

By: Blanco

S.R. No. 423

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Blackwell School Alliance secured designation
2 of the Blackwell School in Marfa as a National Historic Site in
3 October 2022; and

4 WHEREAS, Opened in 1909, in an era of de facto segregation of
5 Mexican Americans, the school served local students until 1965, a
6 year after passage of the Civil Rights Act, when Marfa integrated
7 its schools; the faculty was largely White, and children could be
8 punished harshly for speaking Spanish, even though for some, it was
9 not only their native language, but their only language; the school
10 was supplied with hand-me-down books and other equipment from Marfa
11 Elementary, the school for Whites; and

12 WHEREAS, Alumni of Blackwell School learned in 2006 that the
13 school district planned to tear down or sell the nearly century-old
14 one-room adobe schoolhouse; they began organizing to save the
15 structure, forming the Blackwell School Alliance in 2007; joined by
16 other community advocates, they cleaned up the building and
17 fundraised to make repairs; they went on to seek recognition for the
18 school from the Texas Historical Commission, which was granted in
19 2010; nine years later, their efforts led to its inclusion in the
20 National Register of Historic Places; and

21 WHEREAS, The members of the alliance have worked tirelessly
22 to document and preserve the school's history, partnering with
23 universities, state agencies, private foundations, the City of
24 Marfa, and individuals; in addition, they have garnered support

1 from elected officials, and in 2021, a bipartisan group of
2 representatives filed the Blackwell School National Historic Site
3 Act; it easily passed both chambers of Congress, and President Joe
4 Biden signed it into law on October 17, 2022, authorizing the
5 designation of the site as a unit of the National Park Service; and

6 WHEREAS, Today, the Blackwell School is one of the very few
7 National Historic Sites devoted specifically to the commemoration
8 of Latino heritage; the original school building functions as a
9 museum and community center, with a replica classroom featuring
10 rows of old desks; moreover, the Blackwell School Alliance has
11 assembled a wealth of artifacts, from trophies, sports uniforms,
12 photographs, and old letters to the wooden paddle once used to
13 discipline children; the site also includes the 1927 Band Hall; and

14 WHEREAS, Through their hard work and many years of grassroots
15 advocacy, the members of the Blackwell School Alliance have ensured
16 lasting protection of an authentic setting to commemorate and
17 interpret the Mexican American experience, the culture of the
18 borderlands, and the sometimes painful history of progress in our
19 society; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 88th Texas Legislature
21 hereby recognize April 22, 2023, as Blackwell School Day at the
22 State Capitol and commend the Blackwell School Alliance for its
23 outstanding contributions.