Council of the Great City Schools
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CONTACT: Tonya Harris
tharris@cgcs.org

11 Educators Selected for Michael Casserly Urban Executive Leadership Institute

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 – The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) has chosen 11 senior-level education administrators to participate in the fourth cohort of the Michael Casserly Urban Executive Leadership Institute for Superintendents.

Named after the Council's longtime former executive director, the program is designed to help current and aspiring superintendents develop the skills they need to successfully lead a large urban school system.

Cohort participants will participate in discussions regarding common challenges faced by urban superintendents. They will engage in sessions covering topics such as school board relations, academic performance, media relations, operations, finances, and labor relations.

One of the most valuable features of the program is the opportunity for cohort participants to connect with current and former council member superintendents, who will offer advice, guidance, and opportunities for shadowing. The program also focuses on building relationships, allowing cohort members to network with one another and engage in peer-to-peer learning.

"We are honored to welcome the newest cohort of the Michael Casserly Urban Executive Leadership Institute for Superintendents," said Council Executive Director Ray Hart. "This will be a transformational experience that will equip them with the critical skills, training, and supportive network needed to help them succeed in today's complex urban education environment."

The Institute was established in 2023. Since its inception, 38 individuals have completed the program, with four of them becoming superintendents of a CGCS member district.

"Participants in the program will hear from experienced superintendents who will share their valuable insights gained from managing some of the largest urban school districts in the nation—an experience they cannot find anywhere else," said Michael Hinojosa, the Council's Superintendent-in-Residence who oversees the program. "We look forward to working with

these dedicated and enthusiastic leaders as we prepare the next generation of urban superintendents."

The members of the fourth cohort are:

- Dr. Jose Fuentes, Chief Financial Officer, Newark Public Schools
- Dr. Tanya Giovanni, Esq., Deputy Superintendent, Administrative, Legal, and Compliance Services, Durham Public Schools
- Dr. Steven Gutierrez, Chief Operating Officer, Tomball Independent School District
- Dr. Loren Hatfield, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools, Wichita Public Schools
- Oz Hill, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, The School District of Philadelphia
- Dr. Brian Lusk, Deputy Superintendent of Schools and Academics, Dallas Independent School District
- Dr. Ida Perales, Chief Leadership Officer, Garland Independent School District
- Dr. Roderick Richmond, Interim Superintendent, Memphis-Shelby County Public Schools
- Andre Spicer, Region South Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District
- Jennifer Trejo, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Pre-K Schools, Socorro Independent School District
- Dr. Kimberly Vaught, Assistant Superintendent of School Performance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Programming for the 2026 cohort will begin in February with monthly sessions held through October 2026.

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About the Council of the Great City Schools
The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 81 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. For more information, visit www.cgcs.org