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Council of the Great City Schools  
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**Statement on the Passing of Arlene Ackerman  
By the  
Council of the Great City Schools**

WASHINGTON, Feb 2 -- The Council of the Great City Schools and its member urban school systems are profoundly saddened at the passing of Arlene Ackerman. Arlene died peacefully this morning at her home in Albuquerque surrounded by her family.

“Arlene Ackermann was a tireless champion for urban public education and a relentless warrior on behalf of urban children,” said Council Executive Director Michael Casserly, who had known Arlene since she worked in the Seattle Public Schools alongside Superintendent John Stanford in the early 1990s.

Arlene Ackerman served as chair of the Council of the Great City Schools in 2005-06, and was presented with the Council’s Richard Green Award for Excellence in Urban Education in 2010 for her lifetime of dedication to urban education.

After leaving Seattle, Dr. Ackerman served as the chief academic officer and then superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools where she saw the school system through its takeover by the federal control board and introduced higher standards, instructional reforms, after-school programs, and substantial personnel, funding, and operational changes. After leaving D.C., Dr. Ackerman was appointed superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, where she initiated an important reform initiative centered on the city’s lowest performing schools. As superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, after leaving San Francisco and serving a stint teaching at the higher education level, Dr. Ackerman introduced a bold set of long-term reforms and managed significant budget cuts.

“Arlene Ackerman’s nearly 45 years in urban public education stands alone as one of the nation’s most important contributions to our Great City Schools,” added Casserly. “We will miss her wonderful laugh, but we are grateful for her energy and passion on behalf of America’s urban children. We are all better for having known and worked with her.”

The Council family extends its deepest sympathies to Arlene’s family, who she loved deeply and from whom she drew strength and courage.

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