

January 11, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Labor-H Approps. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Labor-H Approps. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Labor-H Approps. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Labor-H Approps. Subcom.
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Retaining the Fostering Diverse Schools Program in the FY 2022 Budget

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the undersigned civil rights and education organizations, we urge you to include the Fostering Diverse Schools Program in the FY 22 budget. Over 50 civil rights and education coalitions, organizations, and individuals, including many of the signatories below, previously provided you with our [FY 22 budget recommendations](#), and were delighted to see that the Fostering Diverse Schools Program was included in the House Labor-H Appropriations bill that the House of Representatives passed earlier this year. The program provides \$100 million for a voluntary grant program that states and school districts can apply for to help reduce racial and socioeconomic isolation in their schools. It is modeled after the Strength in Diversity Act, which passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan basis in the 116th Congress.

Your support for school diversity is critically important right now. Our country is grappling with the legacy of racism in virtually all aspects of our society at the same time that we are emerging from a pandemic that has upended all of our lives. We need Congress to demonstrate concrete support for efforts to build cross-racial understanding and facilitate a more equitable distribution of resources. Funding the Fostering Diverse Schools initiative would provide locally-led movements critical resources to do this challenging work well.

At the onset, it is important to acknowledge a simple truth that should consistently drive the discourse on this issue: all **students benefit from attending integrated schools, both academically and socially**. [A synthesis of four decades of research highlights these benefits](#), including higher achievement in math, science, language and reading; higher educational attainment; more advanced social and historical thinking; and increased civic participation. Moreover, [the benefits of diversity continue to adulthood](#), leading to higher levels of social cohesion and civic engagement; reduced racial prejudice; and less segregation in neighborhoods, colleges, and workplaces. [Social science also demonstrates the democratic](#)

[value of meaningful, sustained cross-racial contact among youth](#). In short, these benefits to individual students also benefit our society in important ways, particularly as we grapple with issues of race.

As we strive to live up to the ideal of being “one nation, indivisible” we should all heed Justice Thurgood Marshall’s words: “Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever begin to live together.” The Fostering Diverse Schools program is an important step in that direction. We urge its inclusion in the FY 22 budget.

Sincerely,

All4Ed

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Atheists

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Teachers

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Capitol Region Education Council

Center for American Progress

Center for Educational Equity; Teachers College; Columbia University

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights

Children’s Defense Fund

Committee for Children

Communities in Schools

Council of Administrators of Special Education

D15 Parents for Middle School Equity

Education Law Center

EduColor

ERASE Racism

Girls Inc.

IntegrateNYC
Integrated Schools
Intercultural Development Research Association
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Magnet Schools of America
METCO, Inc.
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector
National Center for Youth Law
National Coalition on School Diversity
National Education Association
National Indian Education Association
National Urban League
New York Appleseed
North Carolina Justice Center
PDK International
Poverty and Race Research Action Council
Public Advocacy for Kids
School Diversity Notebook
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Southern Education Foundation
South Side Early Learning
Teach Plus

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc of the United States

The Civil Rights Project at UCLA

The Education Trust

TNTP

TransFamily Support Services

UnidosUS

UnifiED

Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corp

Submitted with the support of the following individuals (organization names listed for identification purposes only):

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Amy Stuart Wells

Reimagining Education Summer Institute Teachers College, Columbia University

Cc:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Vice Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee