

Engaging Jim Crow Education: Who is Allowed to Learn and Why?

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“Schools are key institutions where Americans make each other racial: not only are schools central places for forming racial identities, but they are key places where we rank, sort, order, and differently equip our children along racial lines even as we hope for schooling to be the great societal equalizer.” (Pollock, Colormute, 4)

African American Education: Pre-Civil War

“Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave.” Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*



Reconstruction/Post-Reconstruction

- 1871, Alcorn University established
- 1878, Renamed Alcorn A&M College
- Governor: “There is no need multiplying words about it, the negro will not be permitted to rise above the station which he now fills” since education only “renders him unfit for the work which the white man prescribed.”



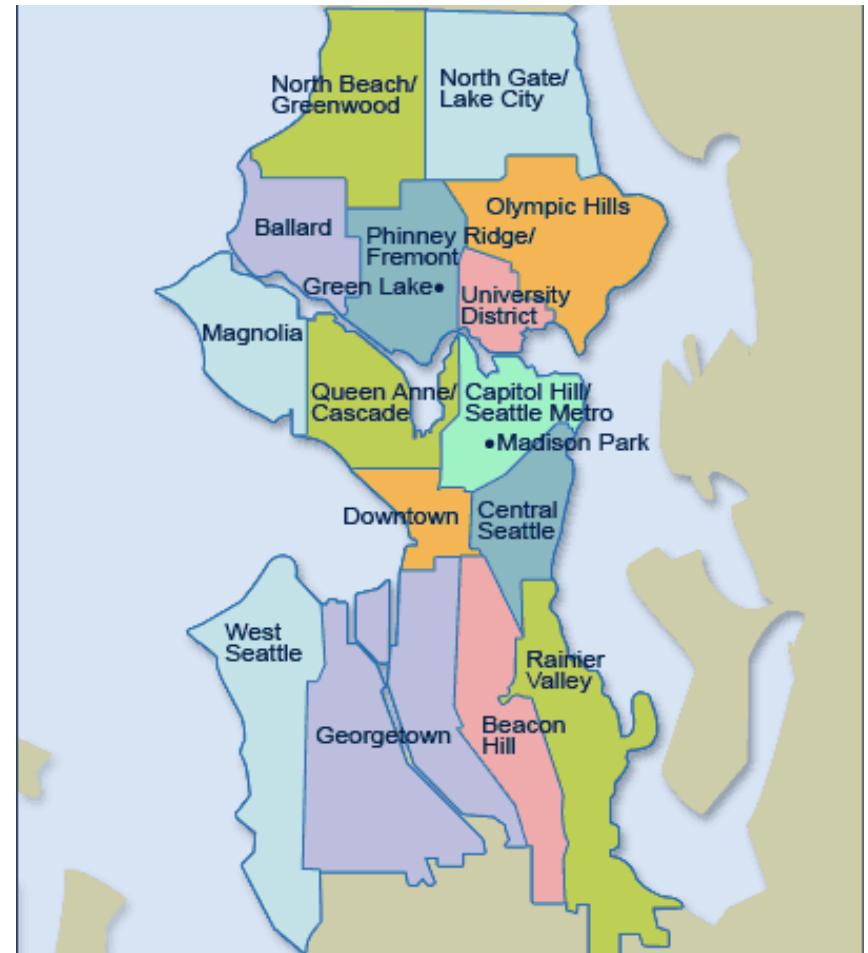
Brown v. Board of Education

- *Brown II*
- VA county closes schools for four years
- Vouchers
- Black teachers and principals fired



More Recent Examples

- Standardized testing
- Behavioral disorders
- Culturally deprived
- *Parents' Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*



Mexican Americans and Schools

Question: Are Mexican Americans “white?”

- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848
- CA School Code, early 20th century
- “Brown not white,” post-1954
- Receive “non white status,” 1973



Chinese Americans and Schools

Question: Where do Chinese Americans fit in the black/white binary?

- Positioned themselves as “better than blacks,” 1857
- Courts ruled they were “colored,” 1927

**YOUNG CHINESE GIRL
CAN'T ATTEND GRESHAM**

**Aliens Not Admitted Under the
Law—Pupils Must Be Nat-
uralized and of the Cauca-
sian Race According to Act
Creating Bibb Schools.**

Blacks Controlling their Own Educational Destiny

- Frederick Douglass
- Dunbar High School
- Morehouse, Spelman, Howard, and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities



Questions to Ponder...

- How can we represent race groups equitably in our curriculum and public events *and* highlight our students' more complex, blurry diversity?
- Is racial equality being adequately addressed and achieved by our reforms? When would targeting race groups in our reforms help children more? When would racial equality actually be best achieved by reforms designed for 'all'?
- How do issues of language, immigration status, or family income factor in? Since inequality systems include various factors intertwined with race, would it make sense to analyze our inequalities through several simultaneous lenses? Or should we target specific forms of inequality separately?
- Do racial achievement patterns exist in our school or district? Are we treating them as if they are normal or acceptable? How are we each involved in producing them? How could we each be involved in remedying them? And who else needs to get involved in the analysis and remedy?

Judge

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