

Brown v. board of education

Education



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the broad scope of the hundreds of thousands of cases decided by the United States Supreme Court in decades past, few measure up to the historical significance of Brown v. Board of Education. The decision of the judges in this particular dispute challenged the mainstream views of the people of our country, changing the times, and shaping the future of America. Not only did the Court's ruling protect the rights of millions of African American students in our country, moreover Brown v.

Board of Education launched the civil rights movement that produced the America we know today. Had the judges ruled other than the way they did, one can only imagine how the history of our country would have played out, or how different our nation would be as a result. In the years leading up to the 1950's, as a whole, the people of our country were severely discriminative towards the African American race. People of different colors were forced to shop in separate stores, eat in separate restaurants, live on opposite sides of town, and even drink from different water fountains.

The same held true for the public school system, which unfairly segregated students according to their color based on the laws that Brown v Board of Education changed. Tragically, the schools reserved for white children were in far better condition than the schools for those of the minority, usually lacking decent books and properly trained teachers, and often teaching an inadequate curriculum (The Brown Foundation).

It is no surprise then that the affliction of these minority students did not settle well with the race as a whole, and in 1951, after long suffering, four complaints were filed in four separate states against their respective school boards (Brown v. Board 486). As summarized by The Brown Foundation, the <https://assignbuster.com/brown-v-board-of-education/>

first action arose out of Delaware, where the segregated schools were considerably unequal. There, black students were bused from their homes to schools hours away, rather than attending the schools for white children where they lived.

After being denied access to the white schools near their homes, suit was filed. The second case came from Topeka, Kansas, where the number of white schools greatly outnumbered the amount of black schools. As a result, parents in Topeka tried to enroll their black children in white schools, only to be denied. The third case was filed in South Carolina, where the schools were also substantially unequal. When the parents of black children filed suit against their school board, the Court ordered that the schools be equalized. The schools however, refused to comply. The final case arose out of Virginia.

There the schools were far too small to accommodate the number of students that attended them, and once again were grossly inadequate, lacking even indoor plumbing. After suit was filed locally, the school board was ordered to make the segregated schools equal, however black children still were not admitted in to white schools (The Brown Foundation). The facts regarding each case were different, but the issue at hand was the same, young African American children had been denied access to the schools reserved for their white counterparts per the laws that were written to protect them from such injustices.

The very government that was intended to protect their rights and freedoms denied the relief of the children, holding to the “separate but equal” doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson. That doctrine stated that the separation of black and white students was within the law, so long as the segregated

schools were equal. After defeat in federal district courts, on appeal, the four cases were consolidated into what is known as Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, to be heard in The Supreme Court in 1952 (Brown v. Board 487, 488).

The Supreme Court Justices looked in depth at the fourteenth amendment, more specifically the right of the equal protection of the laws that the fourteenth amendment guaranteed to all Americans, of which the minority children claimed that they were deprived of. The justices pondered the question, “ Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other ‘ tangible’ factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? ” (Brown v.

Board 493). The Justices addressed the equality of the education in public schools overall, throwing out the idea that if books, desks, and classrooms were similar, then children received an equal education. Considering the fact that separated black children are educated in a way that makes them feel inferior to white children, the Court held that the feelings of inferiority, which were enforced by the laws of our country, effected the driving force behind the students that urged them to learn and therefore to receive an equal education.

On May 17, 1954, the Court ruled that the “ separate but equal” doctrine was irrelevant when it came to education, thus holding that the segregation of students based on race did in fact violate the rights set forth by the fourteenth amendment (Brown v. Board 495). Then a few weeks later, on May 31, the last day of the term, the judges elaborated on their decision, <https://assignbuster.com/brown-v-board-of-education/>

ordering that the desegregation of schools take place with “ all deliberate speed” (The National Archives). As news of the Court’s decision spread across America, as expected, people of the white race were extremely unhappy.

Rather than doing as the Justices had ordered, most states simply refused to comply with their judgment. The years following proved to be a battle for the African American race. Brown v. Board of Education seemed to affect the race as whole rather than only the students who longed to attend equal schools. In Virginia, the Governor shut down all public schools in an attempt to avoid their desegregation. Instead of simply allowing the black children access, the state issued vouchers to white families so they could send their children to private schools, leaving the black children without any education at all.

In Arkansas, the National Guard had to accompany several black students, whom we now recognize as The Little Rock Nine, on their walk into a newly desegregated school as white students verbally and physically abused them. To prolong the desegregation, states attempted to enforce a “ freedom of choice theory”. By which black students had the option of attending any school they wanted in the district. Nevertheless, when parents sent their minority children to white schools, they were tortured by angry whites, who threatened them and even burnt crosses in their yards.

The National Education Association estimates that in the decade following the landmark Supreme Court decision, nearly 38, 000 black educators lost their jobs (The National Education Association). With the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education, it seemed the minority had won the battle; unfortunately <https://assignbuster.com/brown-v-board-of-education/>

the war was far from over. What ensued following Brown v. Board of Education was one of the most imperative eras in the history of our country, what we now call the civil rights movement. The judges who ruled in the case could not have predicted the relevancy of their verdict, nor the outcome that would eventually come to pass.

Brown v. Board of Education has proven to be a case that greatly impacted the lives of millions of African Americans and the freedoms that all people, despite their race, now experience every day. Works Cited The Brown Foundation, " Brown v. Board of Education: About the Case. " The Brown Foundation. 11 Apr 2004. The Brown Foundation. 29 Apr 2008 . The National Archives, " Timeline of Events Leading to the Brown v. Board of Education Decision, 1954. " The National Archives. 2008. The Federal Government. 30 Apr 2008

gov/education/lessons/brown-v-board/timeline. html>. The National Education Association, " 50th Anniversary, Brown v. Board of Education. " Public Schools for Every Child. 2008. The National Education Association. 30 Apr 2008 . Patterson, James. Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. The United States Supreme Court, " Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. " United States Reports 483 (1954) 486-496. 29 Apr 2008 .