



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Providence Public School Board
FROM: Krystafer Redden, *Chief of Staff*, Rhode Island Department of Education
DATE: 16 March 2025
RE: Conditional Philanthropic Funding for Council of Great City Schools



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum is to directly address inquiries related to the method and type of funding being used to support board professional development, as well as with the process and selection of the provider of the aforementioned board professional development.

I trust that this Memorandum will help to clarify and to settle any remaining concerns. Further, I ask that the below information be placed into the record and made publicly available.

COUNCIL OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

For readers who may be unaware, the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) is a nonprofit coalition of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Founded in 1956, CGCS works with 70 of the nation's largest and most diverse urban school districts to provide support and leadership in the areas of governance, student outcomes, and operational efficiency. The Council's work is rooted in a commitment to ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students, especially those from historically underserved communities.

CGCS serves as a crucial resource for urban school districts, providing a wealth of services, including:

- Governance training focused on building effective, student-centered school boards.
- Data-driven tools and research to support districts in improving student achievement.
- Policy and advocacy support at local, state, and federal levels.
- Technical assistance on a wide range of operational and strategic challenges that urban districts face.

CGCS AND PROVIDENCE

The CGCS has a longstanding relationship with Providence dating back over 30 years, during which the Council has provided invaluable support and expertise. This includes guidance on improving governance, enhancing student outcomes, and addressing key challenges in urban education. CGCS has played a key role in helping



Providence navigate complex education reforms, providing both training and strategic insight to enhance the district's ability to improve performance and leadership. This partnership has helped Providence make significant strides in transforming the educational experience for students in the city. This organization and its partnership in Providence are not new.

PERTINENT DETAILS

In February of 2024, Providence School Board President Erlin Rogel asked for the Commissioner's assistance in securing philanthropic funding for Board professional development. *Please see Rogel Letter, dated February 21, 2024.*

In response, the Commissioner secured philanthropic funds in partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation for this initiative for Providence Public Schools.

To that end, the first year of funding for the initial payment of \$50,000.00 to the CGCS is being offered through philanthropic funds secured in partnership with and administered by the Rhode Island Foundation. These funds are conditionally allocated for the Providence Public School Board and the Providence Public School District central office administration team to work together with the district's longstanding professional development and technical assistance partner, the Council of Great City Schools. More specifically, these funds have been allocated to provide the Board and PPSD admin team professional development focused around CGCS's national governance model predicated upon a student outcomes focused approach.