



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

For Immediate Release
January 25, 2006

Contact: Elena Temple (202)861-6719
Fritz Edelstein (202)861-6737

U.S. Conference of Mayors Releases a New Publication: *Mayoral Leadership & Involvement in Education : An Action Guide for Success*

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Conference of Mayors today released a new publication entitled ***Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success*** during its 74th Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C. The ***Action Guide*** was made possible by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

With the increasing role of mayors in public education, the U.S. Conference of Mayors believed that there was a need to assist mayors as they choose how to get involved and at what level of engagement. The ***Action Guide*** provides principles, suggestions and ideas for mayoral leadership and involvement. It also explains the political, financial and bureaucratic problems with which mayors are confronted when they become involved in public education.

USCM President and Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill succinctly stated what she sees as a key role in mayoral leadership and involvement in education, "If there are issues in education, the mayor is the only person who can typically bring all the stakeholders together to identify solutions. This is the most important role a mayor can play regarding education."

Four central themes on mayoral leadership and involvement in education are emphasized in the ***Action Guide***: *advocacy, capacity, implementation and sustainability*. The ***Action Guide*** is intended to provide useful information to mayors no matter what role they currently have or are considering in education. The ***Guide*** helps mayors answer two pivotal questions:

- ❑ What role should I have as the chief elected official of my city to ensure that every child has the opportunity to have a quality education experience? and
- ❑ What can I do to align my city's services and resources to provide that opportunity?

“Education is a key issue mayors have used to improve public perceptions of their cities. Mayoral involvement in education and school-related issues makes a difference no matter what level of input a mayor seeks to have,” said Tom Cochran, Executive Director, U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Additionally, throughout the **Guide** specific examples of what mayors have done are provided, and mayors speak out “*in their own words*” about the reasons for getting involved, problems faced, strategies and the mayor’s role in the education arena.

St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay, Chair of the Conference’s Job, Education and Workforce Committee named five reasons why he, as mayor, decided to become involved in improving the city’s public education system, “I got involved for the kids, a more productive workforce, stronger neighborhoods, crime reduction, and to replicate good schools and programs.”

Further, the **Guide** provides information on how a mayor can determine their capacity for selecting a role; describes the various challenges and issues a mayor may face; provides a political context for mayoral involvement in education; explains the various types of involvement and discusses three key issues faced by mayors when they get involved.

Recently Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said, “We face the great challenges of education. I’ll say it here and now: Reforming our public schools is the central public policy issue of our time. We all know that this is the one way we can give more of our people a meaningful shot at a better life.”

With the release of ***Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success***, mayors now have a resource from which to draw ideas, make decisions on type and level of involvement, and understand what other mayors have done. If nothing else mayors will understand the diverse roles they can have in public education in their city, and will be motivated to take a greater leadership role and become more involved.

Copies of the **Action Guide** are available at the U.S. Conference of Mayors and on the website at www.usmayors.org.

Contact Fritz Edelstein at (202) 861-6737 for more information.