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Council of the Great City Schools
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Council of the Great City Schools Calls on Congress To Pass Teacher Jobs and School Modernization Plan

WASHINGTON -- The Council of the Great City Schools supports and welcomes President Obama's timely American Jobs Act, which will help restore the nation's teaching force and repair our eroding school infrastructure.

The nation's elementary and secondary schools are entering a third consecutive school year of severe budget cuts, educator layoffs, and deferred maintenance to school buildings, a situation that is particularly grim in the nation's urban centers. And, a fourth year of additional layoffs and further building deterioration are on the horizon for school year 2012-2013 if the economy does not gain traction soon.

"The President's plan will not only help stimulate the economy, provide badly needed jobs, put laid-off teachers back in our classrooms, and fix our aging schools, but more importantly it will begin to rebuild the nation's capacity to deliver 21st century educational services that meet the new higher academic standard adopted by nearly all of the states," said Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council.

A recent survey of the Council's 65 urban school districts estimates that some \$75 billion in school facility needs exist across the Great City Schools. This amount includes some \$44 billion in needed school repair and modernization, \$18 billion in new construction, and \$13 billion in deferred maintenance. The nation's big cities have some of the country's oldest and most over-crowded school buildings.

Over 20 percent of these urban school infrastructure projects can be up and running in the next 12 months according to leaders of the nation's major city school systems, providing tens of thousands of jobs for out-of-work construction personnel.

"We call on Congress to pass the President's teacher jobs and school modernization plan this fall," said Casserly. "And we applaud the President on his leadership."

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(The Council of the Great Schools is a national organization representing 65 of the nation's largest urban school districts.)