during the event where she was presented with an award in recognition of her outstanding leadership. The Council will celebrate 60 years of service to America's urban public schools during its Annual Conference scheduled to take place in Miami during October 19-23, 2016.

Most recently, CGCS Executive Director Michael Casserly joined the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results announcement in Washington D.C., one day after President Obama's announcement calling for limits on standardized testing in schools. Mr. Casserly shared results from a new CGCS nationwide school district survey of testing, which found that most students spend between 20 and 25 hours a year on standardized tests. It was also noted that Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), which last year eliminated close to 300 district-initiated tests, led the nation in the assessment known as the Nation's Report Card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress; Mr. Casserly, added "The school district's gains were among the fastest in the country of any major city and were across the board, even as state and national numbers were trending downward." M-DCPS's leadership in reflective assessment practices and outstanding assessment results were highly lauded.

ACTION RECOMMEND

DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County accept the Council of Great City Schools 59th Annual Fall Conference materials and update as provided by its Board appointee and Council Executive Board member.