



**Council of the
Great City Schools**

- Albuquerque
- Anchorage
- Atlanta
- Austin
- Baltimore
- Birmingham
- Boston
- Broward County
- Buffalo
- Charleston
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Chicago
- Christina (DE)
- Cincinnati
- Clark County
- Cleveland
- Columbus
- Dallas
- Dayton
- Denver
- Des Moines
- Detroit
- East Baton Rouge
- Fort Worth
- Fresno
- Greensboro
- Hillsborough County
- Houston
- Indianapolis
- Jackson
- Jacksonville
- Kansas City (MO)
- Little Rock
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Louisville
- Memphis
- Miami-Dade County
- Milwaukee
- Minneapolis
- Nashville
- New Orleans
- New York City
- Newark
- Norfolk
- Oakland
- Oklahoma City
- Omaha
- Orlando
- Palm Beach County
- Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh
- Portland
- Providence
- Richmond
- Rochester
- Sacramento
- Salt Lake City
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Seattle
- Shreveport
- St. Louis
- St. Paul
- Toledo
- Washington, D.C.
- Wichita

Council of the Great City Schools
 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. ♦ Suite 702 ♦ Washington, D.C. ♦ 20004
 (202) 393-2427 ♦ (202) 393-2400 (fax)
<http://www.cgcs.org>

May 4, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
 Chairman
 Committee on Education and Labor
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

The Council of the Great City Schools, the coalition of the nation's largest central city public school districts, writes in strong support of the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R. 2187). The Council applauds the work of Congress, and specifically your leadership in working with Reps. Chandler, Kildee, and Loeb, to improve the infrastructure of our country's schools. Modernizing our nation's school buildings should be a vital national priority, and we urge the Committee to approve H.R. 2187 immediately.

In urban schools, congressional efforts for modernization will help reverse ongoing facility deterioration, where students attend classes in the country's oldest buildings. These schools have long suffered from overcrowding, inadequate repair, and deferred maintenance, and the result can be seen in areas from student performance to teacher recruitment and retention. Improving these learning conditions is vital for helping schools meet high standards, improve student test scores, and keep instructional staff focused on the children they teach.

H.R. 2187 will also provide immediate assistance to school districts that are dealing with budget cuts and a slowing economy. The measure includes provisions to ensure that federal assistance reaches the local level quickly and with the least amount of bureaucracy and red-tape, especially important at a time when districts are faced with difficult spending decisions due to significant losses in state aid. School repair projects are often the first to be cut in these situations, and federal action will help districts protect their facilities from painful reductions.

Support for school modernization will also help local communities create new jobs, a fact that escaped the conference committee that stripped school construction grants from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) earlier this year. And provisions requiring facilities to be built in a manner that capitalizes on energy efficiency and other environmental measures will provide long-term savings and the greatest return on the federal investment in school modernization.

The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act is a meaningful measure that can help school districts address the problems of school modernization. Most importantly, it will provide districts with the support they need to improve the learning environment for all students, and has the full support of the Council of the Great City Schools.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Casserly
 Executive Director