



NEWS **The United States Conference of Mayors**

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U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS CALLS ON ADMINISTRATION & CONGRESS TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mayors Outline Plans For Greater Involvement & Leadership In No Child Left Behind Act & Other Education Issues At First Mayors' Education Summit

WASHINGTON, DC – Over two dozen mayors called on the Administration and Congress today to increase support for public education at the first Mayors' Education Summit, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Broad Foundation. They also outlined plans to increase mayoral leadership and involvement in public education including the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Also attending the summit were Education Secretary Rod Paige, Eli Broad, founder of the Broad Foundation and public school reform advocate, and a number of other leading education experts.

"Mayors recognize that improving our public schools is no easy task," said U.S. Conference of Mayors President James Garner, Mayor of Hempstead, NY. "As with many of the issues we take on, getting more involved in education poses challenges and political risks. However, we must do it. We need to break down a cultural divide between city government and education, if students are to achieve and succeed."

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, Vice President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, said, "The U.S. Conference of Mayors is committed to expanding our level of leadership and involvement in education. We are leaders nationally as an organization and as individuals at the local level."

Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, former President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors asserted, “If you want to be a successful mayor today, you have to have a real passion for education, and for giving the young people of your city a real shot at economic opportunity. It all starts there, because in today's world, education is the key to a better future. In the past, we've seen the legacy of ‘downtown’ mayors, as well as ‘neighborhood’ mayors, but today's mayors incorporate the best of both worlds, by boosting education, after-school programs, computer literacy efforts and recreational and health activities.”

Tom Cochran, Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors said, “As Chief Executive Officers of their cities, mayors are expected to show leadership on all local issues, including education. Our Education Summit shows that mayors are committed to being more involved because the future of our cities hinges on the quality of our public schools. For many years the nation’s mayors have advocated that we must have a commitment for reconstruction and retrofitting our public schools so that the classrooms for our children have the technology needed to make them more competitive with other children throughout the world.”

The U.S. Conference of Mayors also passed a resolution pledging greater mayoral leadership and involvement in public education. The mayors committed to developing “real working relationships with local school superintendents, school boards, teacher organizations, parents, students and other education stakeholders.”

Importantly, the mayors also resolved to promote “innovative approaches to education such as charter schools, and where appropriate, seek more direct authority over public schools.” They also said they will advocate more strongly on behalf of public education in Congress, in state capitals and in their cities and will work on helping their cities meet the requirements of The No Child Left Behind Act.

A larger number of mayors have been getting more involved in public school education during the past decade. A few have taken complete control of the school system, while others have focused on more targeted efforts in the areas of after-school programs, school safety, school finance, school infrastructure, access to technology and higher education issues. For example:

- Boston Mayor Thomas Menino was one of the first mayors in the country to truly get fully involved in education. He gained the authority to select the school superintendent and the school board. Mayor Menino has also taken a personal role in making sure the schools have the latest technology and connections to the appropriate city services.
- Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic took a leadership position in the most recent increase in the school tax levy. With his leadership and involvement, the levy passed.
- Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson is one of the first mayors, if not the first mayor, to receive from the State Legislature the authority to charter schools in his city.

This is very unique and provides an opportunity for a mayor to be truly involved in providing public school educational alternatives while not taking over the school system.

- Providence Mayor David Cicilline has made a commitment to the concept of community schools by joining appropriate city services with education to provide seamless services to children and the appropriate families.
- St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay has become fully engaged in education this year. The mayor and his staff are working very closely with the newly elected school board. They are also working with the new interim leadership of the school system as it reconfigures and searches for a new superintendent.
- St. Petersburg Mayor Richard Baker has pledged to dedicate all local permit and development fees to support tree-planting and landscaping in that city's schools.
- In San Jose, Mayor Ron Gonzales is encouraging schools to establish more after-school programs in the city's libraries, which provide Internet access and training for students.

Also participating in the Mayors' Education Summit were Sandra Feldman, President, American Federation of Teachers; Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of Great City Schools; and Lisa Graham Keegan, President, Education Leaders Council.

They, along with other education experts, led discussions on the following topics during the Summit. The Importance of Mayoral Leadership and Engagement in Improving Urban Education; Building a New Partnership for Children: Connecting Education with City Services; Innovative Approaches to Public Schools: A Mayor's Role; Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Where Do Mayors Fit?

Attending the summit were the following mayors: Hempstead (NY) Mayor James Garner (President, U.S. Conference of Mayors); Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic (Vice President, U.S. Conference of Mayors); Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales, Indianapolis Mayor Brad Peterson, Oklahoma City Mayor Kirk Humphreys, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, Providence Mayor David Cicilline, District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams, Alexandria (VA) Mayor William "Bill" Euille, Fresno Mayor Alan Autry, Stamford Mayor Dannel Malloy, St. Petersburg Mayor Richard Baker, Santa Barbara Mayor Marty Blum, Manchester (NH) Mayor Robert Baines, Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton, Toledo Mayor Jack Ford, Jackson (MS) Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr., Quincy (MA) William Phelan, North Tonawanda (NY) Mayor David Burgio, Irvington (NJ) Wayne Smith, Pleasantville (NJ) Mayor Ralph Peterson, Hope (NJ) Mayor Timothy McDonough, Maywood (IL), Mayor Ralph Connor, Macon (GA) Mayor C. Jack Ellis, Chula Vista (CA) Mayor Stephen Padilla, Portsmouth (VA) Mayor James Holley III, and Mt. Vernon (NY) Ernest Davis.

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