

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 28, 2007

Contact: Diane Nowak-Waring or April Preston
410-626-0805 or 301-261-1570
mediarelations@mcca.com

LEADING LEGAL ASSOCIATION DENOUNCES SUPREME COURT DECISION IN SCHOOL BOARD CASES

The Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA), a national organization that supports and advocates for diversity in the legal profession, denounced today's Supreme Court decision in the cases of *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education (Kentucky)* and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*.

"The ruling in these cases could set back years of integration progress in our public school system," said Veta Richardson, Executive Director of MCCA. "How does the Supreme Court think our public schools will be racially integrated on a voluntary basis if the school districts are prevented from considering the race of those children enrolled in their schools?"

In essence, the Court's decision in these cases focused on the constitutionality of race-based student assignment in K-12 education. Both the Seattle and Louisville school districts contended that they use racial metrics, although not in the exact same way, to ensure that the racial composition of each school in the district resembles the racial composition of the entire district. Keeping schools more racially balanced, they argued, enhances diversity and the quality of education at each school.

Many diversity leaders, including MCCA, agree with that argument and further contend that the Supreme Court decisions not only restrict school districts' efforts to combat segregation, but also will minimize efforts to teach racial awareness and tolerance, attributes that help prepare students to better participate in a racially-diverse, globally-focused society.

In the case of *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District*, the Court ruled against the school district citing that it is a violation of a student's equal

protection rights, guaranteed under the 14th Amendment, when a school district decides to admit a student to a desegregated high school based on race. Similarly, the Court ruled against the *Jefferson County Board of Education*, saying that school districts do not constitutionally have the right to use percentage-based range plans to assign students to public schools based on race.

“Efforts by school districts to achieve racial balance within schools have proven to foster diversity and open-mindedness in the educational setting. The rulings in these two cases are a step backward and could return us to separate, but unequal educational opportunities for our youth,” said Richardson. “It should be something that concerns us all.”

MCCA was founded to advocate for the expanded hiring, promotion and retention of minority attorneys in corporate legal departments and the law firms that serve them. MCCA’s headquarters are in Washington, D.C., with offices in Atlanta and Chicago.

###