



July 9, 2026

Comments on Proposed Revisions to OMB-2026-0034, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance

Submitted by Magnet Schools of America

To Whom It May Concern:

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) proposed revisions to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 C.F.R. § 200).

MSA is the national, bipartisan association representing magnet and theme-based public schools and the school districts that operate them. Our members serve millions of students nationwide through innovative educational programs designed to expand public school choice, increase student engagement, and promote academic excellence.

MSA is particularly concerned about the proposed restrictions on conference attendance, professional development activities, and association memberships. If finalized, these provisions would significantly reduce the ability of federally funded school districts and educators to access high-quality professional learning opportunities that are essential to successful program implementation and student achievement. We further explain these concerns below.

Magnet Schools Assistance Program Flexibility - Magnet schools are fundamentally different from traditional schools in that they are schools of choice built around specialized themes, innovative instructional models, and unique educational approaches. Successfully operating a magnet school requires ongoing professional development, collaboration with peers, and access to specialized expertise. Federal programs, including the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), have long recognized the importance of these activities by allowing grantees the flexibility to participate in conferences, technical assistance opportunities, and professional networks that directly support program goals.

Conference & Professional Development Participation - The proposed requirement that conference participation be expressly approved by a federal agency and included in grant terms and conditions would create unnecessary administrative barriers that limit local flexibility and responsiveness. School districts often identify emerging professional development needs after grants have been awarded. Under the proposed rule, educators could lose access to timely learning opportunities that help them strengthen curriculum design, improve student recruitment and retention strategies, and share evidence-based practices with peers from across the country.



Specialized Training & Technical Assistance Opportunities - Professional conferences and convenings are not ancillary activities; they are often the primary mechanism through which educators receive specialized training, technical assistance, and implementation support. For magnet schools, these opportunities help educators develop and sustain innovative programs, such as career and technical education, STEM, and the arts, that attract families and provide students with distinctive educational choices. Restricting access to these opportunities would weaken the capacity of schools to effectively implement federally funded initiatives and achieve intended outcomes.

Membership & Professional Community Participation - MSA is similarly concerned about the proposed requirement that memberships be individually justified as necessary to fulfill award requirements and approved in advance by federal agencies. This would create additional burdens for grantees while limiting access to professional communities that support continuous improvement. Furthermore, restricting memberships based on broad definitions of issue advocacy risks discouraging participation in organizations that provide valuable educational resources while also engaging in appropriate public policy discussions on behalf of students and schools.

School Choice Implications - These proposed changes would have broader implications for public school choice. Magnet schools are one of the nation's oldest and most successful forms of public school choice, providing families with diverse educational options within the public education system. Sustaining high-quality choice programs requires well-prepared educators, strong leadership, and ongoing professional learning. Reducing access to conferences, technical assistance, and professional associations would undermine the support systems that help magnet schools remain innovative, effective, and responsive to student and local community needs.

Ultimately, the proposed restrictions may produce outcomes contrary to the goals of the Administration and federal education investments. Limiting professional development and collaboration opportunities reduces educators' access to the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to best serve students and successfully implement federally funded programs.

MSA respectfully urges OMB to reconsider the proposed restrictions to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 C.F.R. § 200). We encourage OMB to preserve existing flexibility that allows local educational agencies to make reasonable, program-related investments in professional learning, collaboration, and technical assistance while maintaining appropriate oversight of federal funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments and for your consideration of the needs of magnet schools, educators, and the students and families they serve.

Sincerely,
Magnet Schools of America