

Overview of Desegregation in Minnesota Schools

1. History

a.) Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

United States Supreme Court held that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities based on race are inherently unequal.

Impact: Segregated schools are required by law to integrate by race. This still holds true today.

b.) Booker v. Special School Dist. No. 1, Minneapolis, Minn., 351 F. Supp. 799 (D. Minn. 1972).

Minnesota Supreme Court held that Minneapolis Public Schools is segregated. The Court held this was the result of intentional acts and required the District to desegregate and stop its unlawful actions.

The Judge in Booker stated: “This is not an effort to assess blame; it is an effort to vindicate plaintiffs' rights. Blame for segregation rests firmly on the shoulders of all of us”.

Impact: Court monitoring of a desegregation plan. This ended in 1983 when MN Dept. of Education assumed the duty of monitoring MPS efforts to desegregate.

c.) Skeen v. State of Minnesota, 505 N.W.2d 299 (Minn. 1993).

School finance case. Minnesota Supreme Court held that students have a fundamental right to a general and uniform system of public education, which provides an adequate education. However, that right does not extend to any particular funding scheme.

d.) Minneapolis Branch of the NAACP v. State of Minnesota., No. 95-14800 (Minn. Dist. Ct. filed 1995).

Plaintiffs claimed that the state maintained a system of concentrated poverty and racial segregation that as a result interfered with students receiving an adequate education mandated by the state constitution as established in Skeen.

Impact: Case settled by agreement to a 4 year *Choice is Yours* program that provided transportation for students of color and low-income Minneapolis students to enroll in suburban school districts.

2. Current Minnesota Litigation:

Alejandro Cruz--Guzman, et. al. v. State of Minnesota et. al., Court File No.: 27-CV 15-19117, Filed 11/2015 in State District Court, Hennepin County. Honorable Susan Robiner. (“Deseg lawsuit”).

Plaintiffs, who are enrolled in MPS and SPPS, claim these schools are segregated, unequal and therefore inadequate. Plaintiffs state this is a violation of their fundamental rights under the Minnesota Constitution and case law, which mandate an adequate education. Th plaintiffs sued the legislature, the Governor and the Minnesota Department of Education to provide a system of education that is constitutional.

Status: The parties to this lawsuit are currently mediating this case. This means they are trying to reach a solution that will resolve the plaintiff’s claims to the satisfaction of everyone involved as well as the judge presiding over the case. If the parties cannot come to an agreement, the case will go to trial in early 2021.