



**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)
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>

April 30, 2008

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 Representative Chandler's 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and the Loeb sack-Kildee substitute. The Council applauds the work of Congress to improve the infrastructure of our country's schools and highlight school modernization as a national priority, and urges the Committee to approve the measure 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.

The Chandler legislation and Loeb sack-Kildee substitute 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.

Additional benefits will also result from Committee approval. Support for school modernization will create new jobs in local communities, and funding for repair and renovation projects will help to stimulate local economies that would otherwise be facing tough times. 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.

Representative Chandler's 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and the Loeb sack-Kildee substitute 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