

# Brown versus board of education

[Education](#)



Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas was one of a group of cases that was being brought before the Supreme Court in the early 1950's by the NAACP to challenge the concept of "separate but equal." The story began in 1950 when several parents went up against the Topeka school board that would only allow black children to attend one of the four segregated schools in the area. Oliver Brown was one of this group, having brought his daughter to the local school, tried to enroll her and was turned away (National Park Service, 10).

The case was brought to court by the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, and was later combined with several other cases such as Briggs v. Elliot and Bolling v. Sharpe (National Park Service, 10). The NAACP brought the suit with the focus that school segregation was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's clause that provided for equal protection. Its original purpose had been to ensure all blacks equal status as citizens of the United States after the Civil War (Martin 2).

The legal team also put forth that when black children attended racially segregated schools, it caused them harm by creating a "stigma of inferiority (Martin 2)." This stigma was supported by research stating that racial segregation could have a harmful impact on a child's development as they grew and on individual self-worth. There was even evidence presented of the bad effects that segregation could also have on whites (Martin, 11).

The Supreme Court, under the leadership of Justice Earl Warren, found in favor of the plaintiff's to end school segregation on May 17, 1954 (National Park Service 11-12). Overturning the precedent of Plessy v. Ferguson, which originally established the concept of separate but equal, Brown v. Board of <https://assignbuster.com/brown-versus-board-of-education/>

Education opened up the doors of public and higher education to blacks all over the country. This also eventually opened up doors to new fields and opportunities that had once been closed off.

Today, this landmark decision has been the basis for the Civil Rights movement that reached its zenith during the 1960's and later groundbreaking legislation (National Park Service 14). It also laid the foundation for other equal rights movements, including the struggle by those with disabilities who wanted equal access to public facilities and end to job discrimination. American education now can offer a free and appropriate public education to all, regardless of color, race, disability or any other distinguishing factor.

Just as children who were black were given the chance to attend integrated schools, the case laid the legal framework for later legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act, or IDEA, that mandated educational standards and services for children with disabilities. Without Brown v. Board of Education laying the framework for these kinds of laws, other student populations would not have achieved the equality they have. The legacy of Brown is one of tolerance, equality and the lingering memory that in order to preserve the freedoms that we have, we sometimes have to fight for them.

One avenue that freedom can be one in is the courtroom, where sweeping changes can be brought into reality. References Martin, Waldo E. Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998. 23 May 2010 from <http://books.google.com/books?id=KRxIUFnFs8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=brown+v.+board+of+education&cd=1#v=onepage&q&f=false> Maruca, Mary. "<https://assignbuster.com/brown-versus-board-of-education/>

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