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WASHINGTON, DC – The NAACP applauded Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's announcement recently of a renewed effort to vigorously enforce federal civil rights laws while addressing the challenges of failing public schools, and restoring the country's active commitment to the landmark Brown v Board of Education ruling that ended legal segregation. American schools are more segregated now than they have been in over 40 years – today, 39 percent of Black students and 40 percent of Latino students attend highly segregated schools where 90 to 100 percent of the population is non-white.

“A quality education is not a segregated education. It is not educating children in racial or ethnic isolation. In a multicultural world, educating our children of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds in an inclusive environment will make us a more competitive and prosperous nation,” stated NAACP President & CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous.

The NAACP plans to work with the administration and others to help design and implement plans that can redress the re-segregation of our schools consistent with the spirit and intent of the Supreme Court rulings. The NAACP advocates plans that include strategic site selection of new schools; drawing of attendance zones in general recognition of the demographics of neighborhoods; allocation of resources for special programs; targeted recruitment of students and faculty; and tracking of enrollments,

Jealous praised the administration's initiatives to reform school discipline policies that disproportionately criminalize rule violations in schools serving predominantly low-income, Black and Latino students. Recently, a five-year-old girl was handcuffed in Florida by school resource officers for having a temper tantrum; and in New York, a girl was handcuffed and taken to jail for doodling on a desk with a magic marker. According to statistics in one Florida county, African American youth constituted 19% of the student population, but represented 51% of student arrests, and 45% of out of school suspensions in 2005.

“This inappropriate use of jails and the juvenile justice system for minor acts of defiance adds to a ‘school to prison’ pipeline for our children that increases the drop-out rate and ultimately deprives our nation of the full potential of all of its children,” said Jealous.

Jealous commended the Obama administration's commitment to reversing the failure of many of America's schools in low income neighborhoods.

“Secretary Duncan expressed the Administration's commitment to great teachers for every student, equal distribution of resources to meet student's needs and a fair and inclusive education for all. That is the American dream – a dream that all Americans should cherish and be willing to stand with the Obama Administration to fight for,” Jealous said.