

Education: separate and unequal

Business



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It's the year 1952, and American society and businesses have never been so prosperous. Money circulates in excess, people are driving automobiles in the millions, and domestic lives have shifted to the suburbs-a peaceful, quiet, place to occupy outside of the chaotic business environment miles away in the cities.

What we try to desperately to mask in this period of history, however, past the transparent prosperity for the "average" American, are the people suffering in a society infected with racial ideals. The 1950's society was tragically brimming with inequality as segregation plagues every aspect of American life. A portion of this rising action climaxes in the infamous Brown vs Board of Education Supreme Court Case, where, finally, education became integrated. Finally, we made it! We've finally overcome race as a deciding obstacle for equal educational opportunities. Sorry, America, but Brown's actions only began a battle that Americans have yet to conquer.

Minorities across the nation suffer from an education that, on average, receives less funds, suffers more dropout rates, and is poorly preparing students for the competitive college life ahead of them. In Queens, New York City, the percent of non-white residents is 72. 2% according to a 2010 New York City Government Census. In the school year 2014-2015, funding in Queens barely sufficed \$7, 000 per student allocations, according to the Independent Budget Office, a publicly funded NYC agency; in the same year Staten Island, New York, whose white population is 71. 3%, received almost \$2000 more per student.

Being a high school student myself, I understand how much \$2000 extra can mean to one's educational experience. I was lucky enough to attend a public school that can afford computer technology, which, granted, is something that many students could never imagine lacking. A sum of \$2000 more per student could afford computer access which entails online learning programs, discussion boards, and much more that makes the life of a high schooler tremendously more convenient. It's obvious not every student was fortunate enough to attend an affluent public school, and minorities are most commonly the victims of this, as Pennsylvania researcher David Mosenkis explores. In Philadelphia, Mosenkis studied this unsettling trend of poverty that plagues the city. Mosenkis states, " If you color code the districts based on their racial composition you see this very stark breakdown.

At any given poverty level, districts that have a higher proportion of white students get substantially higher funding than districts that have more minority students." In Pennsylvania, poverty among minorities in these public school districts trend reached a point of severity. On May 21st, 2014 a seven year old public school student died after falling ill. There was no nurse on duty. For years, Philadelphia had been suffering budget cuts, crippling the city and depriving schools of a basic health practitioner, which may have cost them a life.

In the September before, another student in the same school district had died of an asthma attack while a nurse was also not on duty. The lives of two children lost due to an economic problem was a striking alarm for the nation, and the fact that it took their deaths to open up the eyes of the nation to a crumbling school system is tragic. This troubling correlation between <https://assignbuster.com/education-separate-and-unequal/>

poverty, minority races, and public education funding has shown the striking inequities between various socio-economic classes. According to the United States Department of Education, more than 40% of low-income schools do not receive a fair share of state and local funds, leaving the children in higher poverty to receive less supplies and resources than their wealthy counterparts. This setup not only affects those in poverty, but also their ability to attend universities simply for the reason of their parent's uncontrollable financial status.

However irrevocable the malfunctions in the education system appear, these trends haven't proved enduring. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, "from 1996 to 2012, college enrollment among Hispanics ages 18 to 24 more than tripled." During this sixteen year period, college enrollment rates steadily grew among all race groups. In 2012, whites, blacks, and asians shared the same amount of high schools graduates as college attendees.

The reason for this increase may be seen through a traditional American perspective, highlighted by American journalist John Hawkins. Hawkins sees a solution to getting minorities and others in poverty out as lucid as this: if you "make good decisions, work hard and are willing to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, you can at least join the middle class." This perspective of the rugged American individual truly underlines this country's established principles of liberty, social opportunity, and of new beginnings. This perspective can encourage all to apply him/herself and lean on government aid only when completely necessary, resulting in a domino effect that may ultimately alleviate poverty in homes and schools. Moreover, the answers to fixing the failing public school system and ending minority injustices may lie <https://assignbuster.com/education-separate-and-unequal/>

in doing away with the entire public school system. The answer? A voucher system.

As stated by the National Conference of State Legislators, school vouchers are “ state-funded scholarships that pay for students to attend private school rather than public school.” This system allows students to choose schools of their choice, which would let parents pick schools based on academic fit and suitability for the child’s individual needs. And typically private charter schools are much less expensive for the individual taxpayer, so there is potential to save millions of dollars. This idea would, ideally, provide equal opportunity for everyone-race, poverty, and socio- economics in general would not be a deciding factor for the future of one’s education. It would, in theory, create an optimal system-there is no discrimination whatsoever, and as competition among schools increase, so will educational quality as a whole.

To take this to a more extreme, many believe the education system is outright, simply not failing. This so-called false belief that American schools are failing stems from the media misrepresenting the issues. Steve Berlin, Senior Communications Manager of the National Association of State Boards of Education, states, “ what better way to show how bad our schools are, and how inept our students, than comparing them to actual top-down education systems in ethnically homogenous countries (and city) with populations a fraction of the United States’?”. So is diversity to blame for low American test scores? Is the United States so diverse ethnically that it’s more difficult to raise our test scores to match that of our international counterparts? Well, it may be a possibility, but who can actually pinpoint what determines <https://assignbuster.com/education-separate-and-unequal/>

failure? If one considers, according to the State Health Facts, out of those in poverty in the U. S.

, nearly 65% of those are minorities who often attend schools that are underfunded with high fail rates, then yes. It's all how you look at it. The American school system is like a Hydra-we can't eradicate the public school system in it's entirety, or simply more problems will arise from the head we cut off. We must fix education from where the problem stems-the public school system. We need to evaluate where we're spending money, who's receiving the money, and who needs its the most. Once we solve the issue at it's basic core and allow equal educational opportunities to all, we can uplift academic test scores and help each student fulfill their academic potential.

We still have a lot to do. We have come a long way, approaching equality with each miniscule baby step forward, propelled by today's progressive society. But hey, baby steps are steps.