

'Gov't cannot force unity'

Bob Kellogg - OneNewsNow - 9/14/2011

A spokesman for the Cato Institute suggests the best thing the federal government can do to attain "meaningful integration" within America's public schools is to simply get out of the way.

Saying that diversity training is an essential part of public education, the National School Boards Association recently released a guide of strategies for schools nationwide. "While our society has become increasingly diverse, too many of our communities are becoming increasingly segregated," says the NSBA in its [report](#) titled *A Guide to Diversity-Related Policy Strategies for School Districts*. "Voluntary migration patterns and economic segregation have replaced legally imposed divisions."

To remedy that, the NSBA report recommends that school boards "work with schools to support their diverse student bodies through curricular and extracurricular offerings and student services that create a culture in which student differences are acknowledged and celebrated."

Neal McCluskey is associate director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the [Cato Institute](#). He acknowledges that dealing with diversity and integration in schools remains a continuing problem. But another government program, he says, is not the answer.

"Any time you see something coming from the National School Boards Association or some public schooling advocacy group, you can almost be certain that it's going to go in the wrong direction," he tells OneNewsNow.

McCluskey says the best solution would be for government to just step aside. "And that's the real key," he emphasizes. "Government cannot force unity -- it can try [but] that just makes things worse. What it can do is get out of the way, and over time free people will begin to come together voluntarily -- and that is real meaningful integration."

He argues that school-choice programs could go a long way in helping with integration because charter and private schools bring together parents and students with common interests.

The "endnotes" section of the NSBA report suggests that school and district leaders consider "other diversity factors such as sexual orientation and gender identity" in their policy framework, "particularly with respect to high school level programs and offerings."

