



The National Association for Magnet and Theme-based Schools

PRESS RELEASE

President Obama’s FY 2015 budget fails to address increasing racial and socio-economic segregation by neglecting to restore damaging sequestration cuts for a third-year in a row.

Washington, DC, March 10, 2014 – Magnet Schools of America, which represents approximately 3,800 magnet schools nationwide and serves 2.6 million students is deeply concerned that President Obama’s FY 2015 budget fails to restore \$5.1 million that was cut from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) due to sequestration. If enacted, this budget would result in a third consecutive year of sequestration related cuts to this successful program that aims to increase student achievement through diverse theme-based schools. The president’s budget proposal also neglects to restore an additional \$2.9 million that was reprogrammed from MSAP in FY 2012. The Magnet Schools Assistance Program is an invaluable resource for school districts that are seeking to improve the educational outcomes of students in low-performing, racially and socioeconomically segregated schools. It is the only federal program designed specifically to achieve the goals of school diversity and integration.

“While we understand there are many difficult budget choices that need to be made, we believe that support for MSAP should be a top priority, given the successful and critical nature of this program” said Executive Director, Scott Thomas. “It is extremely disappointing to the magnet school community that both the president and Congress have chosen to provide relief from sequestration to only a select group of programs. It is even more disheartening that additional resources are also being used to support programs that have never been authorized and do not have a record of success.” By failing to restore these cuts the president is communicating to Congress that these reductions are acceptable and should be the new baseline for future MSAP appropriations. This was evident in the FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

Over the last four years, MSAP has been gradually reduced by approximately \$8.4 million and \$20 million since 2002. These cuts have real consequences for school districts and are occurring at a time when we should be reinvesting in our nation’s magnet programs not allocating resources to programs that promote school segregation and privatization. During the most recent grant competition many highly qualified applicants in need of resources to desegregate schools were prevented from participating in MSAP due to funding restrictions. This forced the U.S. Department of Education to reduce the number of MSAP awards to only 27 school districts. This is eleven fewer grantees than in the previous grant cycle. In addition, due to a new expensive S.T.E.M. requirement in the grant, fewer magnet schools are being started compared to previous years. Only a decade ago 50 school districts were able to receive support. At a minimum, MSAP funding should be returned to the FY 2010 level of \$100 million.

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MISSION STATEMENT

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