



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY

September 24, 2025

Serita D. Beamon
Superintendent of Schools
Seminole County Public Schools
400 E. Lake Mary Boulevard
Sanford, FL
532723

Dear Superintendent Beamon:

This letter is to notify you that the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has identified a civil rights compliance issue with Seminole County Public Schools (the District). OCR is deeply concerned that the District may be discriminating based on race in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 100. Specifically, through its partnership with the Latinos in Action organization and its hosting of Latinos in Action courses or programming at several district high schools, including South Seminole Academy, the sole project school of Seminole County's current grant under the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), the District appears to be violating Title VI and its implementing regulation.

By statute, MSAP provides discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) or consortia of LEAs to operate magnet schools that promote desegregation in order to "increase interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds."¹ Prior to grant disbursement, OCR's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights must sign an assurance that the applicant will "not engage in discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability."²

¹ 20 U.S.C. § 7231d(b)(1)(A).

² 20 U.S.C. § 7231d(b)(2)(C), stating that an applicant "will not engage in discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in--

(i) the hiring, promotion, or assignment of employees of the applicant or other personnel for whom the applicant

has any administrative responsibility;

(ii) the assignment of students to schools, or to courses of instruction within the schools, of such applicant, except

to carry out the approved plan; and

(iii) designing or operating extracurricular activities for students[.]”

The Latinos in Action program appears to exclude students based on race, to engage in unlawful racial balancing, and to segregate students based on race.

The Latinos In Action Program Excludes Students Based on Race.

First, Latinos in Action appears to be explicitly organized around the concept of Latino ethnicity. As the organization’s recently updated [website](#) states, “Latinos In Action (LIA) offers an asset-based approach to bridging the graduation and opportunity gap for Latino students,” and “[o]ur program operates as a year-long elective course taught by a highly qualified teacher at the middle school, junior high, and high school level with the goal of empowering Latino youth to lead and strengthen their communities through college and career readiness.” The organization’s [webpage](#) about LIA alumni states that the “LIA Alumni initiative is designed to foster a dynamic, vibrant community of LIA graduates who are eager to give back and support the new generation of Latino leaders.” The “About LIA” [webpage](#) states that “[t]he end goal of everything we do is to empower Latino youth to lead and strengthen their communities through college and career readiness.”

In *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (SFFA)*, the Supreme Court held that, under the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause and Title VI, every university applicant “must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual—not on the basis of race.”³ In reaching its decision, the Court emphasized that “universities have for too long done just the opposite,” that universities in doing so “have concluded, wrongly, that the touchstone of an individual’s identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned, but the color of their skin,” and that “[o]ur constitutional history does not tolerate that choice.”⁴ Thus, the Court confirmed what common experience teaches: “Racial discrimination is invidious in all contexts.”⁵

At bottom, *SFFA* confirms what Title VI prohibits: “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The Latinos In Action program, however, is designed for and exclusive to Latino students. It is not, for instance, available to black, white, or Asian American students. This is textbook racial discrimination, and no justification proffered by the District can overcome the patent

³ 600 U.S. 181, 231 (2023).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* at 214 (cleaned up).

illegality of its unlawful exclusionary program.⁶ As Justice Clarence Thomas explained, “racial discrimination based on benign prejudice is just as noxious as discrimination inspired by malicious prejudice. In each instance, it is racial discrimination, plain and simple.”⁷

The Latinos In Action Program Engages in Unlawful Racial Balancing.

Second, in response to the question “Is this class only for Latino students,” posted on the organization’s [FAQ page](#) about the elective Latinos In Action course implemented by partnership schools, the organization states, “80% of the class must be Latino. 20% of students may be from any other racial/ethnic background.” This is prohibited racial balancing. Even before the Supreme Court’s watershed *SFFA* decision, the High Court has repeatedly made clear that “outright racial balancing is patently unconstitutional.”⁸

The Latinos In Action Program Segregates Students Based on Race.

Third, the same FAQ webpage confirms that the program segregates students based on race/ethnicity by creating a “safe harbor” for Latinos In Action participants before “infusing them back into the school setting” so that the “students begin to feel more comfortable participating in arenas which typically experience lower Latino representation.” As the Supreme Court held in another landmark decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, segregation is illegal.⁹ By segregating students, the District is engaging in precisely the kind of discrimination that Title VI was enacted to remedy and prevent. Indeed, the inexorable command of *SFFA* applies here: “Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it.”¹⁰ Put differently, “[t]he way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.”¹¹

As a result of these findings, unless the District comes into compliance with Title VI, I will not certify its grant under 20 U.S.C. § 7231d(c).

⁶ See *SFFA*, 600 U.S. at 206 (“Eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it

⁷ *Adarand Constrs., Inc. v. Peña*, 515 U.S. 200, 241 (1995) (Thomas, J., concurring).

⁸ *SFFA*, 600 U.S. at 223 (quoting *Fisher v. University of Tex. at Austin*, 570 U.S. 297, 311 (2013)) (cleaned up).

⁹ *Id.* at 204 (citing *Brown v. Bd. of Ed. of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, 494 (1954))

¹⁰ 600 U.S. at 206.

¹¹ *Parents Involved in Cmty. Sch. v. Seattle Sch. Dist. No. 1*, 551 U.S. 701, 748 (2007).

The District Must Come into Compliance with Title VI.

To resolve these concerns, OCR requires that Seminole County Public Schools comply with Title VI and take the following steps:

1. Terminate its partnership with Latinos In Action and end all Latinos In Action programming at district schools by the start of the spring 2026 semester.
2. Issue a public statement to parents, students, and staff notifying them that the district is ending its partnership with Latinos In Action and all associated programming and that any programs, resources, or educational benefits that are provided to students will be done so based on race-neutral criteria and in a manner that does not violate Title VI.
3. Rescind any guidance which violates Title VI, remove or revise any internal and public-facing statements or documents that are inconsistent with Title VI, and notify all parents, students, and staff of such rescissions and revisions.

Please notify OCR within five (5) days of receipt of this letter whether Seminole County Public Schools will agree to take the remedial steps outlined here to ensure it is in compliance with Title VI.

Sincerely,



Craig W. Trainor
Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

CC: Julie Ciocca, Director