



Judges in the Classroom

Brown v. the Board of Education

Source:

Written by Margaret Fisher, Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and then updated in 2012. For more information, contact AOC, Court Services, 1206 Quince Street SE, PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504-1170. For an electronic copy of this lesson, or to view other lesson plans, visit Educational Resources on the Washington Courts Web site at: www.courts.wa.gov/education/.

The student roles were drawn from *Brown v. the Board of Education*, 74 S. Ct. 686 (1954); "The Stories of *Brown v. the Board of Education*," published by the American Bar Association, 2004; and *Jim Crow's Children*, Peter Irons, Penguin Group: New York, 2002.

Additional Teaching Resources:

The American Bar Association has lessons at every grade level for teaching *Brown v. Board of Education*. See www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/schools/lessons/home.html. See also www.streetlaw.org/en/landmark/home.

Objectives:

1. Understand the historical development in race discrimination and civil rights in the United States.
2. Define the change ordered by *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kan.*, 74 S. Ct. 686 (1954).
3. Identify the role played by courts in changing social policy.
4. Examine the impact of the court's decision in today's world – the unfulfilled promise or work in progress.
5. Take a personal stand on specific issues such as busing, neighborhood schools, public African American schools, and other educational policies.

Grade Level:

Grades 9-12

Time:

One class period (approximately 50 minutes)

Prior to Class:

1. Ask the teacher to copy and cut out roles for each student, and place one role on the desk of each student. If there are more than 30 students in the class, the teacher should make two copies of the roles and hand out duplicates of some roles.
2. Additionally, the teacher should place handouts reading “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Undecided” around the room.
3. Make a copy of Handout 3 to use on a docu-camera – Racial Balance in Schools.

Materials:

Handout 1: Student Roles, see above.

Handout 2: Case Study, make one copy for each student.

Handout 3: Place on docu-camera – Racial Balance in Schools, see above.

Handout 4: Opinion Poll, make one copy for each student.

Note: This lesson assumes the teacher has already taught students the historical antecedents of <i>Brown</i> , including the separate but equal doctrine of <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , as well as federal constitutional right of equal protection.
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Procedures:

1. **Begin the class by introducing yourself** and telling a little about what you do. Tell students that today's class will deal with one of the most important court decisions in the history of the United States. To help students look at the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, each student should be given a role of a person or organization. Students should pick up their role and read it.
2. **Instruct students to take about three minutes** to introduce their role to at least one other student in the class. After three minutes, ask students to sit down and to keep the role they received in mind as they consider the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*: What might their attitudes have been? How would the case affect them?
3. **Explain** that the lesson today will have us going back in time to examine *Brown v. the Board of Education* and looking today to see what has changed. At the end of the class, we will see why the decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education* is referred to as a “promise unfulfilled” and a “work in progress.”
4. **Write the term “separate but equal doctrine”** on the board. Ask students to define the term. This doctrine provides that equality of treatment is met when the races are provided substantially equal facilities even though these facilities are separate.
5. **Ask where** the term comes from.
6. **Explain to students** that separate but equal doctrine was first announced in the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). Ask the student who has the role of Homer Plessy (#24) to tell the class who he was. Homer was an African American man in Louisiana who attempted to ride in a “whites only” railway car and was thrown off the train and arrested. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution

and laws were satisfied if the government provided separate but equal facilities to the races. Ask the student with the role of Justice Harlan to explain his role. (#25)

7. **Tell students** by the 1930's, nearly three million school-aged black children lived in the 17 states and the District of Columbia that had state constitutions and/or laws that required segregation of the public schools. This constituted 81% of all the black school-aged children in the United States.
8. **Ask students** whether these separate schools were actually equal. Have them report facts from their roles. (#1, #2, #3, #6, #7, #8, #9, #12, #13, #19, #21)
9. **Write** "white schools" and "black schools" in two columns on the board. Place items suggested by the students from their roles in each column. They should include these facts.

Clarendon County, South Carolina: There were school buses for white, but not for black students. The white schools had much superior equipment, curriculum and qualifications, pay and experience of teachers. Black schools were dirty little wooden shacks, with no running water, while the white schools were brick with chimneys and running water.

Prince Edwards County, Virginia: The white school had a gymnasium, locker room facilities, cafeteria, teachers' break room and infirmary and offered physics, world history, Latin, advanced typing and stenography, drawing and wood, and metal and machine shop work. The black school did not have these. There were 450 black students in a school designed for 180.

New Castle County, Delaware: The state paid \$137 per pupil at the black school and \$178 per pupil in the white school. The salaries, qualifications and training of teachers in the black school fell below the teachers in the white schools. The facilities at black schools were much worse than the white school. The black schools lacked extra curricular activities and had higher teacher-pupil ratios. White students attended a high school located on a 14-acre site and got free school buses if they lived more than two miles away. The black students did not get buses.

Washington DC: The white school had an enrollment of 765 white students and a capacity of 918 students. The black school was designed to hold 783 but had an enrollment of 1,638. The black school was a run-down and overcrowded school and had no playground and only one Bunsen burner for several hundred students.

10. **Probe students:** If you were a black student or the parent of a black student, what could you do? What price might you pay? Ask who has the role of Barbara Johns (#12) and let this person describe what she did. Ask who had the role of the principal Boyd Jones (#15) and get that student to report. Get students to report some of the consequences to black people who objected to segregated schools as reported in their roles (#2, #3, #12, #15): threats of physical harm, loss of job, credit, housing, etc.
11. **Tell students** that we are now going to explore the case that ended up at the U.S. Supreme Court and decided in 1954, known as *Brown v. the Board of Education*.

There were actually five different cases that were consolidated and argued together.

12. **Pass out Handout 2.** Ask students to read the facts. Divide the class into small groups of up to five students. Have each group assign a reporter to provide the group's answers to the large group. Assign each group to answer one question, e.g., question 1, question 2, question 3, etc. This will ensure there is sufficient time for the opinion poll. After five minutes, ask students to report from each group on the answers.

Answers to Handout 2

1. What was this case about?

This case was a challenge to the power of the state to permit separate but equal schools for blacks and whites.

2. What were the arguments of the plaintiffs? Why did they argue about the length of the bus rides for black students?

The plaintiffs had two main arguments: (1) the schools were not equal and (2) segregation in and of itself violates the Constitution. They focused on the length of the bus rides for black students because most of the other areas were comparable between the two school systems.

3. What were the arguments of the defendants?

The defendants argued that the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court permitted states to operate separate but equal schools. The black schools were comparable to the white schools and therefore met the requirements of separate but equal.

4. What was the law from the U.S. Supreme Court at the time this case was decided by the three-judge panel?

The law from *Plessy v. Ferguson* permitted separate but equal facilities for the races.

5. How did the three-judge court rule? What were its reasons?

The court ruled that the two separate school systems were comparable and the school district could lawfully operate the two separate school systems. The trial court felt compelled to follow the precedent from the U.S. Supreme Court, which permitted separate but equal facilities for the races. However, the trial court ruled that segregation had a harmful effect on black children.

6. How do you think the Supreme Court ruled? Why?

Students should know from their experience that the Supreme Court ruled that in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. This violates the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. Separate

educational facilities are inherently unequal. However, the Supreme Court did not enter any orders on how to implement the decision. It ordered that there be more arguments in the Court on how to implement the decision. Ask student who has the role of Earl Warren to explain his efforts in this case.

13. **Ask students** what they think the state government's reaction to the Supreme Court's ruling was.

Many politicians passionately criticized the decision and declared they would not follow the decision in their state. More than 100 U.S. Congressmen from the South signed the *Southern Manifesto*, attacking the Supreme Court's "clear abuse of power" and vowing to resist integration. There were high levels of violence, threats, and demonstrations. Some states began to integrate.

14. **Write the bold words** on the board and explain. The school district involved in the Supreme Court cases in Virginia shut down all its public schools and gave tuition vouchers to white students to attend private white schools. School districts adopted a **public placement program** that gave school boards the right to place individual students in the most suitable school, which meant that white students were generally placed at white schools and black students at black schools. School districts adopted **freedom of choice programs** which allowed parents to choose the school for their children. However, any black parents who chose white schools were threatened with losing their homes and jobs and had crosses burned on their property. Another reaction was the **minority-to-majority plans** that allowed parents to move their children from schools in which they were a racial minority to those in which their race was a majority.
15. **Tell students** that in the original 1954 case, Justice Earl Warren did not order immediate implementation of the order to desegregate. He knew that he would fail to get a unanimous opinion if he did so. Instead, another round of arguments was ordered and in 1955, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered U.S. District Courts, the federal trial courts, to oversee implementation of the desegregation "with all deliberate speed."
16. **Put Handout 3** on the docu-camera and review facts about integration in U.S. public schools in 2004.
17. **Tell students** that we are now going to conduct an opinion poll on implementing desegregation. Ask students to be candid about their personal opinions. Place the signs "Agree" "Disagree" and "Undecided" around the room.
18. **Pass out Handout 4**, and ask students to write down their personal opinion: "A" for agree, "D" for disagree, or "U" for undecided next to each statement.
19. **Ask students to stand** by the opinion they personally agree with beginning with the first statement.
20. **Responses to Opinion Poll:** Probe students as to their reasons for their opinions. For students in the Undecided group, ask them to explain why they are undecided. Ensure that these points are raised with each statement.

1. Courts should order busing to make sure that schools are integrated.

Probe students whether the schools should have a quota system, for example, reflecting the percentage of minority groups in their community. Ask students whether busing should extend beyond the boundaries of an individual school district, including urban and suburban areas. Let students know that in 1971 the Supreme Court did authorize the courts to order busing as a remedy for segregation when the segregation was due to legally sanctioned segregation. However, it ruled against allowing federal courts to order school districts to transport students across school district boundaries in order to integrate urban and suburban areas.

2. It is more important that students be allowed to attend schools in their neighborhoods than to integrate schools.

In recent years, schools have adopted neighborhood choice plans. Courts have permitted schools to operate schools that are primarily of one race so long as the segregation is not the result of the state's legislation but reflects the housing patterns within an area.

3. Urban school districts with high minority populations should have the power to set up magnet schools to attract white students from the suburbs.

In 1995, the Supreme Court struck down the magnet-school plan in Kansas City, making it harder for federal judges to order city school-desegregation plans designed to attract white students from the suburbs.

4. The most important aspect is to have a good quality education for everyone, and it does not matter whether the schools are integrated or not.

The head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter in Yonkers, New York, was removed from his position by the national organization in 1996 for questioning the protracted litigation to integrate his city's schools. His focus was on quality education, not integration. Justice Marshall on the other hand had stated "Education is not the teaching of the three R's. Education is the teaching of the overall citizenship, to learn to live together with fellow citizens."

5. Having African American, Mexican American, or other minority public schools is important to develop minority leadership and to teach the culture and values of minority groups.

Some public school districts have set up African-American, Mexican-American, Native American, gypsy schools with the mission to provide the specific minority group and all children, for example, the Native American Heritage Middle College High School in Seattle. "The curriculum follows Seattle School District text adoptions; however, currently the Humanities teachers highlight Native contributions." <http://middlecollegehs.seattleschools.org/>

21. **Conclude** by highlighting the role that courts have played in shaping education in American society and the fact that individual students, such as Barbara Johns, in Prince Edwards County, were willing to risk their lives to make her community a more just society. The work to provide just solutions to the issues around race in our country continue and demand their involvement now and in the future.
22. **In the unlikely event** that there is more time, you might ask students to volunteer the specific roles that they received to start the class and ask how their role might react to the *Brown* decision and what happened afterwards.

HANDOUT 1

Brown v. the Board of Education **Student Roles**

Note: Copy these individual roles and cut them into individual strips. Place one role on each desk at the school. If you have more students than 30, duplicate some of the roles. If you have fewer than 30, hand out as many as you need and discard the rest.

1. My name is Ms. Janes; I am white and teach white children in a rural school in Clarendon County, South Carolina. I earn \$118 per month while the black teacher earns \$73 per month in my area. The year is 1948.
2. My name is Levi Pearson. I am a farmer and have three children in a Clarendon County, South Carolina school. There are 30 school buses that take white students to their schools in the county, but none for black students. My kids have to walk nine miles to school. They should have a bus too. Because I petitioned the superintendent for a bus, none of the white-owned businesses in the county would give me credit any more. The year is 1947.
3. My name is Harry Briggs and I have five children who attend the all black school in Clarendon County, South Carolina. I joined 19 other local organizers to try to end the many glaring inequalities that existed between white and black schools in my county. The white schools are brick and have running water and chimneys. The black schools are dirty little shacks with horrible outdoor toilet facilities. The white schools have much superior equipment, curriculum, and the teachers have better qualifications, pay, and experience. Because I joined a lawsuit with the support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), my wife and I were fired from our jobs. The year is 1949.
4. My name is Dr. Kenneth Clark. I testified about my research in social sciences in the Clarendon County, South Carolina court case trying to legally end segregation. In my research, I used tests involving white- and brown-skinned dolls to evaluate the extent to which segregation created feelings of inferiority in black children. I found that the vast majority of black children would choose the white doll as the one they wanted to play with and the one that was “nice,” while they mainly picked the brown doll as the one that looked “bad” to them. The Supreme Court cited my research in the *Brown* case. The year is 1951.
5. My name is Judge Julius Waties Waring. I dissented from the federal three-judge panel in Clarendon County, South Carolina case that ruled that there was nothing invalid in segregation itself. I stated, “Segregation is per se (in and of itself) inequality.” The year is 1949.
6. I am a black student in Topeka, Kansas. When I was in school up to 8th grade, I stayed in the grade school with a single teacher who had to teach all the grades 1-8. The white students in grades 7, 8, and 9 went to a junior high and got departmentalized courses taught by subject specialists. The year is 1941.

7. My name is Oliver Brown and I have three girls. When it was time for my daughter, Linda Brown, to go into 3rd grade here in Topeka, Kansas, I decided, along with 12 other parents, to enroll our children in the “whites only” elementary school just six blocks from our house, instead of sending them to the all black elementary school. We were turned down. We agreed to join a lawsuit being prepared by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Linda’s and my names were put first on the lawsuit, and the case, *Brown v. the Board of Education*, made us famous. The year is 1951, the year the case was filed.
8. My name is Shirley Bulah, I am six years old, and I live in New Castle County, Delaware. The school bus that takes white students to their elementary school goes right by my house, but it will not stop to pick me up. To get to school, my mother has to drive me two miles each day to a one-room segregated schoolhouse. The state pays \$137 per pupil at my school and \$178 per pupil in the white school. The salaries and qualifications of my teachers fall below what the white schools have. The year is 1951.
9. My name is Ethel Louise Belton. I wanted to go to the high school in the suburbs where I live in New Castle County, Delaware, that is one mile from my house. Instead, I have to ride for two hours on the school bus each way to get to an all-black high school in the city. The facilities at my school are much worse than the white school. The black schools do not have extra curricular activities and have higher teacher-pupil ratios. Meanwhile the white students attend a high school located on a 14-acre site and get free school buses if they live more than two miles away. The year is 1951.
10. My name is Louis Redding and I am the only black lawyer in New Castle County, Delaware in the 1950s who has a passion for civil rights. I agreed to sue to integrate two New Castle County, Delaware school districts in 1949.
11. My name is Collins Jacques Seitz and I am a Chancellor (Judge) in New Castle County, Delaware. I personally visited the segregated schools in New Castle County, Delaware before ruling that the state does not have the right to refuse admission to black students who seek an education in the white public schools. I will not give the school officials more time to equalize the separate facilities, but am ordering the white schools to admit black students immediately. This year is 1952.
12. My name is Barbara Johns. When I was 16, I led a student strike at my high school in Prince Edward County, Virginia. 450 students joined my strike to protest our poor education. We went to school in an eight-room building designed for 180 students. I had to move to Alabama to live with my uncle after the strike because it was not safe for me to stay in Virginia. The year is 1951.
13. My name is Emery Johnston. I go to the all white school in Prince Edward County, Virginia. My school has a gymnasium, locker room facilities, cafeteria, teachers’ break room, and infirmary. I can take physics, world history, Latin, advanced typing and stenography, drawing and wood, and metal and machine shop work. None of these is available in the black high school. The year is 1951.

14. My name is Carrie Stokes. I was the student council president in the high school in Prince Edward County, Virginia, when another student, Barbara Johns, persuaded me to do something about the terrible condition of black schools in our community. We wrote a letter to the offices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), asking for their help in changing our segregated schools. The year is 1951.
15. My name is Boyd Jones and I am the principal of an all black high school in Prince Edward County, Virginia. On April 23, 1951, I got a call saying that two of my students were in trouble with the police down at the bus station. I ran out to help. This was a trick to get me out of the building so that the students could call a strike of the 450 high school students to demand integrated schools. I was fired despite the support shown to me by the striking students. I told the students that I was behind them 100%, but that I could not say that publicly.
16. My name is Dorothy Davis and I am a 15-year-old student at the all black high school in Prince Edward County, Virginia. I was not one of the strike leaders at my school, but my name was listed first on the lawsuit filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) against Prince Edward's County. The year is 1951.
17. I am a state legislator in Virginia. I approved, along with the other state legislators, \$600,000 in additional money to build a new school for black students in Prince Edward County in an effort to "equalize" and preserve the segregated schools. The year is 1951.
18. My role is Prince Edward County, Virginia. After *Brown v. the Board of Education*, I decided in 1959 to close all the public schools rather than integrate the schools. I kept them closed until 1964 when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered me to re-open the schools.
19. My name is Gardner Bishop and I am a barber in Washington DC. I tried to enroll my daughter in the junior high school nearest our home that had 765 white students and a capacity of 918 students. Instead, she was assigned to a school much further away that was designed to hold 783 but had an enrollment of 1,638. I got active in the cause of ending racial segregation in the nation's capital. The year is 1947.
20. My name is Charles Houston. I served as dean of Howard University Law School and I mentored Thurgood Marshall. I died shortly after the trial court upheld segregation in our suit against the District of Columbia. Before I died, I recommended that the plaintiffs go to James Nabrit, a law professor at Howard University, to take over the appeal of the DC case.
21. My name is Spottswood T. Bolling, Jr., and I am 12 years old. My mother works as a bookbinder for the federal government and makes \$57.60 a week, more than twice what the average black women makes in DC at this time. I was assigned to a run-down, overcrowded school in DC that had no playground and one Bunsen burner for several hundred students. I tried to enroll in a new white school near my home but was turned away. My name is on the lawsuit challenging segregated schools in Washington

DC. The year is 1951.

22. My name is James Nabrit and I am a law professor at Howard University. I helped change the legal strategy in the DC case from demanding equalization of facilities for black students to demanding integration of the white schools. The year is 1950.
23. My name is Thurgood Marshall and I am the chief general counsel and chief legal strategist who led the assault on segregation for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and argued one of the cases in *Brown v. the Board of Education*. Later I became the first black justice on the United States Supreme Court. The year is 1952.
24. My name is Homer Plessy. In 1892, I bought a first-class ticket to ride the train in Louisiana. I took a vacant seat in the white coach. Because I was part black, the conductor ordered me out of the coach. When I refused, he called the police who threw me off and took me to jail. In my case in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that providing “separate but equal” facilities for blacks and whites was constitutional.
25. My name is Justice John Marshall Harlan. I was the only Supreme Court Justice to disagree with the decision in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. I harshly criticized the Court’s decision that “separate but equal” treatment of the races was constitutional. I am often quoted for my statement, “Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens...In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.” The year is 1896.
26. My role is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and I was founded in 1909. Initially, my leaders focused their limited resources on our most pressing problem: to stop the lynching of black people, more than 100 cases each year. Later I tackled integrating schools of higher education before tackling the segregation of public elementary and secondary schools.
27. My name is McKinley Burnett and I am the President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter in Topeka, Kansas, in 1948. I put pressure on the Topeka school board to end segregation in the grade schools. After two years of unsuccessful attempts, I wrote to the NAACP headquarters in New York. Thurgood Marshall responded and sent us a lawyer to take our case.
28. My name is Louisa Holt and I am an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Kansas. I testified at the trial in *Brown v. the Board of Education*. I stated that the fact that segregation is legal and enforced is more important than the mere fact of segregation by itself. It makes it the official policy that black people are inferior to white people. This affects the motivation of black students to learn. The year is 1951.
29. My name is Philip Elman and I wrote the friend-of-the-court brief for *Brown v. the Board of Education* for the position of the United States government. I wrote about the impact of racial discrimination in Washington DC, the nation’s capital. Representatives of all nations come here. It is humiliating and embarrassing the way that black people are treated in our nation’s capital and shows our attitude towards minorities in general. The year is 1952.

30. My name is Earl Warren. As governor of California, I helped Dwight D. Eisenhower get elected President in 1952. In return, Eisenhower promised me the next seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. When Chief Justice Vinson died suddenly in 1952, I was offered the job. As Chief Justice, I was able to get the other eight justices to rule unanimously in *Brown v. the Board of Education* that equal protection of the law prevents states from segregating public schools and that separate but equal doctrine has no place in public education. The year is 1954.

HANDOUT 2

Brown v. the Board of Education **Case Study**

Oliver Brown lived with his family in Topeka, Kansas, in a primarily white neighborhood with black, Indian, and Hispanic families. He had three daughters and worked as a welder fixing boxcars in the railroad shop. He was also a part-time minister. When his daughter Linda was eight and ready to enter the third grade, he took her to a school six blocks from their house to enroll her. He was turned away because this school was a white school.

Kansas had a state law that said cities of more than 15,000 residents had the authority to segregate their schools. Topeka segregated its elementary schools; it operated 4 elementary schools for black children and 18 elementary schools for white children. The black schools lacked some of the facilities and programs of the white schools. The black students had to travel longer distances to their schools than the white students did to their schools.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) enlisted 20 plaintiffs to challenge the segregated schools of Topeka on behalf of all black children of elementary school age residing in Topeka. They listed Oliver and Linda Brown as the first names on the complaint, which is where *Brown v. the Board of Education* gets its name.

The NAACP focused on the differences in travel time to get to school, and what the burden of spending two hours each day on the school bus had on the children. In addition, the NAACP argued that the real harm of segregation was the lesson it gave black children that there was something bad about black skin. Assistant Sociology Professor Louisa Holt testified as a plaintiff's expert that segregation affected the learning process of black children. The lesson of segregation is that black people are inferior and this affects their motivation to learn.

The school district argued that the black grade schools had adequate facilities and more experienced teachers than the white schools. They had testimony that black and white schools were equal in curriculum, teacher salaries, and facilities. They defended their case by stating that the two schools systems were separate but equal. Under *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the precedent of the U.S. Supreme Court, it was constitutional to provide separate but equal facilities for people of different races. The three-judge panel ruled in August 1951 that the Topeka school board under Kansas law had the power to separate children by race in the elementary schools. The judges found the teachers, the facilities, and the curricula for the two separate school districts to be comparable. Because *Plessy v. Ferguson's* separate but equal doctrine was still the law, the judges felt obligated to follow the law.

The U.S. Supreme Court decided to hear the Topeka, Kansas case, along with segregation cases from four other communities: New Castle County, Delaware; Prince Edwards County, Virginia; Clarendon County, South Carolina; and the District of Columbia.

1. What was this case about?
2. What were the arguments of the plaintiffs? Why did they argue about the length of the bus rides for black students?

3. What were the arguments of the defendants?
4. What was the law from the U.S. Supreme Court at the time this case was decided by the three-judge panel?
5. How did the three-judge panel rule? What were its reasons?
6. How do you think the Supreme Court ruled? Why?

HANDOUT 3

Brown v. the Board of Education **Racial Balance in Schools**

Racial Balance in Schools Today

- 1. 70% of black students attend schools in which minorities are the majority in the schools.**
- 2. One third of all black students in the United States attend schools in which 90%-100% are minority students.**
- 3. Since 1988, during every single year, there has been an increase in segregation.**
- 4. Not one of the 25 largest metropolitan school districts has a white majority in the public schools even though all 25 have a majority white population.**

Source: Adam Cohen, "The Supreme Struggle," *New York Times*, Education Life, January 18, 2004., p. 24; and Peter Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, Penguin Group: New York, 2002.

HANDOUT 4

Brown v. the Board of Education **Opinion Poll**

Integrating Schools Opinion Poll: Write "A" for Agree, "D" for Disagree, or "U" for Undecided next to each of the statements. There are no right or wrong answers, every opinion is good when you can give reasons for that opinion.

- _____ 1. Courts should order busing to make sure that schools are integrated.
- _____ 2. It is more important that students be allowed to attend schools in their neighborhoods than to integrate schools.
- _____ 3. Urban school districts with high minority populations should have the authority to set up magnet schools to attract white students from the suburbs.
- _____ 4. The most important aspect is to have a good quality education for everyone and it does not matter whether the schools are integrated or not.
- _____ 5. Having African-American, Mexican-American, or other minority public schools is important to develop minority leadership and to teach the culture and values of minority groups.