

URGENT

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, D.C. 20503-0001

Her request

Friday, July 25, 1997

LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL MEMORANDUM

Urban School

TO: Legislative Liaison Officer - See Distribution below
FROM: *Janet R. Forsgren*
OMB CONTACT: Janet R. Forsgren (for) Assistant Director for Legislative Reference
Constance J. Bowers
PHONE: (202)395-3803 FAX: (202)395-6148
SUBJECT: EDUCATION Draft Bill on Higher Education Act Reauthorization - (New) Title V, Part C - Urban Partnership Program
DEADLINE: 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 29, 1997

In accordance with OMB Circular A-19, OMB requests the views of your agency on the above subject before advising on its relationship to the program of the President. Please advise us if this item will affect direct spending or receipts for purposes of the "Pay-As-You-Go" provisions of Title XIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

COMMENTS: The attached is part of ED's proposed reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which will be reviewed, cleared and submitted informally to Committees in separate parts. ED will consolidate the entire bill for formal transmittal later.

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(New) Title V, Part C - Urban Partnership Program

RESPONSE TO
LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL
MEMORANDUM

If your response to this request for views is short (e.g., concur/no comment), we prefer that you respond by e-mail or by faxing us this response sheet. If the response is short and you prefer to call, please call the branch-wide line shown below (NOT the analyst's line) to leave a message with a legislative assistant.

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 Branch-Wide Line (to reach legislative assistant): 395-7362

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 _____ (Agency)
 _____ (Telephone)

The following is the response of our agency to your request for views on the above-captioned subject:

_____ Concur

_____ No Objection

_____ No Comment

_____ See proposed edits on pages _____

_____ Other: _____

_____ FAX RETURN of _____ pages, attached to this response sheet

"PART C -- URBAN SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

"FINDINGS; PURPOSE; PROGRAM AUTHORIZED

"Sec. 531. (a) FINDINGS.--The Congress finds that--

"(1) The Nation's urban schools ^{derend / seem} are facing ^{challenges} substantial problems and needs in such areas as inadequate academic preparation of students and low levels of educational aspirations, low levels of parental involvement, and other urban social problems that impinge upon the school environment.

"(2) The Nation's urban institutions of postsecondary education have available resources that by virtue of the institutions' close relationship with their urban communities, are uniquely situated to help ^{urban schools address their challenges} ameliorate the problems described in paragraph (1).

"(3) The skills, knowledge and experience in these urban institutions, if applied in a systematic and sustained manner, and augmented as needed by other urban community-based organizations, working with urban elementary and secondary schools can make a significant contribution to the solution of such problems confronting these schools.

"(4) The application of such skills, knowledge and experience is hindered by the limited funds available to redirect attention to such problems of urban education.

" (b) PURPOSE.--It is the purpose of this part to improve the performance of urban elementary and secondary schools with a high percentage of under-performing students by promoting partnerships among these urban schools and school districts, institutions of higher education, and other public and private groups in order to assist these schools to address the barriers they face in successfully carrying out their educational mission. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to use the full range of their institutional, faculty, and student resources, to help these urban schools to improve their students' performance in such areas as retention and graduation rates, scores on standardized tests of achievement in mathematics, science and reading, and the rate at which their students enroll at institutions of postsecondary education.

"(c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.--(1) The Secretary is authorized to make grants to eligible institutions on behalf of partnerships to enable them to solve problems faced by elementary and secondary schools in urban areas which limit their educational effectiveness.

"(2) Grants under this part shall not exceed 5 years.

"(3) To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure equitable geographic distribution of grants under this part.

"PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

"SEC. 532. (a) AGREEMENT.--To be eligible for a grant under this part, an eligible institution shall enter into a written partnership agreement with a one or more local educational agencies in an urban area that focuses on improving urban schools and eliminating the barriers these schools face in preparing their students for postsecondary education or careers. Such partnerships may also include businesses, community-based organizations, civic organizations, and other public or private organizations or agencies.

"(b) CONTENTS OF AGREEMENT.--The written agreement shall include.

"(1) a list of one or more urban schools that are the focus of the partnership agreement;

"(2) a list of all partnership participants and their official representative, including the representative for each of the urban schools;

"(3) a description of the responsibilities of each partnership participant; and

"(4) a list of the resources to be contributed by each partnership participant.

"APPLICATIONS

"SEC. 533. (a) IN GENERAL.--An eligible institution desiring to receive a grant under this part on behalf of a partnership shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such form, and providing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

"(b) CONTENTS.--Each application shall include--

"(1) the partnership agreement described in section 532;

"(2) a needs assessment documenting, through quantifiable data, the basis for selecting each participating urban school, and including information on student performance and other educational problems or barriers to success that the urban schools face and that will be targeted by the program;

"(3) a description of the programs and activities to be developed and carried out by the partnership; and

"(4) assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that --

"(A) the partnership will establish a governing board, including one representative of each participant in the partnership;

"(B) federal funds will provide no more than 70 percent of the total cost of the

project in the first year, 60 percent of such costs in the second year, and 50 percent of such costs in the third and any subsequent year;

“(C) no local educational agency or institution of higher education participating in a partnership under this part will reduce its combined fiscal effort per student or its aggregate expenditure on education from non-Federal resources; and

“(D) each local educational agency or institution of higher education participating in a partnership under this part will use funds under this part to supplement, and to the extent practicable, increase the resources that would, in the absence of such funds, be made available from non-Federal sources for the education of students and, in no case, to supplant non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available.

“(c) SPECIAL RULE.—The non-federal share of grants awarded under this part may be in cash or in kind fairly evaluated, including services, supplies or equipment.

“USE OF FUNDS

“SEC. 534.(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Funds under this part, to the extent practicable, shall be used to assist elementary and secondary schools in urban areas that serve a high percentage of under-performing students to eliminate the barriers these schools face in helping their students’ achieve their academic potential and prepare for and pursue a postsecondary education.

“(2) Activities described under paragraph (1) may include program design and development, training, improving the use of technology, sharing of resources, and other services and activities designed to assist urban schools meet and address their educational problems.

“(3) Funds under this part may not be used for programs whose primary purpose is to meet postsecondary education degree requirements, such as student teaching or practice.

“(b) STUDENT PARTICIPATION.—Institutions of higher education are encouraged to place students receiving funds under Title IV, Part C in grant-supported projects.

“PEER REVIEW

“SEC. 535. The Secretary shall use a peer review process to review applications submitted under this part and make recommendations for funding. The Secretary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that the panel is geographically balanced and is composed of persons with expertise in the area of urban education and the problems confronting urban schools.

“DEFINITIONS

“Sec. 536. As used in this part--

“(1) The term “urban area” means a metropolitan statistical area having a population

of not less than 350,000.

"(2) The term "eligible institution" means an institution of higher education, or a consortium of such institutions any one of which meets all of the requirements of this paragraph, which--

"(i) is located in an urban area;

"(ii) draws at least 50 percent of its undergraduate students from the urban area in which such institution is located, or from contiguous areas;

"(iii) carries out programs to make postsecondary educational opportunities more accessible to residents of such urban areas, or contiguous area;

"(iv) has a range of institutional, faculty, and other resources available that are relevant to the needs of urban schools; and

"(v) has a record of service to the local community, including partnerships with organizations the purpose of which is to address the needs and priorities of the community.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

"SEC. 537. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal year 1998 through 2002 to carry out this part.

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Urban Community Partnership Program

The existing Urban Community Service Program will be reauthorized as the Urban Community Partnership Program. The new program will establish partnerships between urban institutions of higher education and urban elementary and secondary schools to improve the performance of these schools. The inclusion of additional partners such as businesses, community-based organizations, etc. will be encouraged.

This partnership program recognizes the important role that urban postsecondary institutions can play in their community to improve the performance of elementary and secondary schools and help students better prepare for postsecondary education and successful careers.

> Partnerships

A written partnership agreement will be included as part of an application under this program. This agreement will identify not only the individual partners, but the rationale for choosing the particular urban schools with which to work, as well as the educational issues the partnership will address.

> Activities supported under this program

Unlike the current Urban Community Service Program, this new partnership program will focus exclusively on addressing problems of urban education. Funds will be used to assist urban elementary and secondary schools having a high percentage of under-performing students to eliminate the barriers these schools face in achieving their educational mission.

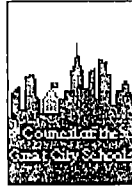
Grantees will have considerable flexibility in the activities of the funded partnerships, such as program design and development, training, improving the use of technology, sharing resources, etc.

> Cost-sharing; grant duration

Federal funds will provide no more than 70 percent of the total costs of the project in the first year; 60 percent in the second year, and 50 percent in subsequent years. Partnerships may be funded for up to five years.

> Urban area; eligible urban institution

"Urban area" means a metropolitan statistical area having a population of not less than 350,000. To be eligible, institutions must be located in an urban area, draw a significant percentage of their students from the area, and demonstrate a clear commitment to the community.



Building an Urban School Marshall Plan

March 17, 1997

In 1947, after Europe was thrown into chaos by the ending of World War II, Secretary of State George Marshall proposed that the U.S. help fund Europe's recovery. Congress allocated \$13 billion to this Marshall Plan for rebuilding Europe. The result was increased cooperation between the U.S. and western Europe, a tremendous growth in trade, an expansion of U.S. influence, and strengthening democracy in Europe.

In 1997, America needs to launch a new Marshall Plan. This time it is for our own urban public school systems. And the reasons for doing one now are the same as then: it is morally right, politically necessary, and in our democratic self-interests. The success of America's economy and the vibrancy of its democracy are intertwined with the success of city schools graduating the future leaders of our nation.

If the government of the United States could devote billions of dollars to rebuild countries overseas, it certainly has the power to devote funds to rebuild schools here at home. If the people of the United States could find the moral strength and political will to overcome our enemies abroad, we certainly have the power to use this strength and will to overcome the problems faced by our urban public schools.

The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) is announcing a five-part framework for an Urban School Marshall Plan. It contains a short-run blueprint but a long-range demand for equity and fairness in America's support of urban schools. The five components are:

1. Our unified commitment for improving urban schools;
2. Adequate state financing of urban schools;
3. Extensive new federal aid for urban schools;
4. Support for President Clinton's infrastructure proposal and more; and
5. Mobilization of the nation and urban communities in support of our schools.

Our goal in developing this plan is to reverse years of financial and political neglect of our school systems. Our aim is to reduce disparities in funding; sustain urban education with aid adequate to attain "world class standards"; mobilize public support on behalf of urban children; provide facilities ample for their needs, and leadership strong enough to guide their destinies.

This effort will expand on what urban public schools know is successful with the nation's most diverse student enrollment. It comes as some of our nation's urban school systems are enacting groundbreaking educational reforms.

1. **The first component reflects a new consensus among urban educators about the strategies we know work and that we are determined to pursue.** They are built around a single urban school mission to:

"Educate the nation's most diverse student body to the highest academic standards and prepare them to contribute to the global community and our democracy."

To fulfill this mission we will redirect the total energies of urban public schools so that each school educates each child to the highest academic standard. We will continue to lead and govern

our schools effectively and in ways that inspire public confidence. We will strengthen our efforts to engage and build an involved and supportive urban community that can work with schools to raise the achievement of urban children.

We, urban schools leaders, commit to the long term implementation of the following strategies:

- **Set high academic and performance standards for all children** with appropriate benchmarks at selected grades;
- **Provide well-trained teachers and staff** who understand a variety of teaching techniques so that students of all learning styles can reach high standards;
- **Provide all schools with the books, materials, and technology** that our resources can buy to ensure student success and organize schools into safe, drug-free, and well-disciplined learning communities with smaller classes which permit more individualized attention;
- **Strengthen system leadership and management, and enhance school decision making** to ensure greater responsiveness and accountability to the community;
- **Design assessments for greater accountability** tied to standards and results for schools and staff;
- **Use resources effectively and equitably** through efficient program delivery, cost-effectiveness, and pursuit of adequate governmental funding;
- **Build public support for the education of urban children** with better reporting about what the schools are doing and more aggressive mobilization of the community to understand, shape, support, and participate in the education of children; and
- **Link schools with community resources** and coordinate necessary social services so that each student has an adult mentor, health care, the opportunity for community service, and a chance to participate in activities to resolve conflicts.

Accomplishing these goals and strategies will take more than just announcing them. Superintendents and school board members will be working together in ways similar to the Governors to reach a greater consensus on how to achieve each of these goals.

Urban schools also need money. They receive between \$400 and \$500 less per child than schools in their surrounding suburbs. That difference means \$10,500 less in books, computers, equipment and resources for every urban classroom in America or about \$3.0 billion total--not accounting for the differences in needs. The disparity in what is provided to urban children and to children just miles from them is a national disgrace and a moral outrage. These gaps, often defined by race and class, have widened through years of neglect. No one knows how much money it would take to close those gaps but the results of not doing so are obvious. America rarely knows the full cost of its bold initiatives before it launches them.

With adequate resources, urban schools can provide the opportunities that all other children in America have: programs, services, books, computers, well-trained and paid teachers, equipment and the like. The results will be student achievement in city schools matching or surpassing any in America. Children in urban schools are as important, talented, and intelligent as children anywhere else and have the same right to a high-quality education. It is long past time that we gave it to them.

2. **The second component is fair and adequate state financing and support of urban schools.**

The Council is announcing that it will seek adequate and fair state aid to urban school systems, in whatever amounts are necessary to ensure that our students attain the same high standards expected of all children. In the short-run, the Council will be using new tools it has developed to assess the level of adequacy of state support. And we will be using the results to develop judicial options that we will announce within a matter of months.

The Council is also recommending that states modify their laws to permit voters in any city to establish their own threshold for approval of local bond and levies.

Finally, the Council is proposing that states provide stronger authorities to urban school superintendents and boards commensurate with their responsibilities.

3. **The third component involves federal responsibilities for urban schools.** The Council is announcing that it will develop legislation, an "American Cities Education Act," that will provide: urban school block grants to develop and implement national and state academic standards; implement programs that build from models of success in urban education; address the effects of welfare and immigration reform on children; provide greater flexibility in the use of federal aid, and boost school safety.
4. **The fourth component relates to urban school infrastructure.** The Council of the Great City Schools is announcing its enthusiastic support for President Clinton's new "Partnership to Rebuild America's Schools Act" providing \$5.0 billion in aid to begin repairing and renovating the nation's public school buildings.

The Council will also begin preparing legislation that, upon expiration of the Clinton plan, provides funding of at least \$112 billion to continue and complete the repair and renovation of urban schools across the country.

5. **The fifth component is community.** Education is not only the responsibility of schools and governments but of everyone in the community. No school can succeed without the support of friends, neighbors, families and business. The Council believes that the fifth component of the framework should involve community mobilization. The Council is announcing that it will seek a variety of urban partners to mobilize some 2 million parents in our 50 cities that will pledge to take their children to schools, meet with their teachers, turn off the TV, read to their children for at least 30 minutes a day, and pick up their child's report cards.

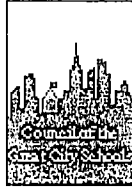
City schools play a pivotal role in society. For much of our history, cities and their public schools have been the engines of progress. But these engines will run out of steam and drive the nation toward a dead end if inadequate urban school systems fail to fuel the hearts and minds of urban youth. America needs a new Marshall Plan, a Marshall Plan for America's Urban Public Schools.

Call to Action

- We call on President Clinton to make urban education central to his national education agenda.
- We call on Congress to hold extensive hearings on urban education and on the funding disparities.
- We call on states to provide fair and adequate funding for urban school children.
- We call on the Mayors for a Joint Summit to better coordinate our efforts.
- We call on corporate America to provide greater assistance to urban schools.

Read the Press Release

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Speech to the Rainbow Coalition Education Conference

by
Michael Casserly
Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools

February 24, 1997

Thank you very much for that kind introduction. It is nice to see so many of you at this critical conference. The Council of the Great City Schools is honored to serve as one of the co-hosts for this meeting.

Before I do anything, I want to express my profound appreciation to the Reverend Jesse Jackson for your leadership in shining the nation's spotlight on the critical issues of urban student achievement and the disparities we see in that achievement.

I would also like to thank Walter Amprey, Paul Vallas and Nancy Ware for the energy they have devoted to this meeting.

For those of you who may not know us, the Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of the nation's largest urban public school systems. On our board of directors sit the superintendent of schools and one school board member from each city school district.

I have been asked to speak to you this morning about the financing of public education, particularly urban schools, as a follow-on to Katy's description of achievement gaps and trends.

I only have a few brief minutes to give you an overview of the obvious: there are gaps in the funding of urban schools and that the gaps contribute to the gaps in achievement.

I would like to open with a statement of fact: the United States of America is the strongest, wealthiest country on the face of the earth. As I tell you what else is fact, please remember this simple one: we are the richest and most powerful.

We are also lots of other things when it comes to our kids and our schools. The United States spends a considerable amount on public education, most of it through local property taxes.

We rank third among 21 other industrialized countries in the percent of our total public dollars we spend on elementary and secondary education--about 9%.

But the U.S. ranks only ninth among the world's major industrialized nations on the share of its total domestic product it devotes to public elementary and secondary education.

While our efforts financially as a nation in support public education are high to moderate, there are signs that our funding commitments are waning.

The total share of the nation's Gross Domestic Product devoted to public elementary and secondary education has remained at only about 3.5% to 4.5% since 1967 despite all the rhetorical attention that has been paid to public education over that time.

In addition, total federal funding for education has dipped from only 2.5% of the entire U.S. budget in

In addition, total federal funding for education has dipped from only 2.5% of the entire U.S. budget in 1981 to just 2.1% now. And the total share of all local and state tax revenue devoted to public education has declined from 43.5% in 1970 to 38.2% in 1992.

This at a time when the number of taxpaying adults in the population capable of supporting the public education of the next generation has increased from 4.4 adults for every school-aged child in 1970 to 6.0 adults for every child in 1992.

Once again, remember that America is the richest and strongest nation on the face of the earth. But we have simply adopted other priorities than our kids.

- ❑ Americans now spend seven times more on snack food or pornography than on school textbooks.
- ❑ The federal government spends \$17 billion a year on prisons and criminal justice and \$13 billion on elementary and secondary education.
- ❑ Americans will spend about \$9.0 billion to build sports stadiums between now and the year 2000 but all fifty states combined spend only \$3.5 billion to build or repair school buildings.
- ❑ The most recent federal budget proposes to boost spending for education at all levels by \$41 billion by 2002, but it will increase military procurement by \$59 billion over the same period.
- ❑ All 50 states combined spend less money on elementary and secondary education than the federal government spends on corporate tax breaks.
- ❑ The Department of Defense spends \$1.2 billion each year to recruit new non-commissioned officers. The nation's schools spend less than \$50 million each year to recruit new teachers.
- ❑ The total cost of providing a multimedia computer for every five kids in the nation, a teacher who can use it and the software to run it could have been paid for with the amount of money we spent bailing out the savings and loan industry.
- ❑ The federal government increased its spending on prisons and criminal justice by 291% between 1982 and 1992, but only 89% for elementary and secondary education over the same period.
- ❑ The nation could wire all its 85,000 public schools for the cost of building five new NSSN Attack submarines.
- ❑ And the nation could buy coffee and donuts for every parent teacher conference in the nation for five years for the price of a single F-22 fighter jet.

In a capitalist nation, nothing speaks more directly about our national priorities than how we spend our money.

Unfortunately, these gaps are wider when it comes to the education of students of color, poor and limited English proficient students.

- ❑ School districts whose enrollments are less than 5% minority spend an average of \$286 dollars more per student than the average school district whose enrollment is at least 50% majority minority.
- ❑ On average, wealthy school districts have about 24% more total funding per weighted student than poor school districts.
- ❑ The average large urban school district in the nation has \$533 less per pupil to spend on its students than schools in their surrounding suburbs.

The difference is large enough to buy seven computers for every urban classroom in America.

- ❑ The need to repair and renovate school buildings is about one-third higher than the national average in schools whose enrollment is at least 50% minority.
- ❑ The shortage of teachers is 2.5 times greater in urban public schools than the national average.
- ❑ Only about half as many schools in poor areas--31%--had internet connections compared to schools in wealthier areas.
- ❑ Finally, of all the new money that has been spent on education since 1967, only 3% of it has gone to compensatory education programs and only 4% to bilingual education.

Once again, remember that we are the richest, most powerful nation on earth. And this is what we do with our money. These are the gaps in how we spend it.

We have watched the gaps widen between the nation's rich and poor, with race, language and disability increasingly defining these divisions. And we have watched our nation grow more complacent of intolerance, dismissive of educational equity and disparaging of diversity.

Let's take a real world example because these statistics are not just academic curiosities--they have meaning for real schools and real kids. Let's take Baltimore.

- ❑ Baltimore is the largest city in a state with the fifth highest per capita income in the nation.
- ❑ Yet, the state of Maryland is more likely than any other state to have its school systems' revenues reflect the income levels of their district's residents.
- ❑ The poverty rate in Baltimore is 69%, compared to the statewide average of 30%.
- ❑ The enrollment of the Baltimore schools is 73% students of color, compared to the state-wide average of 36%.
- ❑ The Baltimore City Public Schools have an average per pupil expenditure \$540 below the state-wide average and \$1,973 below the wealthiest county in the state.
- ❑ By the time that the average child in Baltimore is 17 years old, he or she will have had \$60,000 less spent on their education by their families and their public schools than the average child in the wealthiest county in Maryland.
- ❑ Not surprisingly, Baltimore has the lowest average academic achievement scores of any district in the state.

These financial disparities, these gaps in how much we spend on the education of some children compared to others is at the root of our achievement gaps. School finance experts have a tough time drawing a straight line between funding and achievement but there is a common-sense link that people with money understand when they are asked to part with it.

Reverend Jackson urged us last night to say what we needed. I would like to respond. We need--

- ❑ Higher standards;
- ❑ Better trained, paid and accountable teachers;
- ❑ Books and computers;
- ❑ Better facilities;
- ❑ More involved parents and voters;
- ❑ Stronger management;
- ❑ Vital cities;
- ❑ Safe streets;
- ❑ Respect for our diversity; and
- ❑ Money and all the things above that money can buy.

Urban schools know what it takes to close some of our learning gaps: high standards, better assessments, more parental involvement, one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, strong leadership and staff development. And we understand that urban public school systems do not always spend their money as efficiently as some would like.

It is often claimed that urban schools will not get more money until we prove that we can manage what little we have more efficiently. Pursuing efficiencies before we ask for more money is a strategy. A good strategy. But the efficient management of injustice should never be our goal.

Even the managerial genius of a Paul Vallas can't correct for the fact that some kids in this country get \$2000 a year for their education and some get \$18,000--yet they will all be held to the same high standard.

It has become almost a sin to speak of these disparities in funding or about the opportunity to learn. The truth is, however, that the richest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth is getting what it paying for in urban education.

These are the facts. This is the research. It is not an excuse. These disparities are real; frankly the nation

has no excuse for them.

We can't meet "world class" standards on "third world" funding. Unless we close these funding gaps, there will be no "first class" results.

Then the richest and most powerful nation on earth won't be the richest and most powerful any longer.

Let's work to make sure that doesn't happen.

Thank you very much.

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**Testimony
on the
Education of African American Children in Urban Public Schools**

**before the
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
of the
Committee on Appropriations**

U.S. Senate

Presented by
Michael Casserly
Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools

January 23, 1997
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chairman, my name is Michael Casserly and I am the Executive Director of the Council of the Great City Schools. I am pleased to testify before this critical Subcommittee on the important issue of educating African American children in urban school systems nationally.

Currently in its 40th year, the Council of the Great City Schools is a national organization composed of some 50 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Our Board of Directors is composed of the Superintendent and one Board of Education member from each city, making the Council the only education group so constituted and the only one whose membership and purposes are solely urban.

The urban school districts comprising the Council serve some 6.0 million inner-city children or about 13% of the nation's public school enrollment. Some 36% of the nation's African American children, 30% of its Hispanic children, and 21% of the nation's Asian American students are educated in our schools each day. In addition, these urban school systems educate about 30% of the country's poor children and 36% of its limited English proficient students. Over 60% of our students are eligible for a free or reduced-price federal meal subsidy.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to devote my brief comments this morning to the achievement of African American and other children in urban public schools nationally. I hope this will help give additional context to the issues being discussed here this morning and to some of the decisions faced by the Oakland Board of Education and other urban school systems across the country.

Before I begin, however, I want to take this opportunity and applaud your leadership and advocacy last Fall for increasing the federal appropriations for such vital programs as Title I (and particularly its Concentration Grant component), the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, and other programs. We will do everything in our power to ensure those dollars are spent effectively.

The immediate issue before this Subcommittee involves Ebonics and the context of its use such as in the Oakland Public Schools. The Council also assumes that the Subcommittee is interested in the use of Ebonics by other school systems, particularly urban schools, and why it is being used by some.

In preparation for this hearing, the Council of the Great City Schools conducted a quick survey of its

membership asking for information on the use of programs such as the one Oakland has been using for several years. We are still receiving survey returns, but twenty-three (23) major urban school districts, so far, have indicated that they did not use a language or curriculum approach like Oakland's. They include the public school systems in Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale), Buffalo, Cleveland, Dade County (Miami), Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Detroit, El Paso, Fresno, Houston, Las Vegas, Louisville, Memphis, Milwaukee, New York City, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, San Antonio, Seattle and St. Louis. Most also had no immediate plans to adopt the approach.

Several urban school districts, however, do use an approach similar to Oakland's. They include:

- **San Diego**--has a program called the Mainstream Academic English Program that provides professional development for teachers to help African American and English speaking Latino students achieve mastery in standard English. The main goals of the program are to develop student mastery of standard English, improve teacher understanding of cultural and linguistic variations, and to promote parental involvement. The program is used in 16 of the district's approximately 150 schools with some 43 of the district's 5,300 teachers.
- **Los Angeles**--has a program called the Language Development Program for African American Students. Its goal is to remove barriers to students in learning mainstream English and to ensure that students have an equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum. Its focus is on professional development of teachers and staff. The program is used in 31 of the district's some 775 schools.

A number of other non-urban school districts in California use a similar approach partially in response to California's "Standard English Proficiency Program (S.E.P)". Schools in Chicago and Dallas have also used the approach on a limited basis. Most urban school districts do not have a formalized policy or program similar to Oakland's. Several districts, however, do offer workshops to teachers and staff on how to improve proficiency in standard English for African American students. And we assume that some teachers use these approaches on an ad hoc basis in their classrooms. Each of these programs, formal and informal, have a number of things in common:

1. They attempt to improve the ability of students to speak standard English;
2. They **do not** attempt to teach students how to speak or improve their proficiency in Ebonics;
3. They attempt to improve proficiency in standard English by respecting the language that students bring to school rather than characterizing it solely as deficits; and
4. They provide techniques for teachers and staff in helping students move from one dialect or another to standard English.

The main challenge that program's such as the ones used in Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego try to address involves the achievement levels of African American and other students. The goal is to teach children to "world class" standards in the core subjects, and to prepare them for the workplace and for full participation in our democracy and economy. So far, the nation's schools have a mixed track record in meeting this challenge, particularly for African American students.

There is both good news and bad news. On the positive side, the nation's schools and society have seen progress on a number of important indicators:

- The Census Bureau reported in 1996 that young Black adults (ages 24-29) had pulled abreast of white young adults in their high school completion rates.
- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that African American children have made the largest percentage gains in reading and math since 1971.
- The College Board reports that African American students continue to improve on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) at a rate of one or two points per year while increasing their participation rates.

- The Council of the Great City Schools reports that the percentage of African American students in urban schools successfully completing a first year course in algebra by the end of the 10th grade has also increased significantly.
- The National Research Council indicates that the number of African Americans earning a doctoral degree was at an all-time high in 1995 (the latest year for which data are available).
- The National Science Foundation reports that college graduation rates among African American students have increased in science and engineering.

On the negative side, other indicators point to how much the nation's schools still need to achieve for African American students:

- Data from NAEP and recently reanalyzed by the Education Trust indicate that progress in closing the achievement gaps between African American and white students has nearly stopped since about 1988.
- The absolute achievement gap between African American students and white students is significant on NAEP, the SAT and on standardized tests given in individual local school systems.
- African American students continue to lag behind several other groups in course taking and advanced placement rates.

We have attached data compiled by the Council of the Great City Schools on 1992-93 indicators of achievement by race in the major cities. These data and data from other sources generally point to substantial--if not profound--improvements in the achievement of African American students for which the nation, its schools and its students can be justifiably proud.

At the same time, it is clear not only that significant gaps remain but that the positive trend lines we have seen since the early 1970's have now leveled off if not declined in recent years. It is the concern for the remaining gaps and the recent stagnation that drive discussions about how school systems, particularly in cities, can keep trend lines moving in the right directions.

Urban school systems across the nation use a variety of approaches to improve the achievement of African American students and to close achievement gaps. Some of those approaches include:

- The development and implementation in urban school systems of new, high standards for all student achievement;
- Professional development for teachers and staff in multicultural settings;
- Development of assessment systems that are culturally-fair as well as aligned with high standards;
- The use of Afro-centric curricula;
- Mentoring programs; and
- Parent involvement strategies.

The federal government has an important role to play that is entirely consistent with its historic mission in education of improving opportunity. Within its current authorizations, the Congress could insist on targeting more of the federal Goals 2000 program on urban school systems and other very poor communities. Most urban school systems receive disproportionately small grants under this program to help them improve standards, reform the curricula or develop new assessment systems.

Second, the federal government can continue to improve and expand the federal Title I program and its Concentration grant provision. The program, historically, has been one of the main engines for

improving achievement in urban public school systems.

Third, the federal government might consider authorizing special assistance to urban school systems across the country to assist them in addressing the problems that reforms in the welfare system are likely to cause in the next few years.

Finally, I would like to suggest one thing that Congress and the federal government resist doing. I hope that political leaders resist turning issues raised by the Oakland schools into sources of political rhetoric. There was a disquieting rush to judgment on the merits and motives of Ebonics when it reached national visibility. The issue has the potential to divide us once more. This debate should not be about good versus bad, low versus high, excellent versus inferior. It should be about how we move our schools from a place where they are not succeeding with African American and other children to the extent they should to a place where the schools equip all students with a common language that is the coin of the realm for future success in American society.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

National Trends in Differences in Average Proficiency of White and Black Students in Reading*

Age 17

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gap Between White & Black Reading Scores+</i>
1994	37 points
1992	37
1990	29
1988	20
1984	31
1980	50
1975	52
1971	53

Age 13

1994	31 points
1992	29
1990	21
1988	18
1984	26
1980	32
1975	36
1971	38

Age 9

1994	29 points
1992	33
1990	35
1988	29
1984	32
1980	32
1975	35
1971	44

*Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

+Based on 0-500 point scale

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