

## **Project Abstract**

Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) proposed Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) grant project seeks to reduce racial and ethnic isolation in the West Potomac pyramid of FCPS by transforming an existing elementary school with Hispanic isolation into a Public Montessori School. FCPS believes that as a result of the diversification and the magnet program, students will have higher academic achievement, attain social-emotional competence through strong peer interactions, teachers will have built greater instructional capacity, and learning environments will offer more meaningful opportunities, and family engagement will increase. MSAP funding will support adding a whole school magnet program transforming Bucknell Elementary School into the Bucknell Magnet Public Montessori School. Through strategic marketing and a randomized lottery system, FCPS intends for the Hispanic makeup of Bucknell ES to be reduced by 16 percentage points with further reduction after the grant period ends. Funding would directly impact 1,384 students in FCPS over the 5 years of implementation by offering students the opportunity to access the Montessori approach to education. There is strong evidence to suggest that students who attend well-implemented Montessori programs have better academic achievement, like school more, have stronger executive functioning skills, and report positive relationships with peers and teachers. Through funding, FCPS will ensure that the Montessori model is implemented with fidelity by offering mixed-aged classrooms with groupings of pre-K and kindergarten, first through third grade, and fourth through sixth grade. This grant application is responding to the Absolute Priority 1 as it does not currently have a funding stream from MSAP.