

December 16, 2021

Secretary Miguel Cardona
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Re: Additional Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2023 Department of Education Budget

Dear Secretary Cardona:

On behalf of the undersigned scholars and housing and education organizations, we are writing to provide recommendations for the Department of Education FY 2023 budget, in addition to the important recommendations recently submitted by the National Coalition on School Diversity (letter dated December 15). Our recommendations are focused on extending the important work to connect HUD and Department of Education policies supporting housing and school integration. Meaningful progress started on this coordination work during the Obama Administration, and we believe that the Administration can extend this work in 2023 by providing targeted funding for key data and planning efforts, as set out below.

Funding designed to provide improved information on school boundary decisions. The Administration should propose funding for a full update and continuing data collection for the School Attendance Boundary Survey (last collected in 2015-16), to give real time data for Department of Education policy and research staff and the Office for Civil Rights on school assignment zone changes that have a segregative impact. The data collection should also: 1) cover changes in school district boundaries, including school district secessions; and 2) include flags in datasets produced to indicate where a boundary (district or attendance zone) has been changed since the last collection to allow for analysis of the effect of any changes. This data will be valuable not just for civil rights monitoring and enforcement, but also for state and local housing agencies in the fair housing planning process (AFFH).

Funding for a new “Sustainable Communities Initiative 2.0” that supports coordinated regional planning among local governments, school districts, public housing authorities, transportation agencies, and metropolitan planning organizations in selected metropolitan areas. We saw the tremendous potential of the Sustainable Communities approach to regional equity planning in 2009-2012, but that initiative suffered from the absence of regional school agencies and school district partners.

AFFH-related funding to enable the Department of Education to fully support implementation of the HUD Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, including education data tools for HUD grantees and support and guidance for SEAs and LEAs to participate meaningfully in the AFFH process.

Funding to launch an interagency ED/HUD gentrification task force to explore research and policy interventions to address the relationship between neighborhood gentrification and local schools and to promote positive neighborhood and learning environments for all children.

As noted above, we also enthusiastically support the FY 2023 recommendations submitted by the National Coalition on School Diversity, which our recommendations would effectively complement. We look forward to working with you on these recommendations that are vital to our children's and our nation's collective success.

Sincerely,

Philip Tegeler
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Washington, DC

Deborah McKoy
Center for Cities and Schools
University of California-Berkeley
Berkeley, CA

Myron Orfield
Will Stancil
Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN

Elaine Gross
ERASE Racism
Syosset, NY

Ariel H. Bierbaum
University of Maryland
College Park, MD
(University listed for identification purposes only)

John C. Brittain
University of the District of Columbia
Washington, DC
(University listed for identification purposes only)

Elizabeth H. DeBray
University of Georgia
Athens, GA
(University listed for identification purposes only)

Kara Finnigan
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY
(University listed for identification purposes only)

Erica Frankenberg
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA
(University listed for identification purposes only)

Richard D. Kahlenberg
Stefan Lallinger
The Century Foundation
Washington, DC
(Organization listed for identification purposes only)

Tomas Monarrez
The Urban Institute
Washington, DC
(Organization listed for identification purposes only)

Kfir Mordechay
Pepperdine University
(University listed for identification purposes only)

Genevieve Siegel-Hawley
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA
(University listed for identification purposes only)

cc: Jessica Cardichon, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Suzanne Goldberg, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Monique Dixon, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Maureen Tracey-Mooney, Domestic Policy Council
Sherry Lachman, OMB
Mary Cassell, OMB