

MAYORAL LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

1. **WHEREAS**, mayors are the chief locally elected official in cities and residents hold them accountable for the quality of education provided by the public schools and the quality of the local school system which is not, in most cities, the mayor's responsibility, as well as the quality of life, economic stability and growth, health and welfare, social services, safety, transportation, environment, housing, and other services which are a direct responsibility of the mayor; and
2. **WHEREAS**, mayors represent all residents of the city since they are elected by them, and not by districts or at-large, and mayors understand that the city's destiny is in their hands since they do not work in isolation or separation from the community; and
3. **WHEREAS**, mayors have a fundamental interest in the quality of education provided in their cities because it is an essential element in drawing new business, building a strong and competitive workforce, and either retaining or attracting new residents; and
4. **WHEREAS**, the economic future and strength of our cities lies in the quality of education and related services provided to children so they are ready to learn and attain the core fundamental skills during their years in schools so they are prepared for postsecondary education and/or the world of work; and
5. **WHEREAS**, mayors understand the need for a nexus between education, related social services and other mayoral areas of responsibility which are key components to insure students have the support services, experiences and environments appropriate to encourage and support learning; and
6. **WHEREAS**, mayors are best positioned to forge a common vision for educational equity and excellence; establish collaborative groups and task forces focused on specific education issues to address problems; create a public and political will for public schools; expand services to students when needed; turn educational crises into opportunities; develop creative partnerships in the best

interests of teaching and learning; facilitate opportunities for students, teachers and schools which otherwise would not happen, and make tough or difficult decisions; and

7. **WHEREAS**, mayors can use their bully pulpit to raise issues and confront uncomfortable problems, establish a dialogue, build civic capacity and engagement, bring all critical stakeholders to the table, and create partnerships when no one else can in the city,
8. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on mayors to take on a critical and essential leadership and involvement role in local public education which can range from working as a partner with the local school system to address education needs, problems and issues to one where the mayor has the legal responsibility for the governance of the city's public schools; and
10. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly suggests that mayors who decide to become involved in education first assess their capacity for their level of engagement and make sure they include all aspects of the community in their efforts; and
11. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors supports a wide range of options for mayoral leadership and involvement in education including:
 - taking responsibility for after-school programs, creating or authorizing charter schools,
 - participating in teacher recruitment,
 - establishing programs to assist in housing for teachers and other education professionals,
 - sponsoring policies and practices in city government that encourage tutoring, mentoring and other volunteer work with students,
 - visibly supporting school bond and tax levies,
 - enhancing and encouraging parental involvement,
 - facilitating business partnerships with schools,
 - creating options for alternative learning opportunities and settings directed at at-risk in- and out-of school youth,

- developing education opportunities and settings for recently release juvenile offenders and those ending their foster care,
- helping in the construction and modernization of school facilities into joint use and community learning centers,
- providing recreation and athletic facility options for students,
- establishing recognition programs for educators,
- engaging in or mediating contracts when appropriate,
- lobbying for improved funding, and new policies and programs at the state and federal level that enhance improvement and change,
- facilitating the conversation and working relationship between local government, public schools, and higher education,
- having the governance responsibility for the city's public school system,
- participating in the selection of school board members and/or the superintendent,
- offering transparency to the school budget process,
- overseeing the school budget process and implementation,
- taking responsibility for backroom services for the schools to make them more efficient and cost effective such as IT, personnel, payroll, school security, and/or other management functions, and
- creating summer and during the school-year jobs, and internship and work experience opportunities linked to academic and career skill building; and

12. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors recognizes and supports the rightful role of mayors in doing what needs to be done to promote the interests of public school students and parents, and the schools, align the efforts of the city and the school system, and improve the lives, and education outcomes and opportunities of the children who attend the public schools; and

13. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors supports mayoral leadership and involvement in education that makes a positive difference in the quality of teaching and learning in the city's

schools, whether through direct forms of involvement or informal means; and

14. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors fully supports a myriad of choices in selecting the level of mayoral leadership and involvement in education including utilization of the bully pulpit to build political support for education improvement that provides the impetus school districts need to speed reforms; fostering greater student achievement; providing greater visibility to important issues which forces decisions to be made; creating programs when needed; increasing public participation; working to enhance funding and resources; and setting new priorities when necessary.

Projected Cost: Unknown