

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you begin to draft the FY 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we would like to express our support for the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). This program was reauthorized in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and provides grants to local school districts to create specialized theme-based magnet programs. It is the only federal education grant designed specifically to promote innovation, educational equity, and diversity in the classroom.

There are approximately 4,340 magnet schools in the United States serving nearly 3.5 million students, making them the largest form of public school choice. These enrollment numbers will continue to rise as more school districts embrace the magnet school model as an effective way to turn around low-performing schools. In fact, a large majority of magnet schools have waitlists full of parents eager to get their students into these high-performing schools.

Magnet schools are open to all students and are used to break down traditional school attendance boundaries by allowing families to choose programs that appeal most to their children's academic talents and interests. Magnet schools are administered by school districts and utilize a variety of academic themes, including: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and (STEAM) integrating the arts, Language Immersion, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Visual and Performing Arts. Others use specialized pedagogical approaches like those found in Montessori schools or International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.

Magnet schools are designed to cater to different learning styles and attract a wide range of students from different racial backgrounds and zip codes. There is not only strong evidence demonstrating that students who attend magnet schools have higher levels of academic achievement and graduation rates than those in non-magnet schools, these students are also more likely to develop critical thinking skills, an ability to adopt multiple perspectives, a diminished likelihood to accept stereotypes, and are more inclined to develop cross-racial friendships.

Every student deserves access to an excellent education that will help them be college and career ready, and reach their full potential. When we have adequately supported magnet schools, parents and families will truly have the best possible options available to send their child to a school that focuses on their strengths, engages them, and motivates them to learn. We therefore

urge the subcommittee to provide the authorized funding amount for the Magnet Schools Assistance Program under ESSA in the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



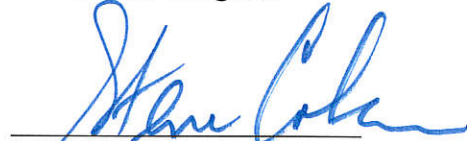
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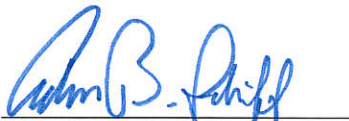
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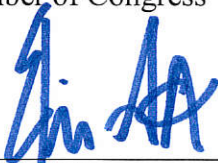
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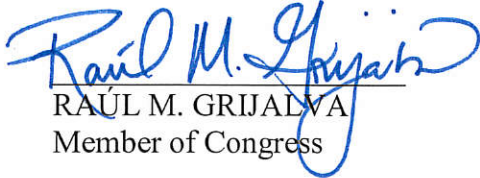
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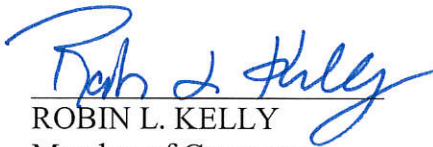
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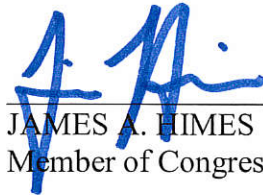
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