



December 13, 2022

Josue Estrada, Chief Operating Officer
 Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
 314 Lytton Ave
 Palo Alto, CA 94301

Sent via Electronic Mail [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Estrada,

On behalf of our members, the undersigned organizations write to request that the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative cease its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) funding of America's public schools, as we believe that the initiatives that are being promoted in districts are negatively impacting student performance. While these donations may be well-intentioned, the impact of this programming on student achievement and well-being is creating unintended consequences that will negatively impact not only individual students but the educational system as a whole – and accordingly, we ask that these efforts be ended.

According to your website, The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, LLC, is “committed to doing our part to dismantle system racism and inequality and to champion equitable opportunities — both in our external work and internally at CZI.” Your organization touts internal “affinity groups,” such as Building Leadership and Knowledge (B.L.K.) for Black employees and Unidos for “Latinx” employees. The creating of “affinity groups,” or separating employees by race, constitutes racial discrimination. This is not only immoral, but illegal under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination “on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”

Further, for your edification, the use of the term “Latinx” is out-of-touch with the vast majority of America’s Latino community. Only 4% of Hispanic Americans surveyed preferred “Latinx” as the label of choice to

describe their ethnic group, according to a 2021 Gallup poll. In January 2022, Axios reported that “Rep. Ruben Gallego (D., Ariz.), head of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus’ campaign arm, announced last month his congressional staff is not allowed to use ‘Latinx’ in official communications, tweeting ‘When Latino politicians use the term it is largely to appease white rich progressives who think that is the term we use. It is a vicious circle of confirmation bias.’”

Of particular concern to Parents Defending Education is your effort to peddle this divisive ideology in America’s public schools. Included in your initiative’s efforts to “center racial equity” is training teachers to “develop anti-racist educational environments” and “[ensure] equitable access to and participation in academically rigorous courses” in our public education system.

Parents Defending Education believes that all students, regardless of race, should have equal access to “academically rigorous” educational opportunities. Unfortunately, the movement to provide “equitable access to and participation in” honors or advanced coursework has in recent years led to eliminating these opportunities — which harms all students. Barrington Public Schools in Rhode Island stripped students of the opportunity to take honors classes in the name of equity. Students at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego protested after their principal decided to cancel honors courses, citing “equity reasons,” a local news outlet reported. In March 2021, a group called Integrate NYC sued the state of New York and the New York City Department of Education, claiming that the city’s advanced academic track for gifted students should be eliminated because it allowed systemic racism to persist.

While your organization focuses on promoting divisive race ideology in schools, academic performance nationwide has plummeted. Eighth grade math scores fell by 8 points, and fourth grade math scores fell by 5 points on the 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. To put this in perspective, student performance in math is on par with that of the early 2000s. In reading, both fourth and eighth grade scores fell to levels not seen since 1992.

Our members are America’s parents, grandparents, and concerned citizens — and we do not want standards or expectations lowered in our nation’s public schools in the name of equity. Our organizations find it deeply troubling that grants from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative are being used to advance these patronizing policies — particularly at a time when students are working to remediate the learning loss incurred during Covid-related school closures. Students deserve to be treated as individuals and not members of identity groups.

We know the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative cares about American schools — as do we. Please consider reevaluating your foundation’s grant priorities so that we might work together to address and improve the quality of America’s public education system for all children.

Sincerely,

Parents Defending Education
American Education Advocates
Army of Parents
Awake Illinois
Bellingham Parents CSC
CA Foundation for Educational Rights (CFER)
CACAGNY
CAPA Nova
Colorado Parent Advocacy Network
Concerned Parents of Round Rock ISD
Courage is a Habit

Fight for Schools
For Kids & Country
Good Trouble Parents
Louisiana Save Our Schools
Moms for Liberty
No Left Turn in Education
Olentangy for Educational Integrity
Parents Unite
Parents United RI
Poudre School District Parents for Change
Power2Parent

Purple for Parents
Push Back Idaho
Truth in Education
United Against Racism in Education
West Valley Parents Uniting