



A Response to NAACP announcement on Charter Schools

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Response from Todd Mann, Executive Director, Magnet Schools of America

“This week’s NAACP resolution calling for a moratorium on charter school expansion and for the strengthening of oversight in their governance and practice is very appropriate. We appreciate that the NAACP has raised this concern and has expressed the need to work harder to create equity in the classroom. We agree that charter schools should be subject to the same transparency and accountability standards as public schools. Magnet schools meet these objectives and consequently should be at the forefront of discussions on school reform and improvement.

We see that magnet schools are not often cited as a solution to expanding high-quality educational opportunities for all, when that’s exactly what they are doing. The majority of magnet schools are reaching this goal, and doing so as part of the public school system. Simply put, magnet schools place diversity at the top of their mission. They also tap into the creativity of each child by offering theme-based schools in STEM, language, arts, and more, an important factor in inspiring life-long learning. “

Background

Reported and debated in newspaper editorials this week was the announcement from the NAACP that its board of directors voted to confirm a resolution that recommends an end to the expansion of charter schools across the country, which currently educate about 6 percent of the nation’s public school students. The board’s issue: charter schools are perpetuating de facto segregation of students, diverting public education funds to for-profit entities, and are operating without proper oversight. The NAACP board called for current charter schools to have “the same accountability as public schools and develop a funding stream that does not hurt other schools.”

Also released this week is a [report](#) from The Century Foundation (TCF) lauding magnet schools in several districts for reaching their goal of creating diverse environments for public school children.

The National Education Association also released a statement of support for magnet schools this week. From NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia: “We strongly support more inclusive and otherwise positive alternatives to charter schools. We should invest in proven strategies—strategies such as smaller class sizes, parental involvement, magnet and community schools—that we know help to improve the success of all of our students.”

About Magnet Schools

There are approximately 3,800 magnet schools serving 2.6 million children. They are operated by public school districts with specialized themes that break down traditional school attendance boundaries by allowing families to choose schools that appeal most to their children's academic talents and interests. They are developed to promote school integration because research shows that students from different backgrounds and zip codes learn better and are more prepared for the real world. One of the five pillars of magnet schools is diversity, which magnet school leaders believe is a cornerstone to preparing students for our increasingly diverse society.

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