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SCHOOL RESEGREGATION CRISIS LOOMS IF U.S. SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN VOLUNTARY INTEGRATION PLANS

PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK JOINS COALITION OF EDUCATION ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS IN SUBMITTING LEGAL BRIEF

October 10, 2006 (Washington, DC) – The Public Education Network (PEN) has joined The Council of the Great City Schools, the Magnet Schools of America, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors in submitting an *amicus curiae* or “friend of the court” brief to the United States Supreme Court. The brief provides details on how the outcome of the case will affect school districts and communities other than the parties to the case.

In December 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear challenges to voluntary integration plans of school districts in Seattle, Washington and Jefferson County, Kentucky. “The legal outcome of these cases will have far reaching implications for ongoing school desegregation efforts and the future of the nation's public schools,” said Wendy Puriefoy, PEN’s President. “But the endless legal battle against school districts and school assignment policies that take race into consideration is interrupting slow but steady educational opportunity for children who have historically been discriminated against in public schools,” added Puriefoy.

Research has consistently demonstrated the comprehensive benefits of diverse educational settings for children of all races. The brief contains rigorous and detailed scientific research on the perilous effects of racial segregation on student achievement and school funding.

“A rejection by the Supreme Court of voluntary school integration plans would have serious implications for the American moral compact that promises protection of certain inalienable rights, regardless of race,” added Puriefoy. “Supporters of integrated public schools are eager for a legal breakthrough.”

At a time when the *No Child Left Behind* law is focusing public attention on the unacceptable and intolerable racial, cultural and economic gaps in student academic achievement, tying the hands of school districts striving to address racial integration in public schools is counterproductive to educational improvement and other efforts to create a more just and equitable society.

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to build public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes that public education is the cornerstone of our democratic way of life. PEN seeks to strengthen public education, and opposes policies and practices that detract from high academic achievement for all children. PEN and its 78 members work in 33 states and the District of Columbia, in nearly 1600 school districts serving more than 11 million children, approximately 22% of the public school population. For more information about PEN, visit: <http://www.PublicEducation.org>

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