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## The New Brown v. Board of Education in Today's School Segregation

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### Introduction

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How do teachers invigorate young people to believe that they can make a difference when the world tells them that they are voiceless and powerless? This interdisciplinary unit offers teachers strategies and activities to galvanize students to understand concepts of school segregation, democracy and inequality in hope to cultivate budding civic leaders in the classrooms and beyond. In particular, students will acquire basic understanding of political science and games theories such as the art of coalition building, *Divide-the-Dollar* majority rule, and Schelling's model of segregation, in order to make informed decisions, arrive at collective compromises, and execute a service-learning project to benefit themselves, their school, and community.

Even though racial segregation has been illegal for close to 7 decades after the 1954 ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*, public schools remain largely segregated by race and income. Students are taught that racial segregation is a thing of the past and no longer an issue. In reality, more than ever, the best schools are only accessible to students with the wealthiest zip codes. Today the debate continues among parents, educators, policy makers, philanthropists, and activists about how to close the achievement gap between White children and children of color, the economic gaps between the wealthy elites and the perpetual poor, the health disparities where Blacks have shorter life expectancies and greater rates of heart diseases, as well as the unjust mass incarceration of young Black men for minor infractions in alarming disproportional rate.

According to a report by *The Century Foundation* based on data from the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), low-income students who attended affluent schools were roughly 2 years ahead in academic performances in comparison with low-income students who attended high-poverty schools.<sup>1</sup> Students in desegregated schools are less likely to drop out and more likely to go to college than students in racially segregated high-poverty schools. However, experts like Amy Stuart Well, Professor of Sociology and Education at Columbia University in 2010 reminds us: "Our approaches to school choice over the past 20 years have been pretty unimaginative — and children are paying for our lack of imagination."<sup>2</sup> She wrote that 11 years ago and very little has changed since. The new "Linda Brown" of today's segregated schools includes a majority of African American and Latinx students as well as an influx of recent immigrants from a multitude of countries in Africa and Asia. Basically, any student living in poverty regardless of race is the new victim of our segregated schools. Today the success of the a new "*Brown v. Board of Education*" battle to desegregate schools depends more heavily on how national, state and city legislatures will address the wealth disparity

and lack of equal access to job, housing and educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, and maybe less about filing court cases based solely on race which possess the damaging effect of fracturing coalitions among people of color. Nonetheless, attacks against modern segregation are needed in all fronts in term of race and class, judicial decisions and Congressional legislature, individual bias and institutional injustice. “Modern school segregation” is real, but rarely discussed in today’s classrooms, and often not included in the curriculum. Private bigotry as well as public policies like housing and labor laws, zoning, redlining, and other systematic racial practices continue to perpetrate inequality. Philadelphia, where I reside, is a perfect example of a segregated city with Black residents as the majority race at 42.1% and White at 37%, but the student population who attends public schools is 53% Black and 14% White.<sup>3</sup> In 84% of Philadelphia’s 381 census tracts, one race or ethnic group represents the majority resulting in White v. Black v. Brown neighborhoods; furthermore, the poverty rate is highest in North and West Philly where majority of its residents are Black.<sup>4</sup>

### **School Segregation and Reparations**

People immediately think of money when they hear the word “reparations,” but it is so much more than that. To me, reparations mean admission by our government that it did injustice to a particular group of individuals, an effort to restore “stolen” economic opportunities, and make tangible the process of healing. Reparations, a method to address injustices done, are not foreign to the United States. Native Americans have received land, programs and other benefits for being forcibly exiled from their native lands. Native American children were also forced into boarding schools, cutting their ties to their families; this type of “civilizing” method had denigrated the Native American culture, language and religion. For Japanese Americans, the government issued a public apology, paid \$20,000 to every living survivor of the internment camps amounting to a total of \$1.6 billion paid to more than 82,250 eligible claimants.<sup>5</sup> After the Civil War, our government paid reparations to White slave owners for their loss of “property.” Yes, it would be difficult to calculate the amount for eligible descendants of the enslaved, decide who gets what, and other difficult problems, but these are also good reasons to figure out the economic loss for the enslaved, and the generations of compounded negative impacts that still exist today, even if it were done as a symbolic gesture.

In his essay *The Case for Reparation*, Ta-Nehisi Coates wants people to stop laughing at the idea of reparations. He described today’s segregation this way: “With segregation, with the isolation of the injured and the robbed, comes the concentration of disadvantage. An unsegregated America might see poverty, and all its effects, spread across the country with no particular bias toward skin color. Instead, the concentration of poverty has been paired with a concentration of melanin.”<sup>6</sup> If you are a student of color living in poverty, you are doomed in a world of “double segregation” due to the intersectionality of your race and class. If you are a student of color living in poverty AND an English language learner (ELL), you’re trapped in a kind of “triple segregation” that confines you to “segregated and unequal schools” with nearly 100% people of color living in poverty.<sup>7</sup> Since 1968, the school enrollment for Latinx students has increased by 495%, and this large immigration influx of Latinx as well as other students of color continues to contribute to an increasing number of segregated schools.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, “racialized tracking” *within* a school sorted Black students out of advanced classes and educational opportunities leading to another kind of segregation *within* a school, clearly visible, classroom by classroom and lunch table by lunch table. While Black students make up 17% of the nationwide population, only 10% are in programs for the gifted, but a shocking 53% of remedial students are Black.<sup>9</sup>

## Rationale

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I teach in an inner-city school with a high concentration of students of color and English language learners. 100% of our students are classified as economically disadvantaged. Political, social and economic inequalities plight the daily lives of my students and their families. This curriculum is designed to address these issues of inequalities as well as Social Studies state standards related to liberty, justice, and democracy. To help students to master historical thinking, it is fundamental to read writings like the *Declaration of Independence*, the *United States Constitution*, and landmark cases like *Brown v. the Board of Education*. In addition, for the last 4 years, I've participated in a service-learning program called *Need in Deed* that focuses on inclusion of the student voices in identifying social issues, building a community culture, practicing general consensus by votes, and agreeing on one final project that the entire class will advocate. In the process, the class collectively researches solutions, interviews experts to deepen their understanding, and takes and executes action steps that will benefit the community. Elevating student voice is essential in building a classroom community of engaged, vested and motivated students fighting for the promise of democracy.

In order to tackle race and class segregation in our modern school system, "We the People" have the duty to confront the fact that giving underprivileged students of color equal access to a quality education is an urgent and national moral reckoning, and not a form of altruism by guilt. It is time long overdue that the U.S. government help the nation to rectify decades of public policies -- centuries if you included legalized and discriminatory practices like slavery and the 1830 Indian Removal Act -- designed to disadvantage Black Americans and other people of color. Reparations, return to a fair and systematic practice of affirmative action, and support for school integration through practices such as yellow-school-busing are possible solutions that immediately invite controversiality, divisiveness and objections. Today the term "Socialism" leaves a distaste in most Americans, similar to the reactions during the McCarthy era in the 1950s to the ideology of "Communism" as well as the backlash in the 1970s to 1990s against the second and third waves of "Feminism." In his 1992 GOP convention speech, Pat Robertson, a television evangelist, said: "The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."<sup>10</sup> This type of thinking amplifies fear in place of moral values and reasons.

### **Critical Race Theory: Why are Teachers Afraid to Teach?**

Today, at least six GOP-led states (Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia) are adopting laws to ban or restrict the teaching of critical race theory (CRT) and other controversial issues. In Arizona, a bill that would fine teachers \$5,000 for promoting one side of a controversial issue just passed in May 2021.<sup>11</sup> Free inquiry, free discussion, and free thinking are discouraged in elementary schools with the rationale that children are too young to think about difficult issues, and teachers should leave politics out of the classrooms. Even though CRT is not taught explicitly in K to 12<sup>th</sup>, teachers are repeatedly warned to be careful about what they teach, say and do. Yet all social issues are political and controversial in some ways. People will take on different positions depending on who they are, where they stand, what they know, what they don't know, and how they look at the world. Today teachers continue to walk on a fine line when discussing those hard topics and terms: The N word (associated with racism), the I word (Inequality), the B word (misogyny), the S word (sexuality), and the E word (evolution).

The classroom can serve as a microcosm to teach how a government works by asking questions like: What is

the purpose of a classroom? How is it structured? Who has the authority to make the final decisions about the distribution of privileges like treats? What are the pros and cons of a popular voting system v. the electoral college where winner takes all? What are the roles of leaders, citizens, and public servants? How and who makes rules, and determines the consequences when rules are broken? In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville writes: “There is nothing more prolific in marvels than the art of being free, but nothing harder than the apprenticeship of freedom.”<sup>12</sup> To be truly free, students need to learn the basis of how our government works and be the rising advocates of freedom for all.

## **My School Demographic**

My school demographics represent a highly diverse community with a wide range of cultural and language backgrounds. The languages spoken by this diverse group of multilingual students, teachers, administrators, and parents include: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, French, Hindi (India), Indonesian, Italian, Karen (Myanmar and Thailand), Khmer (Cambodia), Korean, Laos, Malays, Malawi, Nepali, Pashto (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Poqomchi (Guatemala), Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese, and other Indigenous languages. In 2020-2021, we have an enrollment of 419 students: 41% Hispanic, 38% Asian, 10% White, 8% Black, and 3% Multi-Racial.<sup>13</sup> About 67% is ELL, 5% had exited out of ELL services, and 15% are children of immigrants who are American-born (these students are NOT classified to receive ELL services, even though a language other than English is primarily spoken at home).<sup>14</sup> That’s an estimate of 87% of the student body is recent immigrants and/or children of immigrants.

I believe I’ve a huge responsibility to teach all students in a culturally responsive way that is compatible with – as well as challenging to – how their brains function in a language other than English. As teachers, we often underestimate our students, especially the ELL, Special Education students, and students of color, by giving them below grade level work. When a struggling reader is able to read texts 2 or 3 years below their grade level, it is NOT time to celebrate, rather it is time to set higher goals. Teachers need to stop promoting a false sense of accomplishment that often leads to crippling growth and institutional injustice. Primary sources like maps, data, and games from this unit can level the playing fields for all learners and at the same time, present new challenges and ways to think critically and imaginatively about their rightful place in our democracy. As a 1st-generation immigrant like many of my students and parents, I sincerely believe that education can lead the next generation to seek the right and best ways to govern our world, country, city and local community. Even though my students reside in a place where the American Dream is often an empty “promissory note,” I want my students to NOT only look outward for solutions, but also inward to redefine themselves as agents of social change and makers of their own destiny.

## **Content Objective**

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The word “Democracy” is NOWHERE to be found in the *Declaration of Independence* (July 4th, 1776) or the *United States Constitution* (written in September 1787, ratified in June 1788, and put into effect in March 1789). In the 18th century, the general consensus was that a government ruled by the people will lead to chaos and disasters; not all people are equal, and some people are unqualified to rule themselves. *The Federalist Papers* is a series of 85 essays written by James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton, published under the pen name “Publius,” in a number of New York newspapers. Written between October 1787 and May 1788, these essays were used to rally support to ratify the *Constitution* by addressing the

general fear of a democratic government where "instability, injustice, and confusion... have in truth been the mortal disease under which popular governments everywhere perished."<sup>15</sup> So why do we call our government a democracy, when equality for all is more a promise than a reality? What is the difference between a democracy and a republic? Who really governs us?

### **The Preamble of the Declaration of Independence**

The *Declaration of Independence* is a point of departure and a promise, while the *Constitution* is more like a set of living laws and commitments: some troubling, some transformative, and some lasting. Without debate, the most famous sentence from the *Declaration of Independence* is the 2nd paragraph: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."<sup>16</sup> At that time, the phrase "all men are created equal" was only meant for the colonists who were white, male, over the age of 21, and owned property (therefore, voters). By 1850, almost 7 decades after the *Constitution* and a decade before the Civil War (1861-1865), most white men WITHOUT property were enfranchised with the right to vote.<sup>17</sup> Slaves, women, Native Americans, non-English speakers, all people of color, and citizens between the ages of 18 to 21 had to fight for the right to be included, and often with multiple failed attempts. As of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the United States is still a young country of 245 years.

The *Declaration of Independence* (July 4, 1776) was designed to multitask with the goal to rally domestic and foreign support for the American Revolution in order to form a new country separated from Great Britain. The introductory sentence "declare the causes which impel them [the colonists] to the separation" explains the main purpose of this letter.<sup>18</sup> The Congress knew separation from the mother country will threatened the colonists' sense of security, economic stability, and identity, and also saw the need to stir emotion and inspire the colonists to put their lives on line for a better future. A list of 27 complaints against King George III secured the colonists' right to rebellion. Our Founding Fathers cast the revolution in universal terms for an international audience to read the subtext and join the global fight against tyranny. At the end of the document, it declares a complete break with Great Britain, and rightly claims "the United Colonies" as "Free and Independent States."<sup>19</sup>

### **The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution**

The Preamble of the *U.S. Constitution* reads: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."<sup>20</sup> Why is it important for elementary school students to study the Preamble of the Constitution? Studying the Preamble will help students to understand the essence and philosophy of our democracy. For about 100 days in the hot summer of 1787 (5 years after the American Revolution 1775-1783), some of the most forward thinkers of that times including Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and Roger Sherman came together to draft a new Constitution that would replace the weak Articles of Confederation (written in 1777 and ratified in 1781).

### **Wealth Disparity and White Poverty v. Black Poverty**

In 1960, Lyndon B. Johnson was quoted to have said: "If you can convince the lowest white man, he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you."<sup>21</sup> During the passing of Civil Rights Act of 1964, LBJ was impressively

skillful in his handling of Congress and the harsh objection from the White majority, especially in his native South. Poverty is not an equal opportunity experience, and is more persistent across generations of Black families than White families. According to Bernie Sander's 2015 presidential campaign speech, 400 wealthy Americans own more than the bottom half of the population (150 million people), and 25 best-paid hedge fund managers earn more than the combined salaries of the 425,000 public school teachers.<sup>22</sup> In 2014, the child poverty rate is higher than it was in 1974 (21%), and a Black child in 2014 is still 3 times more likely to be in poverty than a White child.<sup>23</sup> In a period of 40 years from 1974-2014, at least one-third of Black children was living in poverty.<sup>24</sup> Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote: "In its pervasiveness, concentration, and reach across class lines, black poverty proves itself to be 'fundamentally distinct' from white poverty."<sup>25</sup>

So, should we look at Black poverty differently than White poverty? There is no denying that many White Americans experience poverty. In number, there are more White Americans in poverty than Black Americans or members of any other racial or ethnic group.<sup>26</sup> In 2014, 19.6 million non-Hispanic White Americans were living in poverty, compared with 10.2 million Black Americans, 2.3 million Asian Americans, and 13.4 million Hispanic Americans of any race.<sup>27</sup> But on the persistence of poverty, White and Black Americans have different experiences.

In 2018, 53.9 million students were enrolled in K-12th education with 50% non-Hispanic White, 14% Black (7.7 million), 5% Asian (2.6 million), and 25% Hispanic (13.6 million).<sup>28</sup> Most K-12th grade students were native-born and a majority of 89% attended public schools and 11% attended private schools.<sup>29</sup> Students in private schools came from homes with higher incomes than those students who attended public schools. Attendees of private schools came from households with median incomes of \$109K, whereas students who attended public schools came from households with median incomes of \$79K.<sup>30</sup> In 2020 the median annual income earned by Black families was about \$35K, and by the Asian families was about \$53K which is \$20K higher.<sup>31</sup> No wonder Asian Americans are often mistreated with higher standards than White in college admission, and singled out as the Model Minority who doesn't extra privileges.

According to the book *Hollow Hope*, laws and actions designed to preserve segregation in our public schools and local communities can be divided into the 2 basic camps: 1) *Politics* (outside of a school and between school districts) include anti-NAACP laws, emergency power to officials, interposition, segregation committees, sovereignty commissions, and protests; 2) *Policies* (within a school) include compulsory attendance, school privatization, school closures, scholarship out-of-state, teacher removals, tuition grants, and withheld aid to desegregated schools.<sup>32</sup> Drawing on the research from both higher education and K-12 education, it has been shown that an integrated classroom with racial and socioeconomic diversity can benefit all students with academic, cognitive, civic, social-emotional, and economic advantages.<sup>33</sup>

## **Part 1: Landmark Court Cases on Segregation and Affirmative Action**

*Tape v. Hurley, 66 Cal. 473 (1885)*

*Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*

*Roberto Alvarez v. Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District (1931)*

*Brown v. Board of Education (5 cases, 1954)*

*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978)*

*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2019, appealing)*

*Tape v. Hurley*, 66 Cal. 473 (1885) is a less known landmark school segregation case. It was decided 7 years before the “separate but equal doctrine” segregation decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and almost 70 years before the “separate and unequal doctrine” desegregation decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In 1884, a prosperous middle-class Chinese American couple tried to enroll their 8 years old daughter Mamie Tape at the all-white Spring Valley Primary School in San Francisco, California. Principal Jennie Hurley refused to admit their daughter citing the school-board policy against Chinese children. The parents of Mamie decided to file a lawsuit on behalf of their daughter against both Hurley and the San Francisco Board of Education. Andrew J. Moulder was the then-Superintendent who urged the passing of desegregation legislation. The California Supreme Court ruled that San Francisco’s public school system must admit children of Chinese descent. At the time, anti-Chinese sentiment ran high in California. Many White Americans blamed the Chinese immigrants for taking their jobs. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that initially banned Chinese immigration for 10 years, but the exclusion lasted for over 60 years. It was repealed in 1943 by the Magnuson Act allowing 105 Chinese immigrants per year. Below is an excerpt from *Tape v. Hurley*:

“Every school, unless otherwise provided by law, must be open for the admission of all children between six and twenty-one years of age residing in the district; and the board of trustees, or city board of education, have power to admit adults and children not residing in the district, whenever good reasons exist therefore. Trustees shall have the power to exclude children of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.”<sup>34</sup>

*Roberto Alvarez v. Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District (1931)* is another less known but successful desegregated case in California. Commonly known as the *Lemon Grove Incident*, the case happened during the Depression era (46 years after *Tape v. Hurley*). In January 1931, a group of Mexican-American students were barred from attending their local elementary school by then-Principal Jerome Green. Back in December 1930, Green disobeyed the school board and asked a 12 years old student named Roberto Alvarez to alert the families of the plan to build a segregated school for 75 children of Mexican origin. Alvarez was an exemplary 5<sup>th</sup> grade student who spoke excellent English, so the parents selected him as the chief plaintiff to represent all of the children. In March 1931, the district Superior Court of San Diego County ruled in favor of the plaintiffs stating that the school board had violated state laws because ethnic Mexicans were considered *White* under the Education Code. The school board meeting’s minutes did not record the court case. Principal Green was shortly fired after the court decision. The children’s book *Todos Iguales, All Equal* by Christy Hale recounts this landmark case with illustrations, a ballad, photographs, and other factual information. Below is an excerpt of a 2016 resolution filed with the Secretary of State to commemorate the case’s 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

“WHEREAS, The Alvarez case is important because it was an historic first... an example of a community taking action and establishing the rights of their children to equal education, despite the local, regional, and national sentiment of that era that favored not just segregation, but the actual deportation from the United States of persons of Mexican heritage; and WHEREAS, The parents of the excluded pupils refused to accept this injustice, and organized themselves into the Comite de Vecinos de Lemon Grove, sought help from the local Mexican community at large, and eventually obtained the professional services of distinguished San Diego attorneys Fred C. Noon and A.C. Brinkely.”<sup>35</sup>

*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), was a landmark decision (commonly known as the “separate but equal” doctrine) by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) that ruled segregation laws was

constitutional. In 1892, Homer Plessy, an octoroon (a person with 7/8 White and 1/8 Black ancestry) deliberately violated the Louisiana's Separate Car Act of 1880 which required Black passengers to be seated in separate railroad cars from the White passengers. Plessy pleaded not guilty, but the Louisiana Supreme Court convicted him. He appealed to SCOTUS, and lost with a 7-1 decision that claimed the Louisiana Supreme Court did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.<sup>36</sup> The decision gave power to states to enact laws that separated Black people from White people, and barred Black people from bathrooms, fountains, restaurants, hospitals, hotels, housing, job prospects reserved for White Only, and thus, legitimized the Jim Crow laws in many Southern Confederate States.

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) is a landmark SCOTUS case that overrides the ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. SCOTUS declared state laws establishing separate public schools for students of different races to be unconstitutional. The decision dismantled the legal framework for racial segregation in public school. In February 1951, the Topeka NAACP filed suit at the District Court. Citing the decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the District Court judges denied relief on the grounds that the Black and White schools were equal with respect to buildings, transportation, curricular, and qualifications of teachers. The plaintiffs appealed to the SCOTUS in 1952, and were joined by 4 similar NAACP-sponsored cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. The Court's ruling combined these five cases under the heading *Oliver L. Brown et. al. vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*. Mr. Brown was the assigned lead plaintiff in the Kansas class action suit, and became namesake of the court decision. Thurgood Marshall as Chief Counsel for the NAACP argued before the Court that separate school systems for Blacks and Whites were inherently unequal, and thus violated the "equal protection clause" of the 14th Amendment. Marshall also argued that segregated school systems had a tendency to make Black children feel inferior to White children, and thus such a system should not be legally permissible. In September, Chief Justice Fred Vinson, who had been a major stumbling block to a unanimous decision, died and was replaced by Governor Earl Warren of California. Warren had supported the integration of Mexican-American students in the 1947 case *Mendez v. Westminster*. When *Brown v. Board of Education* was reheard, Warren was able to bring the Justices to a unanimous decision.

In May 1954, Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion stating, "We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the 14th Amendment."<sup>37</sup> The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision forced the desegregation of public schools in 21 states which intensified resistance and racial violence in the South, particularly among White supremacist groups and government officials sympathetic to the segregationist cause.<sup>38</sup> In one of the most notorious resistance, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered the state's National Guard in 1957 to bar nine Black students from entering Little Rock Central High School. The SCOTUS decision encouraged, empowered and mobilized activism across the nation. Boycotts, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, marches, nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization all come to define the Modern Civil Rights Movement.

*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (438 U.S. 265) is a 1978 SCOTUS landmark decision about affirmative action. Allan Bakke, a White man who was twice rejected admission to the medical school of the University of California Davis (UCD), filed a suit against the university for "reverse discrimination" on the basis of him being White.<sup>39</sup> Bakke charged that his grades and test scores were much better than those of many accepted minority applicants. The UCD countered saying its affirmative action program was justified to create more physicians likely to work in underserved areas. The SCOTUS, in a highly fractured ruling (6 separate opinions), upheld the lower court decision, and agreed that the use of strict racial quotas (16% reserved for



minority applicants) was unconstitutional, and ordered the medical school to admit Bakke.<sup>40</sup> HOWEVER, it also contended that race could be used as one criterion in college admissions. Bakke was admitted to UCD, the university cannot set strict racial quotas, but affirmative action programs that take race into account can continue in the college admissions process in order to create a diverse school environment. In the 2003 affirmative action case *Grutter v. Bollinger*, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor set the year 2028 (in 25 years) as a potential endpoint for racial preferences.<sup>41</sup> Since the 1978 ruling of *Bakke*, most colleges use a “whole person review” model to consider many qualities about each candidate including race. SCOTUS also ruled in *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2016) that colleges must prove that race-based admissions policies are the only way to meet *diversity* goals.<sup>42</sup>

*Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* (2014 to Present) is a lawsuit concerning affirmative action in college admissions, filed by a neoconservative organization called the Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), representing a group of anonymous Asian American applicants rejected by Harvard admission.<sup>43</sup> SFFA is led by Edward J. Blum and claims that Harvard discriminates against Asian-American applicants. The opinions of Asian American groups are divided regarding this affirmative action case. Some coalitions of Asian American organizations believe that the accusation of discrimination is an attempt to pit marginalized students against each other, and the case uses Asian Americans as the decoy to end affirmative action, and give a masked legitimacy for White supremacy.<sup>44</sup> Critics of Blum accused him of spreading divisiveness to obliterate diversity programs and civil right protections that traditionally benefit all people of color. On the opposing side, in 2015, a coalition of more than 60 Asian-American organizations filed federal complaints with the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice against Harvard University.<sup>45</sup>

In 2019, U.S. District Court Judge Allison Burroughs rejected SFFA’s claim and ruled that Harvard did not unduly discriminate against Asian Americans. The SFFA filed an appeal with the 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals and lost. In February 2021, SFFA petitioned the SCOTUS to hear the appeal. In May 2021, Harvard filed its opposing brief. SCOTUS is expected to issue a decision on whether it will hear the case in August 2021.

An excerpt of the SFFA’s petition against Harvard reads: “Each year, many of Asian-American applicants with excellent leadership skills, competition medals, extraordinary SAT scores and GPAs, are unjustifiably rejected by Harvard and other Ivy League Schools. Studies have indicated that these universities have been engaged in systematic and continuous discrimination against Asian-Americans in the college admissions process, including: 1) Using racial stereotypes. 2) Using racially differentiated standards: *highest [standard] for Asians, next for Whites and lowest for Blacks and Hispanics*. 3) Racial rebalancing de facto racial quota: Asian admission rates in Ivy League Schools have been kept between 14-18% over the last twenty years despite the fact that Asian-American population has more than doubled since 1993...”<sup>46</sup>

An excerpt of Harvard’s petition against SFFA reads: “After years of discovery, SFFA produced no persuasive evidence to support its legal claims. The court of appeals found no error in the district court’s meticulous explanation... SFFA is not entitled to battle out the facts a third time in this Court... Harvard has a compelling interest in pursuing the educational benefits of diversity, finding the evidence at trial ... [makes] clear that a heterogeneous student body promotes a more robust academic environment with a greater depth and breadth of learning, encourages learning outside the classroom, and creates a richer sense of community.”<sup>47</sup>

## **Part 2: Maps, Data Analysis, School Ratings, and Game Theories**

In almost all 50 states, White students go to schools with other White students, and Black students go to schools with other Black students.<sup>48</sup> In Part 2 of this unit, students will study and compare 3 segregated maps, and then create their own by color-coding maps based on data about race and income. Some guiding questions include: How can school districts be better determined and managed to reduce segregation? What are some reasons there may be segregation within a school and what does it look like? In a 2017 finding from the National Center for Education Statistics, it shows how school segregation and economic disparities continues between Black and White students.<sup>49</sup> Black students are 5 times as likely as White students to attend a highly segregated school. 72.4% of Black students and only 31.3% of White students attend a high-poverty school. Black students who attend schools with more than 75% White students perform significantly better on standardized math tests than Black students in segregated Black and Brown schools. During school desegregation from 1960s to 1980s, the racial achievement gap in K-12 education was rapidly closing.<sup>50</sup> However, in the 1990's when many desegregation policies were dismantled, the racial achievement gap widened.<sup>51</sup> The researcher Rucker Johnson tracked Black students exposed to the desegregation in the 1960s to 1980s and found a variety of positive outcomes such as better health, less likely to be incarcerated, higher earnings as adults.<sup>52</sup>

### **Rising Electoral Power of People of Color:**

In regards to the increasing electoral power of minority, about 25% (124 lawmakers) of Congress identify themselves as Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American, making the 117th Congress (2020) the most racially and ethnically diverse in history.<sup>53</sup> It's a 97% increase from 63 minority lawmakers over the 107th Congress (17 years ago).<sup>54</sup> The 2020 U.S. Census Bureau shows that the number of ethnic groups and its population has rapidly increased over the last decade. U.S. population in 2020 was 331.45 million people: 60% White (197.2 million), 18% Hispanic (60.47 million), 13% Black (44.08 million), <5.7% Asians (19.5 million), >1% American Indian & Alaska Native (4.19 million), 0.23% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.81 million), and 2.7% Mixed race (9.14 million).<sup>55</sup>

### **Big Business of School Rankings**

A company called Niche annually ranks schools under the categorization of Best Private Schools, Best Public Schools, Best Schools by State, Best Schools by City, and Best Teachers.<sup>56</sup> Some guiding questions for students when analyzing school rankings: Why do we rank schools, teachers, and students like competitive sports? If there is a winner, then there must be a loser... which states are winners and which states are losers? If a school is number one, then another school has to be last... is it fair to rank schools this way? In *Weapons of Math Destruction* (WMD), the author Cathy O'Neil explains how a good teacher was reduced to a dismal score without anyone understanding how such a math algorithm for teacher evaluation works, and some colleges "game the system" to get a higher ranking on the *U.S. News & World Report*.<sup>57</sup>

### **Game Theories Redesigned for Students**

Designing games for students to "play" and "have fun" is an effective way to teach the basic concepts of bargaining, voting with two-thirds majority rule, median voter model, and coalition-building. *Divide-the-Dollar* (DD) is a popular and hands-on game where 3 or more players simultaneously make demands to divide a dollar (or public funding) as they discuss social issues and form coalitions.<sup>58</sup> According to the median voter model, candidates often position themselves at the center of a one-dimensional issue to meet the needs of the median voters (2/3 majority of that issue). Please note: For 2 players, a major setback of DD is that

continuous division of a dollar will eventually yield a Nash equilibrium of 50/50 like a statemate.<sup>59</sup>

*Schelling Model of Segregation:* During the 1960s, the economist Thomas Schelling created a model that shows how a small racial preference for one's neighbors to be of the same race could lead to total segregation over time.<sup>60</sup> The model provides a surprising look at how otherwise civic individuals might self-segregate, even when that individual has no explicit prejudice. Schelling randomly placed equal number of nickels and pennies (representing 2 different agents or types of individuals) on a graph paper (representing a residential grid). If a coin has less than 33% (1/3) of its adjacent cells are of the same agent, that coin is "unhappy" and will prefer to move to another cell close to individuals like themselves. The 33% represents an individual's preference to live next to individuals who are like them. The higher the percentage, the faster the speed to total segregation eventually. The team Vi Hart and Nicky Case has created an online game and website called *Parable of the Polygon* based on Schelling's findings to how harmless choices can make a harmful world.<sup>61</sup> The premise is: Yellow Triangles and Blue Squares (called "little cuties") are only slightly bias (less than 33%). Even though every polygon *prefers* being in a diverse crowd, a polygon would want to move due to its small bias. This online game leads to the following conclusions: 1) equality is an unstable equilibrium like stacking a tower of cards, it is hard work that demands constant maintenance and is always in progress; 2) small individual bias can lead to large collective bias over time; 3) our world starts as segregated; 4) demanding diversity near your neighborhood over and over again may lead to a more diverse world.<sup>62</sup>

### **Part 3: Possible Solutions: Achievable or Unrealistic?**

According to an AP News article, some 500 students packed tables at a high school in Trenton, New Jersey to debate how to ease racial division in schools.<sup>63</sup> The conference brought together students from Ridgewood, Leonia, Cliffside Park and New Milford high schools. Students pitch solutions to end racial segregation in schools; these solutions included affordable housing, bank mortgages, residential rezoning, school rezoning, school choice, charter schools, privatizing schools, fixing existing schools, busing, and ending de facto segregation. One big insight from a student was: "Anything someone comes up with, somebody will have objections."<sup>64</sup>

Building coalitions is an art and a progress in flux and unpredictability. In the book *The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's School*, the author Dale Russakoff recounts how a group of influential people tried unsuccessfully to improve the Trenton School District in New Jersey. The list of people includes then-mayor Cory Booker, then-governor Chris Christie, Mark Zuckerberg, consultant Christopher Cerf, Superintendent Cami Anderson, community leaders like Ras Baraka, principals like Jonna Belcher, teachers like Princess Williams, and students like Tariq Anderson. Zuckerberg contributed one million dollars to jumpstart this initiative, but once the money ran out and key people also moved on, the collective effort dissipated. Robert Dahl wrote in his book *On Democracy*: "Democracy, it appears, is a bit chancy... With adequate understanding of what democracy requires and the will to meet its requirements, we can act to preserve and, what is more, to advance democratic ideas and practices."<sup>65</sup> The will to improve the Trenton School District disappeared once the funding discontinued.

## Teaching Strategies

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This unit is designed to be taught intermittently throughout the school year, but teachers can choose to teach in consecutive weeks and/or only Part 1 or Part 2 before Part 3. My curriculum unit have three main foci.

Part 1 (3 lessons) in the Fall (September): Students will be introduced to our Founding Fathers' ideas about democracy to challenge students' own ideas about current social issues. Students will recite and celebrate the Preamble of the Constitution on September 15<sup>th</sup> (International Day of Democracy) and/or September 17<sup>th</sup> (Constitution Day). Students will close read landmark court cases such as *Brown v Board of Education*. Possible field trips to the National Constitution Center and Independence Hall will be arranged. Part 1 of this unit will also align with the content of my ELA curricula from Module 3 of Wit and Wisdom titled: *The Red Coats Are Coming!* The essential question is: "Why is it important to understand all sides of a story?"

Part 2 (3 lessons) in the Winter (November): Students will address segregation by researching and analyzing at data and statistics with an emphasis on map-reading, map-making, and graphing x and y coordinates. With interactive platforms like Google Suites and the Racial Dot Map, students can map the city based on race and income; these online activities will integrate geography, math concepts, social behaviors, and public policies for student exploration.

Part 3 (a set of cumulative activities) in Spring (April to June): Students will create possible solutions as part of their service-learning project, plan and execute action steps, and present their findings to classrooms within and outside their school districts. I will align my students' service-learning project with a Philadelphia-based program called Need in Deed. Below is a list of nine teaching strategies (TS1 to TS9) for the unit:

TS1) Set up a Quotation Station as an ELA Center for independent work: Before the 1st day of school, collect quotes with the term: democracy and/or inequality and place them in a folder or a container. Teachers can print out and cut the quotes to be distributed. According to a 1995 study (almost 3 decades ago) from the University of Kansas, children from wealthy families hear as many as 45 million words, and children whose parents are on welfare, *may* hear 13 million, a difference of over 30 million words. This disparity is known as the "30-million-word gap."<sup>66</sup>

Bloom's Taxonomy	Instruction for students	Example of sentence starters: "Quote #1 was analyzed by [Student's name]"
Remember	Write, read, and recite quote to mastery	"Aung San Suu Kyi (born 1945 -) said the following quote: [Insert quote]"
Understand	Explain the quote	"This quote states..."
Analyze	Make inference	"I can infer..."
Apply	Research three facts	"Here are three facts about the speaker..."
Evaluate	Justify opinion(s)	"In my opinion..." or "I agree/disagree..."
Create	Write an original quote	"Democracy..."

Above is a sample chart that include instructions for each quotation using the Bloom's Taxonomy and sentence starters.

TS2) Set up a Map and Geography Centers (based on Math standards). Before the 1st Day of school, collect

different types of maps of the United States such as physical, political, income, race, segregation maps. Sample Maps #1: "3 maps that show school segregation in the U.S." in *Vox.com* or *Urban Institute*, August 28, 2014. Sample Maps #2: "Philly: Color-Coded: Racial and ethnic makeup of Philadelphia by ZIP code," in *Phillyvoice.com*, March 12, 2015.

TS3) Icebreakers with primary sources Collect photos and political cartoons on school segregation on Google Slides. Show each photo or political cartoon and use one of the following graphic organizers or strategies with sample student answers:

*Notice and Wonder* strategy for the 1904 caricature of "White" and "Jim Crow" rail cars by John T. McCucheon. <https://usscmorals.weebly.com/plessy-v-ferguson.html>. Sample #1 Q&A: "What three things you notice and what 3 things you wonder about in this photo? I noticed two cars. I wonder why one of the cars is called Jim Crow."

*WonderSix-Word Caption* strategy for the photograph: Mrs. Nettie Hunt, sitting on steps of the Supreme Court, holding a newspaper, explaining to her daughter Nikie the meaning of the decision banning school segregation, 1954. <https://www.loc.gov/item/00652489/>. Sample #2 Q&A: "Can you use only 6 words to sum up this photo? Mother, daughter on steps of Justice."

*Would You Rather* strategy for the political cartoon "U.S. Kids Not So Good at Math:" at [www.Otherwords.org](http://www.Otherwords.org). Sample #3 Student Q&A: "Would you rather go to the WORST school with all of your friends OR to go to the BEST school with strangers? I would rather go to the WORST school with all of my friends because..."

TS4) Read aloud anchored texts: *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence* by Gretchen Woelfie and *Todos Iguales (All Equal)* by Christy Hale. Discuss themes about inequality. Example: No human being is equal if they are owned by another human being. Below is an example using the 4-layered HRL equity framework from the book *Cultivating Genius* by Gholdy Muhammad to address the Pursuit of: Identity, Skills, Intellect, and Criticality.<sup>67</sup> This lesson is based on the book *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence* and the Preamble the *Declaration of Independence*.

Identity: Students will be able to (SWBAT) use the Preamble of *Declaration of Independence* to define how the word "equal" include and/or exclude people?

Skills: ELA: SWBAT discuss the main ideas and details to write a summary (RL.2). Math: SWBAT use the definition of an acre to estimate areas of public spaces on a map (MD.A.1). Science: SWBAT explain the science of dough and how baking works (5-PS-3: Matter). Social Studies: SWBAT recite the Preamble of the DOI and interpret the phrase: "Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness" in their own words (5.1.3.C).

Intellect: SWBAT will discuss why the DOI did not include the rights of slaves, women, children, Native Americans, immigrants, white male adults who do not own land, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized groups.

Criticality: SWBAT write a collective DOI for the classroom, the school or the community based on survey, consensus, and coalition. Challenge the class to write it with less than 35 words.

TS5) Close Reading of written documents, court decisions and petitions. 1<sup>st</sup> reading asks: "What are three words that resonate with or puzzle or surprise you?" 2<sup>nd</sup> reading asks: what do you think the phrase/sentence/paragraph/passage mean? What is the author's purpose? Who wrote this? For Whom? 3<sup>rd</sup>

reading asks: What is the message (theme)? Do you agree or disagree with the author? If you can reread or add a sentence to the text, what would it be and why?

TS6) Mock Trial Procedures for *Harvard Admissions* case: Read overview of the facts of the actual case from Content Objective. Conduct a brief discussion of the SCOTUS decision. Ask students to take a stand “for” or “against” the court decision. Divided into 3 groups: Petitioners, Respondents, and Supreme Court Justices (9 people). The 2 opposing groups prepare their arguments to be used in front of the 9 Justices. Before the testimony, the 9 Justices will discuss pros and cons of their decisions. Optional: Have students to create own baseball cards with facts for each Justice. Dress like a Judge with a black t-shirt or robe. With support from the “Supreme Court Lessons,” in the *Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement*, teachers can request lawyers and judges to be work virtually with your school to reenact the simulation.

TS7) Maps and data collection: With interactive platforms like Google Maps and Google Earth, students can map the city based on data on race and income; these online activities will integrate math concepts, social behaviors, public policies, grassroots movement like Black Lives Matter, and other related topics to paint a big picture about democracy and inequality.

TS8) Games (online or hands-on activities): use an existing version or create your own sets of rules. Play *Divide the Dollar* using paper, pencils and two-color-sided coins (or dimes and quarters). Discuss concepts such as two-three rule/majority rule, median voter model and coalition building. The median voter model basically says in a major rule system of an issue, the candidate most preferred by the median voters will be elected. This is why candidates often position themselves at the center of an issue to meet the need of the median voters. Have students brainstorm a list of causes and effects on school segregation. Through voting and coalition building, have students iron out the top 10 problems. With the list of problems, make a survey such as a Google Form that allows students to rate these problems in a spectrum from 0 to 10 of importance. 0 is the least important and 10 is the most important.

Play an online or hand-on game based on the Shelling Model of Segregation: *Parable of Polygons* website, Harvard computer science Professor Frank McCown’s website at stanford.edu (2014), OR watch one of the following videos: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAzkHC5sUsk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAzkHC5sUsk), [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhsPjluWH2Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhsPjluWH2Y), or [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EglV9K\\_iXs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EglV9K_iXs).

TS9) Service-Learning Project, Interview Guest Speaker(s), and Community Outreach: Students will research possible solutions for a group selected problem, and plan action steps for a spring celebration. Some possible actions include: letter writing, voting registration campaign, public testimony, educational video, etc. Guiding questions: 1) Do you favor or oppose the busing of Black students from one school district to another? 2) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: White people have a right to keep Blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and Blacks should respect that right? 3) Which laws would you vote for or against? Examples of laws: A homeowner can decide whom to sell to, even if they prefer not to sell to Black people. A homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color.

## Classroom Activities

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### Part 1: Landmark Court Cases on Segregation and Affirmative Action.

Prerequisite: Access student's prior knowledge with the quotation station and brainstorm a list of causes and effects of segregation. See Teaching Strategies: TS1, Quotation Station and TS2, Map and Geography Centers.

Lesson 1: What Is Democracy? Begin your lesson with an icebreaker, see TS3, *Notice and Wonder* or simply ask: "What does inequality and/or democracy mean to you?" After a brief discussion, read aloud the anchored text: *Mumbet's Declaration of Independence*; see TS4, Read aloud. After the read aloud, close read the Preamble of the *Declaration of Independence* or the Constitution. See TS5, Close Reading.

Lesson 2: Landmark Cases Before and After *Brown*. Begin your lesson with an icebreaker; see TS3, *Would You Rather* or simply ask: "Where are the BEST and WORST schools in the United States?" Discuss the case *Brown v. Board of Education*. Close Read an excerpt from the following cases before *Brown*: *Tape v. Hurley*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. and *Roberto v. Lemon Grove School District*. [Optional: Show the PBS T.V. Special, "Explore San Diego: The Lemon Grove Incident, 1985]. Close read cases after *Brown* such as: *Regents of the University of California* and *Students for Fair Admission v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*. Refer to Content Objective with direct quotes of these case decisions.

Lesson 3: Mock SCOTUS trial of *SFFA v. Harvard*. See TS6 for details of the procedures to conduct the simulation. Some discussion questions: Why only 9 Justices? How do people vote? Are voters motivated by emotion, logic, experiences, moral values and/or self-interests? What does the word "fair," "equity" and "equal" mean?

### Part 2: Maps, Data, School Rating, and Game Theories on Segregation.

Prerequisite: Access student's prior knowledge of U.S. geography with a mapping station. Review the names and locations of the 50 states by watching a video such as "The U.S.: 50 States" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0phA72dr1-Y>. Have students take an online quiz from the Seterra's website: <https://online.seterra.com/en/vgp/3285> (Cartoon and Flag Version).

Lesson 1: United States Maps by Race and Income. Discuss and define what is a segregated school or what is a White school and what is a Black school. Guide students to agree on a ratio percentage such as 75% White would be considered a White school. From TS2, show and discuss the "3 maps that show school segregation" from the *Urban Institute*<sup>68</sup> and "Racial Dot Map" website from the *Cooper Center*.<sup>69</sup> Divide students into 7 regional groups and have them color-code data based on income or race on a blank map. Regions: 1) Northeast (New England & Mid-Atlantic), 2) Southeast Central, 3) Northwest Central, 4) Southwest Central, 5) Rocky Mountains, 6) Far West (Pacific), 7) Alaska & Hawaii (Noncontiguous).

Lesson 2: Play the game *Divide the Dollar* with paper and pencil to keep scores. Model the game with 3 players for the whole class. Rules: 3 players will divide \$1.00 equally. It may be easier for students to use dimes and pennies OR divide a hundred dollar in bills. Each player will choose a social issue such as animal rights, child abuse, or public health for COVID-19 as their platform. Players will be given 5 minutes to talk and form coalition to achieve a majority. Majority rule means "winner takes all." Gradually increase the number of players within each social issue until every student has a voice in how and with whom to form a majority. The

class can play this game whenever there is an issue that requires a majority vote. To acquire the majority vote, students will learn how to influence, convince, negotiate, reason, and communicate, see TS8.

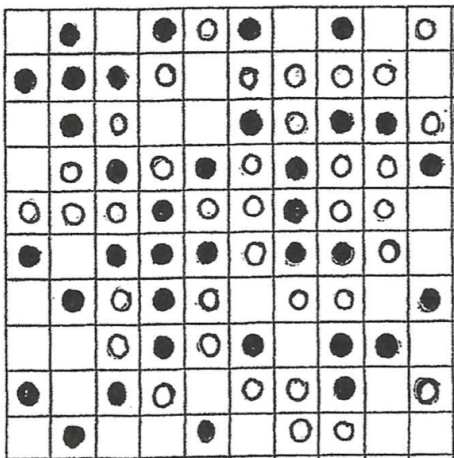
Example	Social Issue	Divide \$1.00 equally	After coalition (5 minutes)
Player 1	Animal Rights	$1/3 = 33\% = \$ 0.33$	$2/3 = 66\% = \$ 0.66$ (majority)
Player 2	Child Abuse	$1/3 = 33\% = \$ 0.33$	
Player 3	Public Health	$1/3 = 33\% = \$ 0.33$	$1/3 = 33\% = \$ 0.33$ (minority)
Result		\$ 0.01 leftover No winner	Player 1 and Player 2 will take all and receive \$1.00.

Above is a chart to illustrate how the game DD with 3 players can be played.

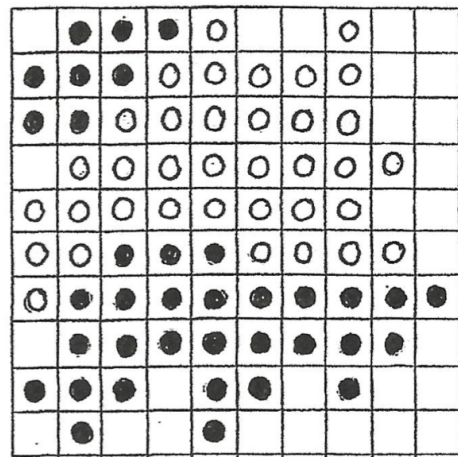
## Schelling's Modern of Segregation

### Explanation to Students:

1. Black coins are quarters and White coins are dimes.
2. Have two players quickly and randomly place the quarters and dimes on the 10 x 10 grid.
3. Players will take turns moving each "unhappy" coin that has less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  (equivalent to 2 out of 4) of the same coins adjacent to it.



Random Pattern



### Result:

The quarters (Black coins) are segregated from the dimes (White coins).

Lesson 3: Play an online or hand-on game based on the Schelling's model of segregation. Visit the *Parable of Polygons* website with your students and have them play the game online, see TS8. For younger students, I have created a simpler hand-on game for two players.

Above is my illustration of a random pattern (initial stage) and the result (final stage) after moving the "unhappy" coins based on the Schelling's Model of Segregation.



### Part 3: Possible Solutions: Achievable or Unrealistic?

Teaching is an organic process with important moving parts; honoring student voices is an important part of the process. After your class has voted on ONE agreed social issue (your students might or might not want to pick “school segregation” as their class project), brainstorm possible solutions. Allow students time to research and discuss what can be done. Invite classrooms from within and outside your school district, experts and community partners as collaborators, expert consultants and guest speakers. For a list of service-learning projects, visit Need in Deed’s website ([www.needindeed.org](http://www.needindeed.org)) under “Student Projects” and its 2021 Virtual Shout Out Museum. See TS9 for additional details.

## Appendix on Implementing District Standards

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The goal of this interdisciplinary unit is to empower 4th-8th grade students to problem-solve and act like civic leaders by integrating ELA, Math and Social Studies standards.

ELA Common Core Standards: Vocabulary Acquisition (L.4): Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-levelled text. Key Ideas and Details (RI.4.3): Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why. Text Types and Purposes (W.1): Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Math Common Core Standards: Solve multistep word problems posed with whole numbers using the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding (OA.A3). Solve word problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions referring to the same whole and having like denominators, by using visual fraction models and equations to represent the problem (NF.B.3.D).

PA Social Studies 4th Grade Standards: Civics & Government Standards: Describe the principles and ideals shaping government such as equality, majority rule, checks and balances (5.1.6.C). Identify needs and rights in the classroom, school, and community (5.2.4.A). Describe the sources of conflict and different ways conflict can be resolved (5.2.4.B). Geography: Spatial distribution, size, density and demographic characteristics of population at the county and state level (7.3.6.A.1). History Standards: Distinguish between fact and opinion from multiple points of view and primary sources related to historical events (8.1.4.B).

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