

Council of the Great City Schools

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**Council of the
Great City Schools**

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August 10, 2011

Kate Walsh, President
National Council on Teacher Quality
1420 New York Avenue, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Kate:

I am writing to indicate that the Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public school systems, supports the study being conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) of the nation's Colleges of Education.

The Council's Executive Committee discussed this issue at great length at its recent meeting in Cincinnati, and we were in agreement that additional research regarding the quality of our pre-service teacher training institutions is badly needed. Our governing body remains concerned that too many Colleges of Education are graduating students who are poorly prepared academically and not ready to provide quality instruction in our urban classrooms.

We are frequently the subject of research, analysis, and study by a wide range of groups and organizations, and are puzzled by the opposition from the higher education community to the examination that your group is proposing.

Urban public schools and school districts are under enormous pressure to raise the academic achievement of all students, improve our leadership and management, and gain the public's confidence in our ability to provide a high-quality education. To do this, we need the nation's teacher colleges as partners.

Your study has the potential of advancing the national discussion on teacher preparation and furthering our understanding of why some new teachers come to our urban classrooms better equipped to serve our diverse students than others. The results should also tell us more about how the colleges compare with one another. Your organization deserves praise for its efforts to expand our knowledge about these critical institutions.

We are particularly pleased that the analysis will include indicators of early reading instruction, English language learners, the common core standards, math preparation, measures of course content, and other priorities important to urban schools.

That said, the Council would be remiss if we overlooked some of the problems with the study. We do believe that you have presented the same level of transparency in your techniques as most groups do, but we are concerned that your data collection process may make it difficult to get a complete picture of the field, a situation prompted in part by resistance from those being studied.

Still, we do not think the weaknesses in the study's scope and protocol trump the need to conduct the study or the moral and political imperatives for the colleges to cooperate. Consequently, the Council of the Great City Schools lends this study our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael D. Casserly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

Michael Casserly
Council of the Great City Schools