



Harvard Model Congress Boston 2021

MODERN DAY SCHOOL SEGREGATION

By Starr Rhee



*Students in New York City protest school segregation in 2019
The 74 Million*

INTRODUCTION

Many people in the United States consider school segregation to be a thing of the past. A report by EdBuild, however, revealed that 53% of children in the United States attend a school where over 75% of the students are white or over 75% of the students are non-white (EdBuild). *The Atlantic* reports that the number of segregated schools has more than doubled in the past two decades (Stancil).

The truth is that modern day school segregation exists, and it is likely getting worse, but this segregation simply takes a different form than it has in the past. Before 1954, school segregation was **legally sanctioned** or **de jure**, meaning it was permitted or enforced by law. However today, a lot of school segregation happens in a more **de facto** manner. Most school segregation today occurs *between* school districts rather than within school districts (“65 Years After Brown v. Board...”). Residential patterns (driven by zoning restrictions, income inequality, and personal preferences) often lead to people living in areas or towns which are racially homogenous, contributing to the segregation of schools.

This rise in school segregation is significant for several reasons. First off, it is important because the Constitution guarantees all citizens equal protection under the law. However, when schools are segregated, it is more likely that resources will not be distributed fairly. This can lead to unequal educational outcomes and attainment for students simply because they attend a school which has more or less money. Additionally, this rise in school segregation is significant because it means that in an ever-diversifying country, many students are only educated alongside others who look like them. This lack of

The number of segregated schools in the United States has more than doubled since 1996.

Legally sanctioned (also de jure) – something that is permitted or protected by the law

De Facto– “In fact” something that has occurred not explicitly because of the law. Often times this occurs because of personal choices, preferences, or prejudices



Students in Little Rock desegregate Central High School among protests.

History.com

diversity in classrooms can lead to a lack of understanding of others and a lack of diversity in opinions. For many people, desegregation is a worthwhile endeavor regardless of its effects on the achievement of students, and many others would add that everyone benefits from learning alongside folks who are different from them.

It is important to keep in mind that this is an incredibly complicated topic. There is no one right answer, and every solution has potential upsides and drawbacks. It is also important to acknowledge that this is a personal issue which effects the lives of millions of students (and likely many of you who will be attending this conference) in one way or another. Difficult issues are often the most meaningful, which makes them worthwhile to debate. I hope that as we delve deeper into this topic, we maintain respect for other opinions and life experiences and that we are able to learn, grow, and craft amazing legislation together.

EXPLANATION OF THE ISSUE

Historical Development

De Jure Segregation

At the close of the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were ratified by Congress. The 13th amendment abolished slavery. The 14th amendment outlined the laws of citizenship, stating that any person born in the United States was a citizen, including formerly enslaved people. The 14th amendment also ensured “equal protection under the law” for all citizens. The 15th amendment prevented voting discrimination on the basis of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (“Landmark Legislation”). However, while these amendments were incredibly important, they did not substantively change the lives of many African American people in the United States. After reconstruction, an oppressive system known as **Jim Crow** emerged in the American South. These laws segregated many public spaces including parks, movie theaters, water fountains, and schools. They also put new restrictions on voting which, without explicitly mentioning race, functionally prevented many Black people from. Many of these laws were also mirrored in the North. These laws emerged as a way to maintain white supremacy and oppressive racial structures.

Plessy v. Ferguson was a Supreme Court case which took place in 1896. It essentially held that, “segregation in itself did not constitute unlawful discrimination” (“Plessy v. Ferguson”). It created a doctrine of “separate but equal” where legal segregation was permitted as long as people of all races had access to similar goods and services. Though the court case was not specifically about

Jim Crow— a series of laws designed to maintain systems of white supremacy and segregate people according to race

Plessy v. Ferguson— a Supreme Court case that rules segregation legal. Created the “separate but equal” standard

schools, it created an important precedent that allowed for the separation of educational institutions and services along racial lines.

The reality of segregated systems, however, was not “separate but equal.” Schools for Black children were chronically underfunded. They often lacked school supplies and books that white schools received. Black students would sometimes have to travel miles away from their home every day to go to school, despite living closer to a white school. Decades of legal battles ensued surrounding segregation of schools and other public facilities (“A Century of Racial Segregation”).

Brown v. Board – a landmark Supreme Court decision which ruled school segregation unconstitutional

Brown v. Board of Education

In 1954, the Supreme Court decided the ***Brown v. Board of Education*** case, ruling school segregation unconstitutional and over-ruling *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Justices found that separate was not equal and that the education Black students were receiving in segregated schools was subpar to that of their white counterparts.

Although *Brown v. Board* was an exciting victory in the Civil Rights Movement, there was little direction from the court about how desegregation ought to be carried out. In a second case in 1955, known as ***Brown II***, the court ordered desegregation with “all deliberate speed” and stated that lower courts would be placed in charge of ensuring such desegregation of schools did occur (History.com Editors).

Brown II– a second Supreme Court decision in 1955 which ordered desegregation with “all deliberate speed” and left enforcement to lower courts

Busing and its Effects

For many Southern districts, “all deliberate speed” did not mean much. Many postponed true school desegregations for as long as possible. By the 1970s, many courts began enforcing busing programs in order to truly integrate schools and overcome barriers of residential segregation. These programs bused, mostly Black students, to predominantly white schools.

Although many considered busing to be highly effective in achieving school desegregation, it was largely unpopular. Many white parents began to protest busing, with a massive and violent protests erupting in Boston. Within the Black community, busing had mixed responses. While many viewed busing as a way for their children to attend more well-resourced schools, many Black parents felt that busing put an unfair burden on their children, as most of the students being bused (often long distances) were Black. Additionally, many Black schools were closed down, and as a result, many Black teachers lost their jobs. Busing also often placed students in dangerous or hostile environments, and non-white students were subjected to bullying and even violence at school. In the past 20 years or so, many busing programs have ended as courts saw them as no longer necessary (Browne-Marshall).



Students being bused in Mississippi to a formerly all-white school

CNN Politics

Milliken v. Bradley

Milliken v. Bradley– a second Supreme Court which prevented busing between school districts and reinforced the importance of local control over schools

White flight– a phenomenon where white families move to the suburbs, often to avoid integration efforts

Redlining – the denial of services, often loans and mortgages to specific neighborhoods, usually on the basis of the applicant’s race

“A typical white person lives in a neighborhood that is 75 percent white and 8 percent African American.”

In 1974, the Supreme Court decided the case **Milliken v. Bradley**, ruling that inter-district busing was not permissible. Detroit had begun a busing program which brought students from the suburban districts into the city and students from the city into the suburbs. The court ruled that such a program violated local control of school systems, and unless districts were explicitly formed with the desire to exclude students of color, busing could not be mandated between school districts (“Milliken v. Bradley”).

This ruling had massive effects on school desegregation efforts and directly ties to much of the de facto segregation we see in today’s schools. The phenomenon of **white flight** had already begun by the time *Milliken* was decided, but the case exacerbated this dilemma. Many white folks fled to the suburbs or attempted to secede and form their own school districts in order to maintain some degree of segregation in schools; this time, a protected form of segregation that could not be undone by busing.

Scope of the Problem

Residential Segregation

Through the 1960s, residential segregation was often legalized via **redlining** and racial covenants. These policies prevented people of color, usually Black families, from moving into predominantly white neighborhoods. Later on, zoning restrictions prevented certain types of homes, including smaller or multi-family units, from being built in a specific neighborhood, making it harder for low income people to move into neighborhoods. Because property ownership is one of the primary mechanisms that American families build wealth, many African American families were set back decades or centuries by explicitly racist housing policies. Even today, studies show that Black families are less likely to be approved for mortgages, or to have homes rented or sold to them, even when controlling for income (Greene, et al.).

This history of residential segregation has ongoing effects today. The average “white person lives in a neighborhood that is 75 percent white and 8 percent African American, while a typical African American person lives in a neighborhood that is only 35 percent white and 45 percent African American” (Greene, et al.). This residential segregation results in schools that appear to be segregated by “personal choices,” but are, in reality, the manifestation of a legacy of racist housing policies.

Unequal Resources

Schools in the United States are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local dollars. Most school districts, however, are primarily funded through local governments, and those local

Non-white school districts receive \$23 Billion less in funding than white districts.

governments primarily raise money through property taxes. What that means is that there are often huge gaps in school spending depending on how wealthy a district is. Wealthier districts, with larger homes, often take in more money in property taxes, and they fund schools at a higher level. Because of residential segregation and income inequality, many of the wealthiest districts in the country are also predominantly white.

A study from EdBuild found that, taken together, predominantly non-white school districts receive \$23 billion less in funding than predominantly white districts “despite serving the same number of students.” On average, white school districts spend \$13,908 per student, while non-white districts spend \$11,682 per student (“\$23 Billion”). Unequal financial resources mean less money for teacher salaries, books, school supplies, extracurricular activities, professional development, field trips, and more.

The Achievement Gap

Segregation is closely linked to student achievement. Test scores tend to be lower and dropout rates tend to be higher in segregated communities with concentrations of economic disadvantage (McArdle & Acevedo-Garcia, 11). This is likely due to a combination of a lack of resources for these schools and some of the difficulties that economically disadvantaged students are more likely to have in their home lives, including having to work a job in addition to going to school, or struggling with issues like chronic hunger.

School District Secession – when members of a community make a specific geographic area into a new school district

School District Secessions and Fragmentation

There are more than 13,000 school districts in the United States, and each of these districts has significant control over school funding and curriculum. Recently, however, there has been an increase in a phenomenon called “fragmentation” or “**secession**.” This is when people within a school district opt to form another smaller school district that operates independently from the district they are leaving. Since 2000, there have been 128 secession attempts in the United States (“Fractured”). Studies have shown that seceding smaller districts tend to be wealthier and whiter than the districts left behind (“Smaller Communities are ‘seceding’...”). Because of the *Milliken v. Bradley* decision, the formation of these new districts prevents desegregation efforts between independent districts. Additionally, because of the localized nature of school funding, forming new districts can allow wealthy parents to level new local property taxes which only benefit the schools their children attend.

There have been 128 school district secession attempts since 2000.

The Benefits of Integration

Many people advocate for integration of schools on the basis that integrated schools tend to lead to students of color having higher levels of achievement and better access to resources.

However, there are other reasons to support school desegregation. A report by McArdle and Acevdo-Garcia finds, “Integrated, diverse education has been shown to improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the development of cross-racial trust, and the ability to navigate cultural differences. Integrated schooling holds promise even for helping to break the vicious cycle of segregated housing and education, as students who attend integrated schools have been shown to more commonly seek out integrated settings in later life, including being more likely to live in diverse neighborhoods following graduation” (12). Thus, diverse educational environments can be beneficial to all students involved. Keep in mind, though, that it is also important to consider the effects of the steps needed to achieve such environments.

Civil Rights Act of 1964— a piece of Civil Rights legislation which outlaws discrimination on the basis of “race, color, religion, sex, or national origin”



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Britannica

Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell— a Supreme Court decision which said unitary school districts did not have to maintain racially balanced schools

Congressional Action

Congress has taken relatively little action on the issue of school desegregation since the passage of the **Civil Rights Act in 1964**. This piece of legislation enabled the Attorney General to bring cases against school districts that were refusing to comply with desegregation orders, and it allowed the Department of Education (at the time, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) to withhold funding from non-complying districts (Clotfelter 26). This was essentially the federal government’s way of enforcing *Brown v. Board*, and the law played a massive role in initiating the first wave of desegregation in the South. Congress has remained relatively inactive on the issue of school segregation since the 60s and 70s because schooling is typically seen as a duty of state and local governments to oversee.

Other Policy Action

Most policy action which has taken place on the issue of school desegregation has happened in the courts and in individual states. In the 1990s, there was a wave of court decisions which largely released school districts from their desegregation orders of the 60s and 70s. In 1991, the Supreme Court ruled in **Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell** that school districts no longer had to maintain racially balanced schools within the district. This decision was reinforced in 1992 by *Freeman v. Pitts* which freed school districts from the responsibility of addressing de facto segregation (Clotfelter 32).

Many states have taken various steps to address and reconsider their role in school desegregation. I recommend you look into the legislation passed by your own state. One example of state legislation that has impacted desegregation is that the state of Tennessee prevented the prevention or creation of new school districts, but the

legislature later changed that law. Since then, more fragmentation and secession has taken place.

IDEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS

Conservative View

Conservative lawmakers tend to be committed to principles of local control and governing close to the people.

Conservative lawmakers tend to have a deep commitment towards local control, especially surrounding issues of education. The 10th amendment leaves all powers not specifically mentioned in the Constitution up to the states, and many view public education as one of the primary rights not guaranteed or protected in the Constitution. This means that they often want to see the role of the federal government limited on issues related to schooling. Additionally, conservative lawmakers may be more likely to support having numerous smaller school districts in order to increase the responsiveness of districts to the communities they serve. Conservative lawmakers also tend to be committed to the concept of free choice for parents. They may recognize that current district lines and zoning laws prevent actual choice, and therefore, they may advocate for systems which allow parents a higher degree of mobility to opt into the schools of their choice for their children.

Liberal View

Liberal lawmakers tend to be committed to principles of equal protection.

Liberal lawmakers may be more willing to allow the federal government to intervene in issues of education, especially when they feel that there are equity concerns or that the principle of “equal protection” is not being fulfilled. However, liberal lawmakers are also likely to be weary of the burdens that full-fledged desegregation efforts may place on children of color and low-income children. Liberals tend to be highly aligned with workers unions, including the teacher’s union, and thus, they may defer to the interests of teachers on issues related to schooling.

AREAS OF DEBATE

The issue of school desegregation is incredibly complex and multifaceted. Below, I will help you all start thinking about solutions by listing some of the ideas that have already been proposed by lawmakers and community activists. This is not an all-encompassing list. I encourage you to think through new and innovative solutions and to consider how multiple solutions may be combined in order to have the most long-lasting effect.

Reforming School Funding

Title I Funding –
*federal funding
provided to districts
which serve a high
number of low-
income students*

As mentioned previously, school funding in the United States varies dramatically according to geographic area. To some, the issue of desegregation is not so much about the need to ensure students are in the same schools as it is about the fact that schools which primarily serve students of color are often underfunded in comparison to schools that primarily serve white students. To address this issue, some have suggested a remodeling of public school's funding model.

Currently, the federal government provides **Title I funding**. This funding is meant to subsidize school districts which serve a high number of low-income students. Some have suggested making Title I programs more robust so that they genuinely make up for spending gaps between wealthy and poor districts. Others have suggested expanding Title I funding so that it also provides funding on the basis of the racial composition of school districts, in addition to their economic composition.

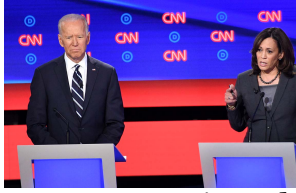
Another funding suggestion, which is perhaps more radical, is to completely restructure public school financing. Such a model might make all public schools funded by the federal government rather than local and state governments. This would likely result in a higher tax rate, but it could ensure more equitable spending across the board.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Responses to funding-based solutions do not fall neatly along political lines, as is the case with many solutions. Many liberal lawmakers are likely to support an increase in public funding for schools, especially via restructuring of Title I. However, many liberal lawmakers might see funding as insufficient in solving the issue of desegregation, and they may advocate for a solution which seeks to bring students of different races together. While some liberal lawmakers might support a complete restructuring of public education financing, others might view the project as too bold and outside of the realm of possibility.

Conservative lawmakers are more likely to support Title I funding reforms than many other types of reforms, as it still gives most discretion over spending to local governments. They might prefer specific designation that gives complete control to school districts to determine how funds are spent. They would also generally be opposed to increases in federal taxes. Conservatives are likely to avidly oppose a complete restructuring of funding, as they might view such a response as an unconstitutional overextension of federal authority.

Re-implementing Busing



Senator Harris and former VP Joe Biden debate about busing

AFP/ Getty Images

In the Democratic primary debates in July of 2019, the issue of busing came back to the forefront as Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) questioned Vice President Joe Biden’s record on busing. This rekindled a national debate about whether busing is a viable solution to address desegregation today. Some have argued that because of the resurgence of school segregation, it might be worthwhile to consider a renewed era of busing in order to combat the effects of residential segregation. Proponents of such a plan note that busing was once highly effective in reducing within-district segregation.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Such a plan is likely to raise concerns on both sides of the aisle. While some Democrats might support a bold vision, which promotes diversity in schools, others might question the negative impacts that busing could have on students of color. In the past, busing put an extreme burden on Black students by forcing them to undergo long commutes, and it caused many Black teachers to lose their jobs. Some Democrats might worry that history could repeat itself. Conservatives are likely to view busing as a federal overreach which undermines the control of parents to determine where their children attend school. However, some might be open to the possibility of such a program under the right conditions as a way to equalize resources.

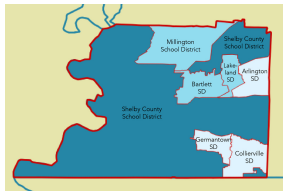
Reshaping School Districts

Because so much of modern-day segregation happens between school districts, some have suggested that it is time to consider reshaping school districts in order to equalize funding and diversity of student populations. Such a law might prevent the creation of new school districts or order the consolidation of others. This response is one way to respond to the disparities which have emerged between neighboring school systems.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Some liberal lawmakers may support such a suggestion as it would enable more widespread desegregation efforts without overruling *Milliken*. Additionally, they might view this solution as a response not only to non-diverse districts, but to inequitable funding as well. However, some Democrats might oppose such a plan as the consolidation of districts would likely lead to many teacher lay-offs which would likely be opposed by teachers unions.

Conservative lawmakers are more likely to oppose this plan, seeing federal restructuring of district lines as an overstep which infringes on units of local control. However, some conservatives might be open to such a solution because fewer districts might cut



Map of newly fragmented school districts in Memphis, TN

Chalkbeat

down on wasteful government spending (and reduce taxes), but they would need assurance that the following desegregation efforts were left up to the discretion of these newly formed districts.

Amending the Constitution

Education is not a right guaranteed in the Constitution, but many state constitutions do protect this right. Some people view this lack of federal protection as a major barrier to creating education reforms. Amending the Constitution to include equal public education as a right would give the federal government much more leeway in influencing how schools are run and ensuring equitability. Additionally, making education a guaranteed right would make it easier for lawsuits to be brought about to protect every student's right to receive a high-quality education. This could pave the way for overturning some court cases including *Milliken*. Additionally, this would make the United States much more similar to other countries around the world with higher ranked education systems.

In order to achieve a constitutional amendment, both chambers of Congress must vote in favor of an amendment with a 2/3 majority. The amendment must then be sent to and ratified by 3/4 of state legislatures around the country.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Many liberal lawmakers are likely to support an effort that makes federal oversight of education easier. Making education a federally ensured right would mean that lawmakers could oversee equity concerns between states and districts and make quality of public education more uniform across the board.

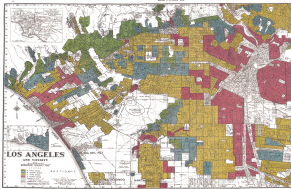
Many conservative lawmakers would be wary about the expansion of the federal government, and they might prefer that such decisions be left up to the states. However, some Republicans might view this as the only legally legitimate way for Congress to pass laws about public education. They might see the 10th Amendment as a barrier to passing laws about education, but explicitly amending the constitution changes this. Additionally, many Republican senators represent lower income states, and they might view this as a way to equalize funding between high income states like California and low-income states like Mississippi.

Increased ED Regulations

The federal government is often limited in what it is able to achieve in the world of education, largely because schools are primarily overseen by state and local governments. However, one way that the federal government is able to control the actions of school districts is through by making the receipt of federal funds conditional upon compliance with certain regulations. This is a

An amendment to the Constitution requires a 2/3 majority from both Congressional Chambers and ratification by 3/4 of state legislatures (or through a Constitutional Convention).

Private School Vouchers – A system which gives students public money to attend private schools.



Redlining map of Los Angeles
National Geographic

Mixed Use/ Mixed Income Housing—mixed income housing is a type of development that has housing at many different price points so that low income and high-income people can live together (for example in the same apartment building). These developments may be mixed use by including restaurants and office space so people can live and work together.

strategy that has been used by the federal government in the past to pressure states and districts to act in a certain way. It could be used again to encourage desegregation programs, to end tracking within schools, or to prevent further splintering between school districts.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Liberal lawmakers are likely to support such a system if they felt it could be used to increase equitable policies within districts. However, this strategy alone may seem insufficient to some lawmakers in terms of creating broader change as some districts may opt to ignore federal recommendations because of a lack of reliance on federal funding. This strategy might place more pressure on poorly funded districts than on richer ones.

While in the past, conservative lawmakers have been opposed to this heavy-handed approach from the federal government, it has been threatened frequently by the Trump administration on other issues, including the use of mail in ballots. This might signal a shift on the stance of the Republican party and a willingness to use federal funding as a mechanism to incentivize state behavior.

Addressing Residential Segregation

Some see residential segregation as the underlying cause of school segregation. Some proposals to reduce residential segregation include, funding **mixed use and mixed income developments**, public housing vouchers that educate folks on high opportunity neighborhoods to move to, less restrictive zoning practices, and much more. Though these solutions are not directly tied to education, they will certainly have an impact on who lives in various neighborhoods, and it can ensure that high income people are able to support services for low income people through their taxes.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Both liberals and conservatives are open to solutions for addressing residential segregation. Liberals are likely to support efforts which reduces zoning restrictions and encourage folks of different backgrounds to live side by side. They tend to support government-built housing or giving direct buying capabilities to low income people.

Conservatives are more likely to support something like mixed income developments or tax credits for private companies that build low income housing. They want construction to remain in the private sector, and they want to ensure that there is choice for residents in what type of neighborhood they want to live in.

Private School Vouchers and School Choice

Private school vouchers are a system that gives students money to attend private schools. As it takes a certain amount of

money, for example, \$13,000 to educate each child in the public school system, that money is simply given to their parent to pay for private schools. This system would address some of the school segregation that happens through private schools, and it would give low income students access to a higher quality education elsewhere.

Outside of vouchers, **school choice** is another frequently proposed solution. In this system, students may attend any school in their district. This creates competition between schools to provide strong results, and it allows students to choose schools which may be tailored to their interests, for example, a performing arts school.

School Choice—
programs which allow families options on where to send their child to school. Usually a combination of traditional public schools and charter schools.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Liberal lawmakers are often wary of programs which give government funding to private entities, as they are more difficult to regulate. Additionally, many private and charter schools do not allow their teachers to participate unions, which is a sticking point for some liberal activists. Some have stated that school choice does not actually decrease segregation as people tend to choose districts where people look like themselves. Lawmakers also worry that private schools are not always higher quality than public schools, and there is no way to ensure students are receiving a good education. However, some liberal lawmakers see these proposals as quick solutions to equity concerns in failing schools.

Out of all of the solutions proposed thus far, conservative lawmakers are most likely to support this one. This strategy introduces “market forces” into school districts and encourages competition between schools which should result in better outcomes for students as schools compete and innovate to attract new learners. This maintains parent control while also incentivizing growth.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The 2021 budget of the Department of Education is \$66.6 Billion, which is 8.4% less than in 2020 (US Department of Education). Any additional spending will need to be accompanied by an increase in taxes or cuts from other portions of the budget. Additionally, it is important to consider that many portions of this budget are generally predetermined, and spending cannot easily be shifted without adequate justification.

US Department of Education has a discretionary budget of \$66.6 billion.

CONCLUSION

The issue of modern-day school segregation is a complicated one without a simple solution. What we know is this: 1) schools today are becoming more segregated; 2) this segregation looks different than

it did prior to the 1960s, as it is often de facto rather than de jure and happens between districts; 3) there are severe inequalities in spending and outcomes between American public schools, often along race and class lines. This is a problem that the US must address. We cannot live in a country where children are subjected to worse resources or a worse quality of education because of their ZIP code or the color of their skin. It is up to you as lawmakers to determine our path forward. I hope that you will maintain a focus on equity and justice as you do so.

GUIDE TO FURTHER RESEARCH

One of the best places to start in your research is right in the bibliography, where I have cited all of the sources mentioned in this briefing. Reading directly from the sources will provide you with a more in-depth understanding on some of the topics which were summarized here.

Keith Meatto wrote a wonderful piece in the New York Times entitled, “Still Separate, Still Unequal: Teaching about School Segregation and Educational Inequality.” This article links to many resources about modern day school segregation- ranging from opinion pieces to data tools. The author also provides activities and questions associated with every source. Running through these activities can be a great way to hear more opinions on this topic and to test your understanding. You can also check out some of these resources: [The Opportunity Myth](#), [Learning Policy Institute](#), [The Fight to Desegregate New York Schools](#).

Another great way to keep up to date with this issue is to set Google News Alerts for different topics. This ensures that you are emailed whenever a new article is written on the topic. Make sure that you are using reliable sources such as well-known news outlets (for example, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, etc.) You can also consider turning to Google Scholar for pieces from peer-reviewed academic journals.

In terms of researching your Senator, I recommend that you look at your Senator’s website- it should be at *lastname.senate.gov*. For example, Elizabeth Warren’s website is *warren.senate.gov* and Lamar Alexander’s website is *alexander.senate.gov*. Here, you can find information on their biography as well as the issues they care about and the pieces of legislation they have sponsored in the past. This may give you some sense of how they feel on this topic. It is also very important to consider what state and which constituencies your Senator serves. The South has a very different history with desegregation than the North, but every state struggles with this issue.

If this is a topic that really interests you, I would recommend a book called *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* written by Charles Clotfelter. You might be able to find this book at the library. Though it is a bit older, it tells a very detailed story about the aftermath of *Brown v. Board* and how segregation re-emerged in the United States.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I want to recognize again that discussing race and racism can often be a difficult subject. Each of us have different lived experiences, and what may be deeply personal to one person may be unfamiliar to another. Every single one of us is learning and growing every day, and we all hold assumptions and biases about other people. What is important, is that we: 1) are constantly working to unlearn our own biases, 2) try our best to listen to other people whose life experiences are different than our own, 3) owning up to our mistakes, and 4) always strive to do better. Tolerance.org is an awesome website that can help us think through different ways to have difficult conversations and to learn and grow in our discomfort.

GLOSSARY

Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell– Supreme Court decision which said unitary school districts did not have to maintain racially balanced schools.

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Mixed Use/ Mixed Income Housing– Mixed income housing are developments that have housing at many different price points so that low income and high income people live together (for example in the same apartment building). These developments may be mixed use by including restaurants and office space so people can live and work together.

Plessy v. Ferguson– A Supreme Court case that rules segregation legal. Created the “separate but equal” standard.

Private School Vouchers – A system which gives students public money to attend private schools.

Redlining – Denying services, often loans and mortgages to specific neighborhoods, usually on the basis of the race of residents.

School Choice– Programs which allow families options on where to send their child to school. Usually a combination of traditional public schools and charter schools.

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