

For Immediate Release

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### Civil Rights Policy Group Praises New School Diversity Guidance

Washington, D.C., The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) released highly anticipated policy recommendations on promoting diversity and reducing racial isolation in K-12 schools and higher education. The Obama Administration's announcement recognizes the harms of resegregation and the benefits of diversity, communities across the nation have voluntarily employed a variety of methods to promote equal educational opportunities for all students.

In August 2008, during the Bush Administration the USDOE issued a misleading "Guidance" to local districts suggesting that effective school integration plans were no longer permissible, and advising districts to adopt "race-neutral" policies.

Today's guidance accurately explains the Supreme Court's holdings in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District no. 1* (2007), and clearly states that educational diversity and avoiding racial isolation are not only compelling governmental interests but also among our country's highest priorities. Communities can and should pursue these priorities using a variety of strategies including carefully-designed, race-conscious efforts.

PRRAC is a long-time advocate school integration and supports the values of a diverse community. "We welcome the new federal guidance and look forward to the positive impact that it will have on diversity within U.S. schools," said Philip Tegeler, Executive Director of Poverty and Race Research Action Council, "There are a large number of districts that are trying to do the right thing and there has been confusion about how far they can go – this will be a huge help."

The Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) is a civil rights policy organization convened by major civil rights, civil liberties, and anti-poverty groups in 1989-90. PRRAC's primary mission is to help connect advocates with social scientists working on race and poverty issues, and to promote a research-based advocacy strategy on structural inequality issues. PRRAC is a founding member of the National Coalition on School Diversity ([www.school-diversity.org](http://www.school-diversity.org)) and helps to staff the coalition.

The guidance documents are available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201111.html>

To view PRRAC's recent report about housing and educational policy, please visit: <http://prrac.org/pdf/HousingEducationReport-October2011.pdf>