

*From Picket Lines to District Lines:*  
School Segregation in New Jersey

Created by: Sara Fischer  
Date: 13 May 2019  
Email: [fischer.saran@gmail.com](mailto:fischer.saran@gmail.com)

Lesson: *From Picket Lines to District Lines: School Segregation in New Jersey*

Date of Lesson: April 30, 2019

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Grade/Course: Human Rights Day

Lesson Duration: 60 Min

Topic of Lesson: A short history of school segregation in New Jersey, the practices that allow its continuance, and its long-term effects on students

Central Focus: At the end of this lesson students should have a clear understanding of what de facto segregation is, its long-term effects on students, and what some possible solutions may be.

Essential Question(s):

- What is de facto segregation?
- How are class segregation and racial segregation linked?
- What are the long-term effects of school segregation on minorities?

State / Disciplinary Standards:

6.1.12.A.13.b: Analyze the effectiveness of national legislation, policies, and Supreme Court decisions (i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, Title IX, Affirmative Action, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade*) in promoting civil liberties and equal opportunities.

6.1.12.D.14.d: Evaluate the extent to which women, minorities, individuals with gender preferences, and individuals with disabilities have met their goals of equality in the workplace, politics, and society.

6.1.12.D.16.c: Determine past and present factors that led to the widening of the gap between the rich and poor, and evaluate how this has affected individuals and society.

Daily Performance Objectives:

- Define de facto segregation and describe how it is different from de jure segregation.
- Describe one solution to school segregation in New Jersey school districts.
- Locate three segregated towns or cities in New Jersey.

Prior Knowledge Resources: Some misconceptions may be that there is no school segregation in the North or that the only type of segregation we can solve is de jure. Both of these are combated, the first by the John Oliver clip and the second by asking the students to identify possible solutions.

Academic Language: De Facto Segregation, De Jure Segregation, Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Abbott v. Burke* (1985), Socioeconomics, Abbott Districts

Materials and Preparation:

- Speaker
- Note Cards
- Hand Out – image analysis
- Expo Marker

Assessment / Evaluation: Based on the closing activity, did students gain something from this lesson, were they able to assess the effects of school segregation, and can they now create potential solutions to address the problem.

Lesson Progression:

Duration:	The teacher will...	The student(s) will...
"Four Corners": 10 Min	<p>Provide each student with a three-colored flip card (red, green, yellow) for them to be able to hold up. Ask students to raise a color dependent on their agreement with each statement (Disagree, Agree, Neutral).</p> <p>Ask list of questions for students to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "I know what school segregation is."</li><li>• "There is school segregation in the United States."</li><li>• "There is school segregation in New Jersey."</li><li>• "There is school segregation in my district."</li><li>• "African American and Latinx students are affected negatively by school segregation."</li><li>• "White students are affected negatively by school segregation."</li></ul>	<p>Raise different colors depending on their level of agreement.</p> <p>If there is a strong split within the class, a few students will answer why they chose to raise the color they did.</p>
John Oliver Clip: 5 Min	<p>Play the first five minutes of John Oliver's School Segregation episode (ending</p>	<p>Students will analyze the clip and will use the information provided in it to understand</p>

	<p>after Robert’s interview), available on YouTube (be aware of mild cursing and the use of the n-word). Write down the terms on the whiteboard as they come up in the video. After the video, ask if anything surprised the students or was interesting to them. If they’re unwilling to share, use the three-colored flip cards again.</p>	<p>the following presentation</p>
<p>A Short History of School Segregation in the US (PowerPoint): 15 Min</p>	<p>Review the powerpoint. Check in with students frequently to make sure they are engaged, understand the topic, and are asking and answering questions posed by the powerpoint.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to ask questions to clarify information they don’t understand. Questions will also be in the presentation to encourage higher thinking and analysis.</p>
<p>Image Analysis: 15 Min</p>	<p>As a class, go through the pictures in the powerpoint relating to a different city in New Jersey. These pictures come from the Brookings’s racial imbalance map. A list of questions will be on the board for the students to make guesses based on what they know of that area and what they’ve learned in class. After the students shout out their answers, the actual statistics of each district (which can be taken from census.gov) will show up on the board.</p>	<p>They will be tasked with answering whether the district is segregated, as well as with creating a list of descriptors to describe the students, resources, and futures of the students (what’s the graduation rate, average income, percentage of people in poverty, etc.). These are answers they can shout out - this is a great interactive moment where students will have to defend their predictions and compare them to other cities.</p>
<p>Closing Activity: 5 Min</p>	<p>Hand out notecards to each student and put the questions on the board. Task the students with answering one of the questions and have them turn the cards in when they’re done.</p>	<p>On a notecard, each student should answer one of the three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there long-term effects of school segregation on minorities? If so, what are they?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is one possible solution that, you believe, would help to minimize school segregation or the effects of school segregation?</li><li>• What is one thing you learned today about segregation that you did not know previously? Did it change the opinion or belief you came into class with?</li></ul>
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Homework:

- Think of ways you can stay aware
- Watch the rest of John Oliver's episode – available on YouTube

## Annotated Bibliography

Flaxman, Greg, et al. "A Status Quo of Segregation." *Civil Rights Project*, UCLA, Oct. 2013, [www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/a-status-quo-of-segregation-racial-and-economic-imbalance-in-new-jersey-schools-1989-2010/Norfler\\_NJ\\_Final\\_101013\\_POSTb.pdf](http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/a-status-quo-of-segregation-racial-and-economic-imbalance-in-new-jersey-schools-1989-2010/Norfler_NJ_Final_101013_POSTb.pdf).

"A Status Quo of Segregation" by Greg Flaxman is a comprehensive tool for understanding New Jersey's history of segregation, as well as the current problems surrounding the issue. The Foreword, while unnecessary for understanding the text, provides a short background on the qualifications of the author, as well as his concerns for the future of desegregation in New Jersey. The following Executive Summary is of most use as it includes a breakdown of the major findings that the author will go on to support throughout his report. These findings include the enrollment numbers based on race, regional differences, the percent of students experiencing racial isolation, percentage of students living in a low- or high-income household, and the progress that has been made since the original census reports in 1989.

There are sections on the racial and economic imbalances, the historical and legal background, as well as an objective look on school segregation through statistical evidence. This last section is particularly important to this lesson plan. He also includes a section on his data and methods, going into more depth on specific, regional trends afterward. This information could be ascertained through his prior sections but is expanded on for those that wish to have a more comprehensive understanding of his study. This section is useful if looking for a visual aid to

illustrate the data, as he uses many simple charts and diagrams. I found this source helpful for finding hard statistics on racial segregation in schools over the last few decades.

Otterman, Sharon. "New Jersey Law Codifies School Segregation, Suit Says." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 17 May 2018, [www.nytimes.com/2018/05/17/nyregion/new-jersey-school-segregation-suit.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/17/nyregion/new-jersey-school-segregation-suit.html).

"New Jersey Law Codifies School Segregation" by Sharon Otterman is a newspaper article detailing a lawsuit filed in 2018 by the Latino Action Network, along with about a dozen other plaintiffs. At the head of this lawsuit is the president of the Latino Action Network, Mr. Christian Estevez. The lawsuit calls on New Jersey to desegregate its schools. The article includes information to help orient the reader around the history of segregation in New Jersey, and the United States. It includes links to relevant and helpful studies, such as one by UCLA that breaks down which states are the most segregated. Sources like these could prove helpful to gain further understanding of the issue, or to keep for students that are interested in exploring the topic on their own.

The author of this article, to understand the historical underpinnings of New Jersey's current struggle with segregation, uses Elise Boddie, a law professor at Rutgers University who helped to organize this lawsuit, as a law expert on the matter. She explains the circumstances of de facto segregation in New Jersey – highlighting how New Jersey state courts decided in the 1960s that de facto segregation is illegal. The lawsuit also suggests several solutions. The article closes on the socioeconomic and racial statistics of the two schools that Mr. Estevez attended in his youth, one wealthy and white, and the other not, presenting a clear difference. I found this



source helpful as it provides a list of activists and organizations who are working to stop school segregation in New Jersey.

“School Segregation.” *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. Writ. Tim Carvell and Dan Gurewitch. Dir. Christopher Werner. HBO. 30 Oct. 2016.

This episode of *Last Week Tonight*, entitled “School Segregation”, begins with the problem: schools with less than 1% of white students have doubled in the last 20 years. John Oliver proceeds to shock audiences by acknowledging that most segregated schools exist not in the South, but the North. He addresses the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision which found that it is not only unconstitutional to have disparities in schooling between minority and white children’s schools, it is unconstitutional to have a separation of races.

John Oliver breaks down why school segregation has yet to come to an end in the North, going back to the original order that schools integrate in the 60s. The show then pivots to explain the benefits of bussing - transporting kids from one school district to another to equalize racial percentages - which includes increased funding for minority schools, as well as long-term positive effects. John Oliver discusses the end of the bussing program in Charlotte, led by a white father whose daughter was not assigned to a magnet school he wanted her to attend. The show acknowledges that the reason these bussing programs have ended is due to the belief that systemic racism has ended. He ends with a quick look at the small desegregation programs throughout the country that have worked.

It is important to remember that, while well-researched and perfect for academic purposes, it is presented as a comedy show on HBO. This means there is a moderate amount of

cursing. Consider the age group and maturity of the students, unless able to find a clean version online. While this source focuses on the United States as a whole, rather than New Jersey specifically, it is useful for gaining a broader context of the issue. It also provides a clear and concise reasoning for why even the most successful bussing programs in the South failed eventually.

Spring, Joel. *Globalization and Educational Rights*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

*Globalization and Educational Rights* by Joel Spring illustrates a student's educational rights on a global level, covering China, India, the West, and Islamic nations. The first section, entitled "Global Education and an Intercivilizational Analysis" speaks on educational rights universally. This section is helpful for understanding why education is a human right. It also tackles the issue of how a right can be universal, while still allowing for differing cultures and customs. The book then goes into four sections, each covering a different geographical range. These sections are entitled "China: Confucius, Mao Zedong, and Socialist Modernization", "Equality and Freedom in Islamic Education", "India: Education, Human Rights, and the Global Flow", and "Natural Rights and Education in the West". This lesson only used information and background from the last section, as this topic was specific to Western and American practices.

The section on Western education focuses mainly on how equality, specifically the Western and American idea of equality, affects one's right to education. It highlights educational discrimination in this section, as well. It provides historical context, including information on the Bill of Rights and Western Enlightenment. This source is a useful tool for understanding the historical and legal background of education inequality in the United States.

Whitehurst, Grover J. "Russ", et al. "Racial Imbalances in U.S. Public Schools." *Brookings.edu*, The Brookings Institution, 30 Nov. 2017, [www.brookings.edu/interactives/racial-imbances-in-u-s-public-schools/](http://www.brookings.edu/interactives/racial-imbances-in-u-s-public-schools/).

Grover J. Whitehurst's "Racial Imbalances in U.S. Public Schools" presents an interactive map of the ethnic ratios of public schools in the United States. It allows for students or educators to choose an area and compare the schools with a high percentage of Latinx, Black, or White students to one another. The site explains why some schools are considered outliers (and appear grey on the map), as well as their methodology for creating the map. This information is a helpful tool for students interested in research or statistical analysis.

The map itself has three categories: Black, White, and Hispanic. When a specific ethnicity is chosen, the schools with a high percentage of students fitting that ethnicity become colored. By clicking on the different races, one can see how the students are dispersed by race. Newark, for example, has very few schools with a high population of white students. There are a high number of Black and Hispanic schools, but they are not intermixed. The schools with a high percentage of Black students appear to be grouped together, whereas the schools with a high percentage of Hispanic students appear to exist only along the eastern border of the schools with Black children. I found this source helpful because it presents a clear image of the de facto segregation of schools in America and will be a useful tool in the classroom.

Rumberger, Russell W, and Gregory J Palardy. "Does Segregation Still Matter? The Impact of Student Composition on Academic Achievement in High School." *Education Week*, 2001, [secure.edweek.org/media/does\\_segregation\\_still\\_matter.pdf](https://secure.edweek.org/media/does_segregation_still_matter.pdf).

"Does Segregation Still Matter? The Impact of Student Composition on Academic Achievement in High School" by Russell W. Rumberger and Gregory J. Palardy provides a comprehensive, unbiased look at the history of school segregation and its continued legacy today. It provides a detailed look at studies which speak on the educational effects of both segregation and integration on students of color, as well as white children. It also takes on socioeconomic differences in district schools, as well as the effect of wealth on a student's education. This paper criticizes studies which improperly used or handled data to create a desired result and breaks down which data can be trusted, and which has been corrupted. This includes data from both sides of the aisle, those against desegregation and those for it.

This paper eventually concludes that the socioeconomic makeup of a school matters more than its racial makeup, as it has a largely effect on a student's success in education. This study also focused on secondary school, specifically grades eight through twelfth, rather than primary school, where the most difference has been studied between disparate schools. Four factors were found to have the biggest impact: teachers' expectations about students' ability to learn, the average hours of homework that students completed per week, the average number of advanced (college prep) courses taken by students in the school, the percentage of students who reported

feeling unsafe at school. It is this data which has been most helpful in creating a lesson which teaches about the differences of segregated and integrated schools, as well as their effect on their students' education.