

# **The National Coalition on School Diversity**

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## **Re: Support School Integration in FY25 Appropriations Requests**

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito:

The undersigned organizations, along with the National Coalition on School Diversity (NCSD),<sup>1</sup> are writing to request Congress's support for school integration in its FY25 appropriations decisions.

Our organizations collectively represent the interests of millions of underserved students and educators throughout the United States. We have seen how the diversity of this nation is our strength—one that our students should benefit from first-hand.

As we prepare to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, we note that when school desegregation was at its peak, there was a significant reduction in the achievement gap between students of color and white students.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, there has been a significant backsliding in these efforts. A recent Government Accountability Office analysis found that, in the 2020-21 school year, "[m]ore than a third of students (about 18.5 million) attended a predominantly same-race/ethnicity school—where 75 percent or more of the student population is of a single race/ethnicity."<sup>3</sup> We can, and must, do better for our students.

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<sup>1</sup> Founded in 2009, the [National Coalition on School Diversity](https://www.school-diversity.org/) is a cross-sector network of 50+ national civil rights organizations, university-based research centers, and state and local coalitions working to expand support for school integration. NCSD supports its members in designing, enacting, implementing, and uplifting PK-12 public school integration policies and practices so we may build cross-race/class relationships, share power and resources, and co- create new realities.

<sup>2</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., Learning Policy Institute, *Education and the Path to One Nation, Indivisible* (2018), <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/education-path-one-nation-indivisible-brief>.

<sup>3</sup> National Coalition on School Diversity, *Fact Sheet: New Findings on School Integration* (2022), [https://www.school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/NCSD-Factsheet\\_New-Findings.pdf](https://www.school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/NCSD-Factsheet_New-Findings.pdf).

**Importantly, research spanning decades shows that students of all backgrounds benefit from attending racially and socioeconomically diverse schools.**<sup>4</sup> They have stronger academic outcomes across a variety of measures,<sup>5</sup> greater intellectual self-confidence,<sup>6</sup> and reduced racial biases.<sup>7</sup> Students who attend diverse schools are also more likely to thrive in our diverse society—they are more skilled at navigating diverse work environments and more likely to live in diverse neighborhoods as adults.<sup>8</sup> They also have a greater adherence to democratic values and an enhanced propensity for civic engagement.<sup>9</sup> Today, it is even more important that students learn these skills and dispositions to work together and embrace different perspectives to prepare for the real world they will encounter after school.

Despite these undeniable academic and social benefits—and despite the fact that our country is becoming increasingly diverse—the unfortunate reality is that “schools remain divided along racial, ethnic, and economic lines throughout the U.S.”<sup>10</sup>

**We are calling on Congress to do more to support holistic, voluntary school integration, thereby helping to facilitate diverse learning environments, adequate and equitable access to vital learning resources in our nation’s public schools, a skilled workforce, and ultimately pathways to increased cross-racial/class understanding in our society.** We ask you to make robust investments in school integration in your FY25 budget. Please do what you can to provide more students access to opportunities to attend diverse, high-quality schools by ensuring that voluntary, locally-led integration efforts receive the resources and assistance they need to be successful.

**We ask that Congress take these steps in FY25 without cutting other education programs:**

- 1. Fund the Fostering Diverse Schools (FDS) grant program at \$100 million to enable states and school districts to pursue community-led, voluntary strategies to promote racial and socioeconomic integration (see [pgs. 75-78 of the President’s \\$10 million FY25 budget request](#) for more information).**
- 2. In addition to providing \$100 million for a new FDS program, include appropriations committee report language that accompanies the Labor-HHS-Education’s FY25 appropriations bill to direct the Department of Education (the Department) to prioritize the ESEA Title IV-A 2% reservation for technical assistance and capacity building to foster school integration efforts across and within school districts. For three consecutive years, Congress—in a bipartisan manner—has directed the Department to prioritize the Title IV-A technical assistance and capacity-building funds to support school integration efforts. In 2023, the Department used these funds to implement the Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Grant Program, which benefitted [14 inaugural](#)**

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<sup>4</sup> Roslyn Mickelson, National Coalition on School Diversity, *School Integration and K–12 Outcomes: An Updated Quick Synthesis of the Social Science Evidence* (2016), <https://www.school-diversity.org/pdf/DiversityResearchBriefNo5Oct2016Big.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> The Century Foundation, *The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms* (2019), [https://production-tcf.imgix.net/app/uploads/2016/02/26171529/Factsheet\\_Benefits\\_FinalPDF.pdf](https://production-tcf.imgix.net/app/uploads/2016/02/26171529/Factsheet_Benefits_FinalPDF.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Linda R. Tropp & Suchi Saxena, National Coalition on School Diversity, *Re-Weaving the Social Fabric through Integrated Schools: How Intergroup Contact Prepares Youth to Thrive in a Multiracial Society* (2018), [https://www.school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/NCSD\\_Brief13.pdf](https://www.school-diversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/NCSD_Brief13.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Mickelson, *supra* note 4.

<sup>9</sup> Tropp & Saxena, *supra* note 7.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *K–12 Education: Student Population Has Significantly Diversified, but Many Schools Remain Divided Along Racial, Ethnic, and Economic Lines* (2022), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-104737#>.

[state and school district grantees](#), awarding planning and implementation grants. These grantees are just starting their work and four of these grants are five-year implementation grants, which will require additional funding to continue their work. The demand for these grants was significant, as evidenced by the Department receiving at least double the number of applications than were funded. Given tight state budgets, these and other state and local education agencies need dedicated federal funds to support their school integration efforts.

- 3. Invest at least \$220 million in the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). Magnet schools are one of our country's longest-standing voluntary integration strategies, attracting students of different races, neighborhoods, and socioeconomic and family backgrounds to the same school. For decades, MSAP funding has not kept pace with inflation, even while segregation has increased significantly in our public schools.**

We are committed to working with you to ensure that this funding is included in the final FY25 appropriations legislation, and we appreciate your earnest consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

National Coalition on School Diversity  
American Federation of Teachers  
All4Ed  
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages  
American Psychological Association Services  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Brown's Promise  
Capitol Region Education Council  
Center for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University  
Center for Racial Equity in Education  
Committee for Children  
Communities in Schools  
Conway Collaborations  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
District 15 Parents for Middle School Equity  
Diverse Charter Schools Coalition  
Dudley Flood Center for Educational Equity & Opportunity  
The Education Trust  
Education Law Center  
ERASE Racism  
Fair Housing Justice Center  
Family Voices NJ  
IntegrateNYC  
Integrated Schools  
Intercultural Development Research Association  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Magnet Schools of America  
Metis Associates

Monroe One Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector  
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment  
National LGBTQ Task Force  
New York Appleseed  
North Carolina Justice Center  
PDK International/Educators Rising  
Poverty and Race Research Action Council  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
School Diversity Notebook  
Southern Education Foundation  
School Social Work Association of America  
Teens Take Charge  
The Century Foundation's Bridges Collaborative  
UCLA Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles  
UnidosUS  
Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation

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