

# RESEGREGATION

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In May of 1954, the Supreme Court ruling *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka* ended segregation. No longer did American minorities have to fight the ideology of "separate but equal." Every American child was given the opportunity to learn on a level playing field; oppression due to racial and/or socioeconomic background was non-existent. Each child in the United States public school system received an equal education.

And then I woke up.

All hopes of renewing my faith in the American education system shattered. Although every classroom in America is "legally" desegregated, public schools are still battling seg-

regation. After many years of actively moving students to promote racially integrated schools, schools remain largely segregated by race and class.

"Resegregation," as coined by *The Raleigh News & Observer*, is occurring in public school across the nation. The state of North Carolina serves as a prime example of the new segregation. According to *The Raleigh News & Observer*, of over 2,000 schools in the state of North Carolina, 226 of the schools have a minority population of 80 percent or greater. 210 of those schools are classified as poor (66 percent or more of the students receive subsidized lunch).

Perhaps the idea of segregated schools is not completely negative. "I'm sure the students in minority schools are performing competitively with the rest

of the students of the state." If only the previous statement were true. Only 10 of the 216 minority schools are performing adequately on the state end of grade exams. Ten minority schools in the state of North Carolina had 66% or more of their students score at or above grade level on state issued tests. Ten. Although there are a few exemplary minority schools, the large majority of them are sub par.

Segregated schools are merely the part of a quickly snowballing problem. Individual classrooms exhibit a similar trend. Academic classifications placed on students are also fueling the separation of races. Children are often given academic classification well before they enter junior high school. After being categorized (usually by standardized testing),

many students find themselves stuck in a specific academic environment.

Where do minorities generally fall? They predictably fall in the lower

level and in learning disabled classrooms. I refuse to believe that minority students are unable to make academic gains and cannot function in challenging classes.

Now that the problem has been addressed, how do we go about making changes? Initially, I think that we need to remain informed and make an effort to know what is going on in American public school education. In order to be a solution to the problem, we have to thoroughly understand it. Involvement is also key. I think the minority population must step up as volunteers, mentors and examples to young minority students. The state of public education needs great reform. Resegregation is not a horrid nightmare, but a disheartening reality.

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