



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2014 Volume III: Race and American Law, 1850-Present

Race, Socioeconomics, the Law, and Public Schools: Should the American Public Care if Our Schools Are Racially and Socioeconomically Segregated?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.03.06
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Over 60 years have passed since the United States Supreme Court declared that "separate but equal" schools were not constitutionally valid in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* (1954) decision. However, 20 years later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) that linking the fate of cities to the suburbs using busing was unconstitutional when one city did not impact policy in another city. Schools needed to be integrated, but the arbitrary lines of cities would be lines of demarcation. Those lines have grown into walls since 1974, leading schools to be even more segregated in some cases.

This unit is designed for students to investigate whether we should really care about segregation that is both racial and economic. The unit uses AP microeconomic concepts regarding revenues and costs to examine how schools function from an economic standpoint. It requires students to examine ten of the high schools in New Haven in order to understand the racial and socioeconomic demographics and how much is spent in each place. This will allow students to assess whether intra-district inequity and segregation exists. Once students have determined whether there is racial and socioeconomic equity, the unit will use the *Milliken* and *Sheff v. O'Neill* cases to understand the legal history affecting schools. To complete the unit, students will be asked to present solutions that could improve the outcomes within school systems. This entire unit requires students to think about the allocation of money. It will also ask them to consider if more money improves student outcomes.

This unit has been designed specifically for AP Microeconomics. It can be used in "Facing History and Ourselves" or U.S. History II civil rights units or for Civics. Designed for students in grades 11 and 12, the unit is also appropriate for strong readers in grades 9 and 10.

(Recommended for U.S. History, Civics, Microeconomics, and Social Studies, grades 11 and 12)

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