

A revolution for achievement in school systems

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



A Revolution for Achievement in School Systems A Revolution for Achievement in School Systems In America today, there is an unknown and disregarded epidemic resurfacing in most urban areas; unequal education opportunities for minority students. When thinking of a normal school experience, math, reading, music class, recess, and fun at lunch time are usually the routine; sometimes a Halloween or holiday party is thrown in as well. As time goes on many students remember school as being fun, and engaging with all sorts of stimulating activities such as field trips or school plays. Unfortunately, the minority students of inner city schools will not remember such happy days; leaky ceilings, unheated and over-packed classrooms, and lack of art, music, and recess will be what float back into their minds. Why is it that only the mainly minority schools are in lack of quality and funding, while the predominately white schools are receiving more money and more beneficial programs? Why the school system has become so unequal is not necessarily known, but attempting to desegregate the schools, equaling out funding, and changing curriculums and programs are essential in getting all school systems back on the same track. Many years ago, before the civil rights movement in the 1960s, schools for blacks and whites were completely separate. White children were given the best tools for a successful education, and were entirely separated from the blacks. Black children were thought to not be as important or as smart and were faced with almost uninhabitable schools and hand-me-downs from the white children. As the years moved forward, many laws were established to eliminate this problem from ever happening in America again, yet it seems that history is again repeating itself and drifting back towards the same

issues. Former teacher and author Jonathan Kozol stated “ Schools that were already deeply segregated twenty-five or thirty years ago are no less segregated now, while thousands of other schools around the country that had been integrated either voluntarily or by force of law have since been rapidly [resegregating]" (Kozol, 2005/2010, p. 220). It seems, according to Kozal that schools in urban areas are facing many horrendous issues that other schools do not; overpopulation, mold, leaky ceilings, rodent infestations, and the lack of appropriate classes for preparation of college are just a few examples. The schools facing these issues are populated with between 90-99% minority and only 1% Caucasian students (Kozol, 2008/2010). There is no real defined reason as to why these students and schools are facing a lack of support and stability from the school system itself, and if nothing is done to reverse the increasing segregation, it will just continue to worsen. The facts backing up the increasing segregation are overwhelming and show that there is a major issue within the system. It is not fair to these minority students to receive unsuitable education just because of a classification that they cannot control. According to freelance writer Tim Lockette, the school systems are blaming the severe separation on the location of school districts, and claiming that they have no control over changing the districts and redistributing children amongst schools (Lockette, 2010). These schools receive much less funding and attention from the educational board; if students are not succeeding then there is no reason for the board to invest any more time and money into the schools. They are left to fend for themselves, and many schools struggle to accomplish anything, turning into more of a daycare for students. Lockette

argued “ In terms of AP classes available, number of veteran teachers, graduation rates – on almost every measure you see an indication of a school in severe stress” (Lockette, 2010). The way to incorporate change in this disintegrating system is to attempt to make the schools as equal as possible by increasing funding, or having more experienced teachers. Desegregation of the schools would not be easy to achieve, but it is something that needs to be accomplished in order to help these minority students succeed today and in the future. Re-districting schools to incorporate a more equal number of students of each race into the same school would be a start toward equality. Giving students and parents the push to unite with other students is more likely to help them understand and influence a change. If not by rearranging the districts, then the school board should attempt to divide the budget provided to each school more evenly. Kozol argued, “ The present per-pupil spending level in the New York City schools is \$11, 700, which may be compared with a per-pupil spending level in excess of \$22, 000 in the well-to-do suburban district of Manhasset, Long Island” (Kozol, 2005/2010, p. 226). The lack of attention and funding these students are receiving shows just how little the board of education cares for these students and their success. Increasing funding would help to better the school conditions as a whole and provide more opportunities and resources for the students. Veteran teachers are rare at these low income schools, and would assist in improving student grades and the quality of instruction provided. According to Kozol, the teachers in most of these schools are amateur or unprepared teachers who have little previous experience. Teachers are taught systems of instruction which is very impersonal and

offers little encouragement or differentiating among students; schools are run like a dictatorship, not letting staff go off the beaten path at all. The older, more educated teachers could provide guidance and support for the younger teachers and staff and create a more desirable environment, which in turn may encourage more diversity. School is a setting in where students of all genders, social statuses, ethnicities, genders, and orientations should be able to thrive; this is not the case as of right now. Attempting to make many small changes within the school system is essential for influencing any changes within the schools and the students. Altering the school districts or even adding experienced teachers and staff would already begin to create a different environment in which students could begin to excel. This would not be an easy task, but it is needed to stop our country from transitioning back to its old and unfair ways. Changing the minds of our citizens and informing them of the reality of this situation is the first and most crucial step in the right direction to create equal opportunity for students everywhere.

References Kozol, J. (2010). Still separate, still equal. In. G. Columbo, R. Cullen, and B. Lisle (Eds). Rereading America: Cultural contexts for critical thinking and writing (pp. 220-226). Boston, MA: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

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