

Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Chair

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**SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE UPDATE**

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

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

The Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) was founded in 1956 and supports the 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." The CGCS advocates for the needs of urban school districts and inner city students through legislation, research, and by building capacity in urban education leaders dedicated to narrowing the achievement gap, improving academic performance and strengthening leadership, governance and finance.

This year, The CGCS held their 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference in Miami from October 19-23. The conference provided urban school district participants an opportunity to learn about reform work, model programs, and best practices throughout the country.

Over 1,000 members consisting of urban school superintendents, School Board Members, Deans of Colleges of Education and Senior School District Administrators representing over 7.3 Million students in 70 urban school districts engaged in this year's fall conference. With a robust agenda featuring relevant topics and breakout sessions on urban school achievement, professional development, and bilingual education, as well as nationally acclaimed speakers, this year's annual conference was a well-received success.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is to be commended for facilitating this year's conference, fittingly themed 'Reinvigorating, Reimagining, Reinventing' and casting a spotlight on the vision and work of the nation's fourth largest school district. M-DCPS had the opportunity to showcase the initiatives, academic offerings, diverse magnet programming, and remarkable student talent that makes our school district worthy of the 'Miami Miracle' moniker. Participants were afforded the opportunity to visit the acclaimed iPreparatory Academy and delight in musical and dramatic performances by acclaimed school groups and student artists.

Planning for this year's conference was led by Lisa Martinez, Chief Strategy Officer, under the leadership and direction of the Superintendent. Ms. Martinez and her team oversaw critical planning and logistical elements that ensured seamless transitions, optimal preparation, and a flawless execution of the agenda. Also critical to the success of the conference, was the participation and expertise of several M-DCPS departments aptly represented by Jose Dotres, Chief Human Capital Management, Jaime Torrens, Chief Facilities Officer, David K. Moore, Assistant Superintendent Division of Academic Support, Ron Steiger, Chief Budget Officer, Lisa Thurber, District Director Office of Community Engagement, Cindy Caldwell, Executive Director, New Teacher Support, Wandarece Ruan, Administrative Director, Office of Professional Development and Evaluation, Renny L. Neyra, District Director, Michele Mordica, Community Liaison Specialist, Luis Diaz, Administrative Director. Additionally, Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho served as a panelist for the Town Hall meeting on Urban Education and the Presidential Campaign moderated by Broadcast Journalist Dan Rather.

Appreciation is extended to the Planning Committee Members, Valtena Brown, Christian Carranza, Douglas Clark, Sylvia Diaz, Nivaldo Galue, Daisy Gonzalez-Diego, Cynthia Gracia, Marie Izquierdo, Deborah Karcher, Adam Lechnir, Judith Marte, Lisa M. Martinez, Iraida Medez-Cartaya, Mabel Morales, Marcus Ortega, Javier Perez, William C. Reaney, Tammy Reed, Christopher Sachtleben, John Schuster, Ron Steiger, Robert Strickland, Lisa Thurber, and Diana Venturini.

IT and ancillary support was provided by Victoria Albert, Joanne Baquedano-Diaz, Desiree Capote, Teresa Colon, Lana Duchene, Lissette Lutz, Melissa Maxfield-Miranda, Ashley Montano, Marlon Zuniga, Peter de Mercado, Gonzalo Battaglia, Nadia Earl, Robert Tarvin, Julio Herrera, Jorge Funcia, Jorge Lopez, Linda Mangual, and Alina Rodriguez. Their assistance proved invaluable.

Special gratitude is also extended to the following school performers, Arvida Middle School Advanced Orchestra led by Ms. Vivian Ventura and Jazz Band led by Ms. Stephanie Gust, Miami Coral Park Senior High School Jazz Band led by Mr. Aramis Gonzalez, Coral Reef Senior High School Orchestra led by Mr. Lee Stone and Thespians led by Ms. Ana Mederos, John A. Ferguson Senior High School Steel Band led by Mr. Lowell Thomas, Glades Middle School Jazz Band led by Mr. Erich Rivero, Hialeah Senior High School Show Choir led by Mr. Ismael Gonzalez, Miami Krop Senior High School Chorus led by Mr. Gary Keating, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 at Zelda Glazer Dancers led by Ms. Monica Villar and Ms. Dana Scotti, Miami Norland Senior High School Marching Band led by Mr. Darryl Baker, Robert Morgan Senior High School Chorus led by Ms. Angel Marchese, South Miami K-8 Center Chorus led by Ms. Vivian Gonzalez, South Miami Middle School Orchestra led by Mr. Besnik Hashani, and Southwood Middle School Orchestra led by Ms. Tinder Burris and Color Guard assistance provided by Dr. Jayne Greenburg.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, accept the Council of Great City Schools 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference update.