

**The National Coalition on
School Diversity**

AMERICAN ATTITUDES ON DIVERSITY, INTEGRATION, AND DEMOCRACY

APRIL 2026

Recent Polling Results

Several recent national surveys have surfaced concerns about the state of American democracy and demonstrate continued support for school diversity, despite open hostility to “diversity, equity, or inclusion” efforts. This fact sheet summarizes findings from four polls, and offers key takeaways and sample messages on how they can inform discussions about school integration.

THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS (polling conducted by brilliant corners Research & Strategies)

The Leadership Conference's 2025 Civil Rights Monitor poll describes a nation experiencing "profound discontent," with 69% of likely voters believing our democracy is under major threat and 72% concerned about their fundamental rights being taken away. However, even amid this anxiety and concern over worsening race relations, **88% remain unified in the belief that our nation's diversity makes us stronger.**

- 60% of likely voters believe race relations are getting worse, while 56% are worried about the rise of white supremacy.
- 68% agree the government must do more to lessen racial inequality.
- 73% believe the government must do more to protect the civil rights of minority groups.

Details about polling:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, brilliant corners Research & Strategies conducted a survey of 1,003 likely voters, including an additional oversample of 100 Asian likely voters, from October to November 2025.

*On behalf of **Brown's Promise**, YouGov conducted a survey reaching a nationally representative sample of 1,000 voters in September 2025.*

*On behalf of **Magnet Schools of America**, Voss Research conducted an online survey of 1,000 adults nationwide from September 3-10, 2025, with additional samples of 100 Black, 100 Latino, 100 Asian American Pacific Islander, and 100 Indigenous adults.*

*On behalf of **NxtLevel**, Bellwether Research conducted a nationally representative online survey of 3,012 registered voters from June 16-21, 2025, with an additional sample of 200 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters. The research also included 10 focus groups and online qualitative discussions.*

Learn more about our work at diverseschools.org

BROWN'S PROMISE (polling conducted by YouGov)

Support for school integration holds steady despite political headwinds.

- Americans continue to support leaders working to increase school diversity (55% “agree” or “strongly agree”) and reduce segregation (68%). At the national level, these results are statistically unchanged from 2023 baseline polling.
 - These findings resonate across demographic lines, demonstrating the durability of public support even amid intense national debates about diversity initiatives.

Independents are becoming more supportive of integration.

- Between May 2023 and September 2025, support among political independents for reducing racial and economic segregation increased 13 percentage points, from 53% to 66%.
 - Opposition among independents dropped by half, from 20% to 10%.
 - This suggests that independent voters may be recoiling against extreme anti-diversity rhetoric.

Warning signs among young and Black voters.

- Young (ages 18-29) voters and Black voters maintained their positions as the strongest supporters of school integration, but showed a slight dip in enthusiasm compared to 2023.
- Importantly, while Black voters' support for “increas[ing] racial and economic diversity” is down, “reducing racial and economic segregation” remains statistically unchanged (88% in 2023 vs. 85% in 2025), suggesting the shift may reflect changing attitudes toward specific terminology rather than the underlying goal.

Integration strengthens democracy.

- 74% of voters agree that we could heal our country's divisions and strengthen democracy if future leaders learned as students to work with people from different backgrounds.
 - Support among independents for this statement rose 9 points (to 78%) since 2023, while disagreement dropped 7 points (to just 6%).

MAGNET SCHOOLS OF AMERICA (polling by Voss Research and Strategy)

Americans value academic options and public access.

- 57% of adults polled say it's “extremely” or “very important” that magnets are publicly funded and open to the public.
- 53% value that magnets offer another public school option beyond their neighborhood school.

When asked to choose between two specific approaches to expanding educational options, a majority of Americans expressed a preference for the public school system over private alternatives.

- 52% prefer expanding the number of public magnet schools; while 31% prefer giving parents vouchers for private or religious schools.
 - The preference for the public magnet approach is especially strong among Asian American adults (68%), Gen Z (62%), Latino adults (61%), college-educated adults (61%), and Black adults (59%).

Diversity as a benefit to students' learning environment resonates with key groups.

- 49% of all adults say it's “extremely” or “very important” that magnets provide students a more racially and economically diverse learning environment by drawing students from different neighborhoods.
 - This dimension is particularly valued by Black adults (75%), Democrats (70%), and college-educated voters (55%).

DEFINING MAGNET SCHOOLS



In this poll, favorability was assessed using the following definition of magnet schools:

“Magnet schools provide parents and their children the option of choosing a specialized program within the public school system while promoting diversity and innovation. Each magnet school focuses on a specific theme such as STEM or performing arts. They are open to the public but enroll students either through a lottery or application process. By drawing students from different neighborhoods, they provide a more racially and economically diverse learning environment.”

NXTLEVEL (polling conducted by Hart Research and Bellwether Research & Consulting)

This research provides a guide for navigating political attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion by identifying messaging that resonates with audiences that distinguish between the broad value of diversity and specific concerns over standards in competitive processes such as hiring and college admissions.

Americans support the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- The vast majority of Americans continue to support the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, though they have strong preferences about how these concepts should be discussed.
- The phrase "equal opportunity" is voters' top choice to describe organizational goals, testing better than "diversity, equity, and inclusion" among most groups.

Expand understanding beyond race.

- Many voters have a limited view of diversity, equity, and inclusion—seeing it almost exclusively through the prism of race.
- Expanding people's understanding to include the broad range of people who benefit—including people with disabilities, veterans, and those from low-income backgrounds—is critical to building sustained support.*

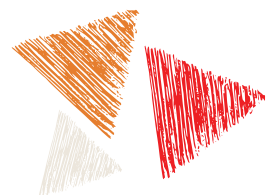
History matters, but frame it carefully.

- Messages acknowledging our country's history while also noting progress resonate broadly.
- "History is history—the good, the bad, and ugly—and our children need to learn the truth so they don't risk making the same mistakes" performs well across demographic groups.
- Avoid overly polarized messages or rhetorical overreach, which can alienate swing voters.

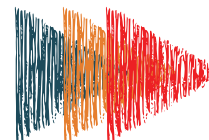
Effective education sector messaging:

- For defending diversity programs in education, emphasize that diversity initiatives help ensure programs are tailored to the specific needs of all populations.
- Messages about protecting academic freedom and scientific research from government interference resonate across party lines.

**This comports with recent polling by Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), which found that while nearly 40% of AAPI respondents view DEI as a tool for fair access and reducing prejudice, over 1/5 people express concern that such policies might lead to discrimination against their community. To bridge these views, AAJC guidance suggests that messaging is most effective when it pairs "diversity" with access to educational resources, uses the term "fairness" alongside "equity," and frames race as one of several intersecting facets of identity rather than a standalone factor.*



Key Takeaways and Sample Messages



The overall picture here is one of **resilience**: core support for diversity and integration **remains strong** and **may even be strengthening** among persuadable voters. Integration advocates should **communicate with confidence** while being **strategic about language and framing**.

We offer three important lessons for communicating about school integration in today's political environment, and a supporting message:

Support remains strong—emphasize resilience and improvement.

- Support for school integration has proven resilient despite political attacks on diversity initiatives. Americans across demographic and political differences continue to back policies that create more diverse schools. Polling shows that voters respond well to acknowledging that integration efforts haven't been perfect, while firmly rejecting the idea of abandoning them entirely.
- **Message:** *"Even in a challenging political climate, Americans continue to support the creation of more racially and economically diverse schools. School integration programs aren't perfect, but the solution isn't to get rid of them, it's to improve them so they actually live up to their promise of giving every child access to a great education and preparing them for success in our diverse society."*

Meet people where they are on language.

- While support for integration remains high, terminology matters. For many voters, "equal opportunity" and "fairness" resonate more broadly than "diversity, equity, and inclusion."
- **Message:** *"School integration is about equal opportunity—ensuring that every student has access to excellent schools with strong academics, experienced teachers, and the resources they need to succeed."*

Connect integration to democracy and real-world preparation.

- Americans strongly agree that racially and economically diverse schools prepare students to navigate an increasingly diverse world and strengthen democratic values.
- **Message:** *"Learning alongside peers from different backgrounds helps students develop the essential skills to work effectively with others, think critically about various perspectives, and participate in our democracy. Integrated schools improve academic outcomes while simultaneously preparing students to be engaged citizens and successful professionals."*