



Lesson 3: With All Deliberate Speed

Students Handouts and Supporting Materials for Teachers

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Glossary of School Integration Terms

Busing: The transporting, usually court-ordered, of students across district lines to create more racially balanced schools.

Class Action Suit: A lawsuit filed by one person on behalf of a group of people who have the same complaint.

Controlled Integration (also known as *gradual integration*): Racially balancing schools in a slow and measured way, such as integrating a limited number of schools at a time or only one grade per year.

Faculty Integration: The process of assigning teachers and other staff members to schools based on race and in order to promote racial balance.

Forced Integration: Measures to desegregate schools that are court ordered or otherwise required and enforced by law.

Freedom of Choice (also known as *Controlled Choice*): A plan whereby families rank their preferences among schools, and then school districts assign students to their highest choice that is compatible with preserving integration.

Magnet School: A school or program that offers a special curriculum (not generally offered in non-magnet schools) and which typically attracts students from diverse backgrounds.

Massive Resistance: Actions taken to avoid court-ordered desegregation, including school closures and the passage of state laws.

Racial Ratios: Formulas used to assign students to schools so that the total number of Black, White, or other groups of students does not exceed a given percentage.

School Choice: In general, a program designed to improve local schools and empower lower-income families through the freedom to choose the kind of education their children receive. Examples in public education include magnet and charter schools. Private school choice gives lower-income students the opportunity to attend private schools through a voucher that families can use towards the cost of a private or religious school.

School Merger: The joining together of two or more schools with the goal of creating a more racially balanced student and staff population.

Transfer Plan: A process whereby students are reassigned to schools based on race and in order to promote racial balance.

Tuition Grants: In opposition to integration, some states provided public money so that white parents could send their children to private schools.

Unitary Status: A standing given to a school system that has effectively desegregated and has eliminated unequal schooling for minority and white students. Some courts have granted unitary status even when it is clear that segregation still exists, saying that everything practical has been done.

Voluntary Parental Choice: A plan that gives families the option to enroll their children in schools outside their neighborhood or zoned school in order to increase integration.

White Flight: A term used to describe the trend of white families moving out of neighborhoods that people of color have moved into.

Timeline of School Integration in Boston, Massachusetts

In the Supreme Court's unanimous majority opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Chief Justice Earl Warren stated, "Segregation in Boston public schools was eliminated in 1855." Warren was referring to a bill passed by the Massachusetts State Legislature a hundred years before *Brown*, which outlawed segregation in public schools. Early court decisions made no statement, however, on *de facto* segregation—the separation of racial groups due to housing patterns rather than legal requirements (*de jure* segregation). Since students usually attend schools based on where they live, the racially segregated neighborhoods of many Northern cities resulted in schools that were as segregated as those in the South during the 1950s and 1960s.

In the *Brown* ruling, the Supreme Court said that segregation—whether by law (*de jure*) or by fact (*de facto*)—is harmful to minority children because of the stigma of separation and the poorer quality of minority schools. In 1965, the Massachusetts State Legislature passed the Racial Imbalance Act, which prohibited "racially imbalanced" schools. The following timeline chronicles the early years of Boston's experiment to desegregate its public schools in the 1970s.

1972

Morgan v. Hennigan is filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, charging that Boston's public schools are unconstitutionally segregated. Documents from the Boston School Committee demonstrate a clear record of resistance to desegregation and "covert techniques to segregate the system."

1974-75 School Year

- The Phase I plan to remedy school desegregation is implemented. It calls for busing students from Roxbury (a mostly African American neighborhood) to South Boston (a primarily white neighborhood and the center of opposition to desegregation). Most schools integrate quietly, but in South Boston protestors stone buses, shout racial epithets, and engage in other violent behavior.
- After the beating of a black man in South Boston, Roxbury students react with violence, stoning cars and attacking Whites. Governor Frank Sargent calls out the National Guard.
- Many white families plan a boycott of the public schools, sending their children to tutoring sessions at night, where public school teachers, college students, and prospective teachers volunteer to teach. Violence against African American students continues, including a plan to overturn and burn busloads of black students (which is averted due to an anonymous phone tip).
- A black student at South Boston High School stabs a white classmate. An angry mob of white students quickly forms outside the high school. Three decoy buses are used to get the African American students home safely.

1975-76 School Year

- The Phase II plan to remedy school desegregation is initiated, which aims for a racial mix across all city schools. The city is carved into “slices” and the plan calls for busing whites from the outside of each slice towards the mostly African American center and vice versa. Specialized magnet schools are introduced, and the number of students bused rises from 14,900 to 25,000. Busing between South Boston and Roxbury continues.
- As Blacks and Latina/os are bused into Charlestown (a largely working-class Irish neighborhood) and Whites into Roxbury, residents of Charlestown resist. Many white parents pull their children out of the city’s public schools, opting instead for private or parochial schools. During the first week of school, Charlestown students boycott the schools while their parents stage protests against forced busing.
- Inside Charlestown High, African Americans face taunts and physical attacks from white students. They fight back by creating a Minority Students’ Council and a list of demands, including regular meetings with the school head and an end to racial profanity on campus. A group of 175 white students respond with a school boycott and their own list of grievances, including vulgarity among African American students, obscene and physical behavior toward white girls, and the persecution of white above black students.
- A fight breaks out after several white boys attack a black student. Police arrest four white students, and five African American students are suspended for three days under a school policy “penalizing both parties to any fight.” The next day, outraged minority students refuse to leave the buses when they pull up to Charlestown High in the morning.
- In January, white students stage a sit-in on the school’s main staircase, forcing school officials to lock African American students in upstairs classrooms for their own safety.

Violence and protest continued throughout the ensuing years, yet busing and desegregation continued in Boston schools. In 1990, control of the schools was returned from the District Court to the School Committee and some improvements were made to the system of mandatory busing. Three zones were created that used race and parental preference for assigning students to schools. A plan called “controlled choice” was introduced, which allowed parents to select their top school choices rather than being assigned to one school.

In 1999, the Boston School Committee voted to end the city’s 25-year-old racial desegregation program after a group of white parents threatened a lawsuit to stop the city from assigning students to schools on the basis of race. These parents claimed that the school system discriminated against white schoolchildren on the basis of their skin color by preventing them from attending schools of their choice.

Today Boston’s schools are no more integrated than they were thirty years ago. Since the 1970s, many white families have chosen to send their children to private and parochial schools, and many others have left the city all together for the surrounding suburbs. While 65% of public school students were White in the 1970s, today only 15% are White. People of color represent

less than 30% of the population of Boston, yet they make up about 86% of public school students (up from 48% in the mid-1970s). In addition, poor and minority students are still generally going to inferior schools as compared to their wealthier and mostly white peers in suburban schools. As Boston leaves its desegregation program behind, some people worry that the return to neighborhood schools could also mean a return to an unequal distribution of resources and opportunity in the public schools.

The article, School Integration in Boston was used as a resource for this timeline. It can be found at <http://www.4littlegirls.com>.

Timeline of School Integration in Danville, Virginia

1954: On May 17 the United States Supreme Court repudiates the doctrine of “separate but equal” facilities based on race (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537) and declares segregated education in the public schools unconstitutional. Their decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483) provides the legal foundation for school integration throughout the United States.

1956: Harry Byrd, an ardent segregationist and political kingmaker (one having great influence over the choice of candidates for political office), leads a “massive resistance” movement in Virginia to challenge the high court’s decision on desegregation. Claiming judicial overreach into state’s rights, the governor and general assembly pass laws to block school integration by withholding money for its implementation.

1959: Decisions by the Virginia Supreme Court and a federal court render Virginia’s “massive resistance” laws unconstitutional. State business leaders meet with Governor Lindsay Almond and persuade him to abandon his opposition to court mandated desegregation.

1960: Sacred Heart Catholic School, a parochial school established 1954 in Danville, admits children from two black Roman Catholic families and becomes the first school in the city to begin integration. Governor Almond directs all school districts in Virginia to integrate, thus ending the campaign of “massive resistance.”

1964: The U.S. Congress passes the Civil Rights Act (Public Law 88-352). The first black students attend George Washington High School in Danville under a “freedom of choice” plan, which allows any students to select either the formerly all black Langston High School or the formerly all white G.W.H.S. The lack of school buses and the city’s demographics severely limit the plan’s effectiveness, and no white students choose Langston High School.

1968: The Supreme Court in *Green v. New Kent County* (391 U.S. 430) declares such “freedom of choice plans” ineffectual in ending segregation and orders the schools to find a new approach to achieve integration. Charles H. Harris is elected to the Danville City Council, the first Black to sit on the council since Reconstruction. Voter registration in the black community soars, providing him a firm political base to push for full integration.

1969: The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare approves Danville’s new desegregation plan. The administration and faculty of both high schools, guided by school superintendent O.T. Bonner and high school Principal E.T. Motley, begin planning the transition.

1970: George Washington High School starts its first year as a fully integrated high school. On September 11, a scuffle between two youths, one white and the other black, breaks out at a high school football game and rapidly escalates into a racial conflict between the students. To quell any further disturbances, the public schools are closed on September 15 and re-opened the following day under a strict “get tough” policy enforced by the local police. The week closes out without any major confrontations. Averett College integrates its programs. The local Y.W.C.A. combines its two racially segregated programs into one integrated program.

1980: After serving on the Danville City Council for over 20 years, Charles Harris is elected the first black mayor of the city.

2000: According to the National Center of Education, the racial composition of George Washington High School stands at 39.2% white and 59.7% black.

Timeline compiled by Clara G. Fountain and James Verdini, and reprinted with permission from Averett University Library

Timeline of School Integration in East Baton Rouge, Louisiana Parish Schools

1956: Desegregation lawsuit filed on behalf of 37 North Baton Rouge African American students

1964: Freedom of Choice implemented in school system with very limited success.

1969: First major court order handed down ordering the closing of some schools, desegregation of some schools mainly in Mid-City, North Baton Rouge, Baker, and Zachary. It also orders the integration of the faculties and staffs at all schools.

1970: Court-ordered busing plan implemented.

1974: Plaintiffs file motion saying 1970 plan did not desegregate system. Judge E. Gordon West rules against motion saying school system is unitary. NAACP appeals to U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

1978: Fifth Circuit vacates Judge West's order and remands the case back to the Middle District of Louisiana for more hearings. Case assigned to Judge John V. Parker.

1980: U.S. Justice Department successfully files for a Summary Judgment in the case. Judge orders the NAACP and Justice Department to meet with the School Board to come up with a plan for desegregating schools. After rejecting the School Board Magnet School Plan, Judge Parker orders a desegregation plan involving clusters and pairs at the elementary level, single grade centers at the middle school level and revised high school districts. The School Board submits a new middle school plan that is accepted by the courts allowing students to attend one school for all three grades. School Board appeals ruling while implementing the plan.

1981: Elementary schools part of the plan is implemented.

1982: Secondary Schools part of the plan is implemented.

1983: U.S. Fifth Circuit reaffirms the lower court ruling. U.S. Justice Department submits its own desegregation plan to possibly end suit. School Board rejects plan.

1989: School redesign plan setting up special programs to voluntarily desegregate program instituted.

1996: Consent Decree between NAACP, School Board and U.S. Justice Department calls for board to improve facilities and educational opportunities for students. This plan replaced Judge Parker's 1981 plan with a new plan consisting of neighborhood schools with magnet programs.

2001: Judge John Parker resigns from case and is replaced by Judge James Brady.

2001 or early 2002: School Board to ask that the federal courts declare the system unitary.

2003: US District Judge James Brady dismisses objections at fairness hearing, approves final settlement agreement, ends 47-year old desegregation case.

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Timeline of School Integration in Little Rock, Arkansas

The 1957-58 school year at Little Rock Central High School should be looked at in terms of what happened in Arkansas prior to it, during it and immediately afterwards. The following timeline presents a brief glimpse into the key events.

September, 1949: University of Arkansas School of Law is integrated.

January, 1951: Little Rock Public Library board approves integrating its facilities.

May 17, 1954: The U.S. Supreme Court rules racial segregation in the public schools is unconstitutional in *Brown V. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas.

May 22, 1954: The Little Rock School Board issues a policy statement saying it will comply with the Supreme Court's decision when the Court outlines the method to be followed and the time to be allowed.

May 24, 1955: The School Board votes unanimously to adopt Superintendent Virgil Blossom's plan of gradual integration that would start in September 1957 at the high school level and add the lower grades over the next six years. Mr. Blossom is named "Man of the Year" by the *Arkansas Democrat* for his work on desegregation.

January 23, 1956: Twenty-seven black students attempt to register in all-white Little Rock schools, but are turned down.

February 8, 1956: The NAACP files suit on behalf of 33 black children denied admittance to four white schools.

August 28, 1956: Federal Judge John E. Miller dismisses the NAACP suit, declaring the Little Rock School Board had acted in "utmost good faith" in its integration plan. The NAACP files an appeal.

Fall 1956: The city's public buses quietly are desegregated with no problems.

April 29, 1957: The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis upholds Judge Miller's dismissal.

Spring 1957: There are 517 black students who live in the Central High district and are eligible to attend Central in the fall. Eighty express an interest in doing so. Following interviews with the



Superintendent and staff, 17 are selected for the first year of integration at Central. Eight of those later decide to remain at all-black Horace Mann High School.

Summer 1957: With desegregation scheduled for September, opponents organize the Capital Citizens Council and the Mother's League of Central High School.

August 27, 1957: A member of the Mother's League files a motion seeking a temporary injunction against school integration. Pulaski County Chancellor Murray Reed grants the injunction "on the grounds that integration could lead to violence."



August 30, 1957: Federal District Judge Ronald Davies nullifies the injunction.

September 2, 1957: Governor Orval Faubus calls out the Arkansas National Guard to surround Little Rock Central High School to preserve the peace and avert violence that may be caused by extremists who came to Little Rock "in caravans."

September 3, 1957: Judge Davies orders desegregation to start the next day.

September 4, 1957: The nine black students attempt to enter Central High but are turned away by the National Guard.

September 9, 1957: The Council of Church Women issues a statement opposing segregation and deploring the Governor's calling out the guard. It calls for a citywide prayer service for September 12.

September 20, 1957: Judge Davies rules that Faubus had used the troops to prevent integration, not to preserve law and order as he claimed. The Governor removes the Guardsmen and the Little Rock Police Department take over.

September 23, 1957: As a crowd of 1,000 mills around in front of the school, the nine black students go inside through a side door. A white student takes them to the principal's office where they are to receive their class assignments. When the mob learns the students are inside, it becomes unruly and the police fear they will be unable to maintain control. The black students are taken out of the school through a side door.



September 24, 1957: Little Rock Mayor Woodrow Mann sends President Eisenhower a telegram asking for federal troops to maintain order and complete the integration process. The President announces he is sending 1,000 members of the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock. He federalizes the 10,000 members of the Arkansas National Guard.

September 25, 1957: Under escort by the Army troops, the nine black students are escorted back into Central High.

October 3, 1957: Georgia Dortch and Jane Emery, editors of Central High's student newspaper *The Tiger*, editorialize: "Looking back on this year will probably be with regret that integration could not have been accomplished peacefully, without incident, without publicity." The editors encourage "each individual to maintain a sensible, peaceful neutrality; to accept the situation without demonstration, no matter what personal views are entertained; and to make these, your years in Little Rock Central High School, the happiest and most fruitful of your academic education."

October 17, 1957: A Mother's League petition to remove the federal troops who are there in violation of state and federal constitutions is dismissed by Judge Davies.

December 1957: Taunted by white male students, Minnijean Brown, one of the black students, dumps a bowl of chili on her antagonists in the cafeteria. She is suspended for six days.



February 6, 1958: Following additional altercations with white students, Minnijean Brown is suspended by the Board of Education for the remainder of the school year. She transferred to New Lincoln High School in New York City.

February 20, 1958: The Little Rock School Board files a request for permission to delay integration until the concept of "all deliberate speed" is defined and until effective legal means exists for integrating the schools without impairing the quality of the educational programs.

May 1, 1958: Central Principal Jess W. Matthews writes to the Seniors of 1958 in the school yearbook, "The graduating Class of 1958 will always stand out in my memory because...the class as a whole reacted so admirably to the shock of having the eyes of the world focused on the school...and the class united in a very cooperative way to leave a fine record of achievement in Central in a year that will no doubt be mentioned in history books for a long time to come."

May 27, 1958: Ernest Green becomes the first black student to graduate from Central High as he joins 600 senior classmates in commencement ceremonies at Quigley Stadium. Federal troops and city police are on hand but the event goes perfectly.

June 21, 1957: Federal District Judge Harry Lemley grants the delay of integration until January 1961, stating that while black students have a constitutional right to attend white schools, the "time has not come for them to enjoy that right." The NAACP appeals.



August 18, 1958: The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis reverses the Lemley delay order.

August 21, 1958: The School Board requests the Appeals Court to stay the order overturning Judge Lemley's decision for 30 days to allow the board time to appeal to the Supreme Court.

August 25, 1958: The U.S. Supreme Court announces a special session to discuss the Little Rock school desegregation issue.

August, 1958: Governor Faubus calls a special session of the state legislature to pass a law allowing him to close public schools to avoid integration and to lease the closed schools to private school corporations.

September 12, 1958: The Supreme Court rules that Little Rock must continue with its integration plan. The School Board announces the opening of the city's high schools on September 15. Governor Faubus orders Little Rock's three high schools closed.

September 16, 1958: The Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools is formed and asks for a special election as a way to keep the schools open.

September 27, 1958: Voters overwhelmingly oppose integration by a vote of 7,561 for and 129,470 against.

September, 1958: Public high schools in Little Rock close for the year, sending the city's 3,698 high school students to seek alternatives. More than 750 whites enroll in newly established private T.J. Raney High School. Others leave town or the state to live with friends or relatives to continue their education.



November 12, 1958: Five of the six members of the Little Rock School Board resign in frustration, having been ordered by a federal appeals court to proceed with integration of the high schools, even though it had no high schools to integrate.

December 6, 1958: A new school board was elected with its membership evenly divided between those favoring compliance and those favoring resistance to the court's orders.

March, 1959: Little Rock Chamber of Commerce votes 819 to 245 in favor of reopening the schools on a controlled minimum plan of integration acceptable to the federal courts.

May 5, 1959: Segregationist members of the School Board attempt to fire 44 teachers and administrators suspected of integrationist sympathies. The three moderates on the board walks out, refusing to participate.



May 8, 1959: Stop This Outrageous Purge, or STOP, and the Women's Emergency Committee are formed to recall the segregationist members of the board. On the other side, segregationists form Committee to Retain Our Segregated Schools (CROSS).

May 25, 1959: STOP wins the recall election by a narrow margin and the three segregationists are replaced by moderates on the School Board.

June 18, 1959: Federal court declares the state's school-closing law unconstitutional. The new school board announces it will reopen the high schools in the fall.

August 12, 1959: School board opens public high schools a month early. Three black girls quietly attend the new Hall High School in the upper income all-white area of west Little Rock with no fanfare. Governor Faubus addresses a segregationist rally at the state Capitol and guardedly advised them against any “rambunctious protest.” Carrying American flags, about 250 people then marched to Central High to protest. This time Little Rock police take the offensive, quickly arresting 21 and calling in fire hoses to be turned on the remaining crowd, which disperses. Jefferson Thomas and Carlotta Walls, two of the original Little Rock Nine, return to Central for their senior year.

Fall, 1972: All grades in Little Rock public schools are finally integrated.

September 28, 1977: At the 20th anniversary of the desegregation crisis, Ralph G. Brodie, the '57-58 student body president, speaks at a special occasion at Central where he pays tribute to the “moderate, quiet voices” who urged compliance with the law and an end to the crisis that eventually closed the four high schools at Little Rock for a year. He says only a small group of Little Rock residents are responsible for the city's bigoted, violent and prejudiced image, adding, “But for most of us, that image remains entirely undeserved.” He addresses three of the Little Rock Nine who were present: “You've done much to assure the rights of others. Yours were acts of courage, and I salute you.”



October 24, 1987: Thirty years after first entering Central High, the Little Rock Nine return as a group for the first time. They are met by Lottie Shackelford, Little Rock's second black mayor. Central High cheerleaders and other students-black and white-break into applause. Melba Pattillo Beals says, “What we feel this morning is joyous that we made it, and sad that we had to make it.” Benjamin L. Hooks, NAACP executive director, says, “We don't come to open old wounds, but rather to celebrate and commemorate the great moment in history that changed the course of this nation and changed it for the better.”

Reprinted from the Little Rock Central High 40th Anniversary Web site at <http://www.centralhigh57.org>

Timeline of School Integration in Montgomery County, Maryland

This timeline is edited from the original, which first appeared in the *Bulletin* of February 12, 1990 published by the Montgomery County Public School System and from the files of Peerless Rockville.

1860: Maryland establishes public schools for white students.

1867: Black parents advocate for a school in Rockville for their children.

1872: The Montgomery County Board of Education purchases a lot on the west side of Frederick Road in Rockville and opens a 1-room school house for grades 1 through 7. This building is replaced by a two-room school in 1883.

1927: Rockville Colored High School, the county's first high school for blacks opens. The Rosenwald Fund helps provide for two classrooms and a library for grades 8 to 11. The high school graduates its first class in 1931.

1935: Lincoln High School opens on Stonestreet Avenue in Lincoln Park.

December 8, 1936: Backed by the NAACP, William B. Gibbs, Jr. files a suit against the Montgomery County Board of Education for parity in teacher pay. Though the case is settled out of court, Mr. Gibbs loses his job.

October 8, 1937: The local branch of the NAACP is established 6 weeks after the settlement of the Gibbs case.

1951: Carver High School & Junior College opens. Rock Terrace Elementary School opens which combines students from four local elementary schools. Lincoln becomes a junior high school.

May 17, 1954: The Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ends segregation in schools.

Aug. 17, 1954: The Montgomery County Board of Education establishes an Advisory Committee on Integration.

Feb. 28, 1955: The Advisory Committee recommends a 12-year integration plan. Five dissenting committee members advocate for the integration of elementary schools by September 1956 and high schools by September 1957.

March 21, 1955: The Board of Education adopts a policy on integration with the following stipulations: employment be offered on the basis of merit, school boundaries be drawn without regard to race, students attend the school serving their district, and boundaries are to be redrawn, or new facilities built to relieve overcrowding.

April 28, 1955: The Board votes to close four substandard black elementary schools: River Road, Ken Gar, Takoma Park and Linden—and send students to all white schools serving those areas.

June 2, 1955: MCPS Superintendent Forbes Norris gives the order to begin implementing the Board's integration policy after receiving assurance from State Superintendent Thomas G. Pullen, Jr. that all legal barriers to desegregation in Maryland have been removed.

June 30, 1955: Forbes receives official notification from Pullen that the Supreme Court decision takes precedence over any state laws that forbid integration.

August 2, 1955: The Rollingwood PTA adopts a resolution against the plan to have Linden children enroll at Rollingwood.

April 23, 1956: The Board adopts the second phase of Norris's integration plan which provides for the integration of certain up-county schools.

Sept. 8, 1956: A group of Poolesville citizens hold an anti-integration demonstration at the county office building.

Sept. 17, 1956: Poolesville citizens argue against integration of their school before the Board. Parents who refuse to send their children to the newly integrated school relent after Norris threatens to take them to court for failure to comply with state attendance laws.

May 6, 1957: The board adopts the integration plan for 1957-58, which affects students in kindergarten through grade nine in the areas of Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Montgomery Blair, Northwood, Wheaton, and Walter Johnson.

May 29, 1957: The board appoints C. Taylor Whittier superintendent, effective Aug. 1, following Norris's resignation to accept another position.

September 1959: Margaret T. Jones assumes her position as the first black principal of Bannockburn Elementary School, a previously all white school. Her prior assignment as principal of Rock Terrace Elementary School is filled by Gerald G. Reymore.

1960-1961: Integration completed. Rock Terrace was converted to a high school for Special Education students. Carver becomes the administration building for the Board of Education.

1967: Bannockburn enrolls students bused from Meyer Elementary School in Washington, D.C. Participation is voluntary.

1971: The DC Board of Education ends the Bannockburn-Meyer program.

1976: The following elementary schools are merged: Rosemary Hills with Chevy Chase, North Chevy Chase with Larchmont, and Pine Crest with Montgomery Knolls.

This timeline reprinted with permission of the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Timeline of School Integration in Nashville, Tennessee



*Avon Williams, left, and
Z. Alexander Looby*

1954: The U.S. Supreme Court decrees school segregation illegal. Shortly afterward, Nashville attorneys Z. Alexander Looby and Avon Williams ask Nashville's local school boards to integrate schools. The boards decline.

1955: The two attorneys file a lawsuit, *Kelly v. Board of Education*, asking that a black Nashville teen be allowed to attend East High School, which is much closer to his home than all-black Pearl High. The Nashville board declines. The Davidson County School Board - then separate from the Nashville board - issues a statement that it will not arbitrarily delay desegregation, but it warns that "the wrong method of integration would seriously affect discipline and the contentment and happiness of the Negro student."

1957: Nashville school officials announce they will allow black parents to pick the schools they want their children to attend, but amid protests and fear of injury, only 13 black children show up at all-white schools. After the first day of school, a bomb blows up at Hattie Cotton Elementary, where a black child attends. No one is hurt.

1958: Federal court rejects the voluntary parental choice plan. Nashville school board promises to integrate schools one grade each year, starting with first-graders.

1960: A second lawsuit, *Maxwell v. County Board of Education*, is filed to force integration of the Davidson County school system - a system separate from Nashville's before the onset of the consolidated Metro government of 1963.



1961: Federal court tells Davidson County schools to catch up with Nashville by integrating grades 1-4.

Under the watchful eyes of the Davidson County sheriff, a father leads his two sons into Mt. View Elementary in 1961, as Nashville begins integrating grades 1-4.

1967: A decade after the start of desegregation, 50 public schools in the now consolidated school system remain either all White or all Black.

1970: Black plaintiffs tell the federal court that integration has not advanced far since 1957. They cite a recent report that shows 83% of white students in Nashville attend classes that are more than 90% White. The court orders schools to desegregate the teaching staff.



1971: The U.S. Supreme Court approves busing as a means to achieve immediate desegregation. A federal judge orders Nashville schools to bus, with a goal of attaining a 75 to 25 Black-White ratio in most schools, but 33 schools, mostly suburban and mostly White, are excluded from the order. There are angry protests but no violence.

Two young children find picketing a bit tiring and take a break from busing demonstrations in front of the Metro Board of Education in September of 1971.

1972: Metro Board of Education asks the U.S. Supreme Court to exempt Nashville from its desegregation order until it exhausts all legal appeals. The high court refuses to hear the plea.

1979: White enrollment drops by 20,000 during the decade of the '70s, as those dissatisfied with public schools enroll in private academies or move elsewhere. A federal judge orders both sides to rethink the agreement governing school integration.

1983: After several tries, a new court agreement ends the previous exemption from integration of 33 mostly white schools. It also relaxes racial ratios so that each school must aim to be within 15 percentage points of the system's overall Black-White ratio.

1992: Newly elected Mayor Phil Bredesen says that "to backslide in desegregation will kill our dreams as a city." Efforts intensify to bring Blacks and Whites together voluntarily at "magnet" schools offering specialized programs.

1998: After several years of planning and debate, the two sides in the continuing court struggle over desegregation agree to remove Nashville schools from federal court oversight. The court agrees, as a new, five-year set of guidelines called the School Improvement Plan is adopted. It eliminates racial goals while allowing parents more school choice and calling for more schools that will bring students together voluntarily.

2000: Schools begin to show significant signs of resegregation, as parents get more choices to send children to schools closer to home.

2001: The school board hires Pedro Garcia, who vows to improve student test scores at all schools, regardless of their racial makeup.

2003: Responding to requests by black parents who want to send their children to schools closer to home, the school board agrees to expand education programs in the inner city, knowing that it will add to resegregation. At the same time, the system's overall achievement tests show improvement.

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Timeline for School Integration in Richmond, Virginia

The information contained in this timeline is based on Dr. Robert A. Pratt's *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia 1954-1989* (1992), unless otherwise noted. This timeline includes national events and court cases that influenced the decisions regarding integration in Richmond as well as placing Richmond's reaction to those decisions in a national context.

1896: The U.S. Supreme Court upholds *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This case establishes the precedent of "separate but equal."

May 3, 1948: Supreme Court rules in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that Blacks can live in all white neighborhoods.

1950: Supreme Court decides in *Sweat v. Painter* that the University of Texas has to admit Blacks into its law school; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) decides to sue for desegregation rather than equalization.

April 23- May 7, 1951: In Prince Edward County, Virginia, Moton High School student Barbara Johns organizes a strike against poor school conditions. Four hundred and fifty African-American students participate in the two-week strike.

May 21, 1951: Richmond lawyers Spottswood Robinson and Oliver Hill file a lawsuit (*Davis v. The County School Board of Prince Edward County*) on behalf of one hundred seventeen students from Prince Edward County. This case is one of the five cases included in *Brown v. Board of Education* (see May 17, 1954).

1953: Virginia's State Board of Education presents the highest budget proposal to date (\$40,807,500) to equalize black and white school facilities by the 1954-1955 school year to prevent integration.

May 17, 1954: Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision overturns *Plessy v. Ferguson's* "separate but equal" precedent by stating that separate facilities for Blacks and Whites are inherently unequal.

June 26, 1954: Virginia Senator Harry Byrd announces that he will use all legal means to continue segregated schools.

May 31, 1955: Supreme Court issues *Brown v. Board of Education, II*. The Court places responsibility of implementing integration plans on district courts.

November 11, 1955: Virginia General Assembly introduces The Gray Plan, recommending that local school boards be given the right to decide which students would be assigned to which schools, and that money be given to parents to send their children to segregated private schools instead of integrated public schools.

February 24, 1956: The term *massive resistance* is coined by Virginia Senator Harry Byrd.

1956: Virginia General Assembly adopts interposition (The state's right to resist federal laws considered unconstitutional) regarding desegregation issues; the Virginia General Assembly passes a set of laws to avoid integrating Virginia's public schools.

March 5, 1956: Constitutional Convention of 40 Virginia delegates meets in Richmond to amend Virginia's constitution to legalize tuition grants which will delay the integration of Virginia's public schools.

March 12, 1956: 101 members of Congress sign the Southern Manifesto, a public declaration by Southern congressmen of their intentions to resist desegregation.

Summer 1956: NAACP files desegregation lawsuits against school boards in Arlington, Norfolk, Newport News and Charlottesville, Virginia.

August 27, 1956: The Stanley Plan is introduced by the Virginia legislature, which is a collection of 13 acts that were passed to keep schools from integrating.

December 26, 1956: Governor Stanley appoints Hugh V. White (Nanesmond County Superintendent of Schools), Beverly H. Randolph, Jr. (Richmond attorney) and Andrew A. Farley (Vice-president and General Manager of the Register Publishing Company of Danville) to the newly created Pupil Placement Board, a committee that has the right to decide what school a student attends based on race.

December 29, 1956: Virginia's Pupil Placement Board is officially established. No desegregation occurs before this date.

September 17, 1957: Richmond attorney Oliver Hill gets Judge Sterling Hutcheson to grant an order to temporarily stop the use of the pupil placement plan in Richmond.

1957: In Little Rock, Arkansas, Governor Orval Faubus defies a federal court order to admit nine black students to the all-white Central High School. President Dwight Eisenhower sends federal troops to make certain that the black students are allowed to attend the school. The students become known as the Little Rock Nine.

July 1958: Six black children apply to the Pupil Placement Board for admission to the all-white Nathaniel Bacon and Westhampton elementary schools in Richmond, Virginia.

August 29, 1958: All six applications are denied (See July 1958).

September 2, 1958: Parents of the six children (See July 1958 and August 29, 1958) file a lawsuit (Warden v. Richmond School Board) in U.S. District Court.

September 12, 1958: Warren County High School, an all-white school in Front Royal, Virginia, is the first school in Virginia to close under *massive resistance*, the plan to persuade white people to avoid court-ordered desegregation through the passage of state laws.

September 19, 1958: In Charlottesville, Virginia's Lane High School and Venable Elementary School, both all-white schools, close.

January 19, 1959: Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals declares in *Harrison v. Day* that the school closings violate Section 129 of Virginia's State Constitution, which requires the state to "maintain an efficient system of public free schools throughout the State."

January 19, 1959: Norfolk federal court rules in *James v. Almond* that Virginia's school-closing statute violates the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and is therefore illegal.

February 2, 1959: In Norfolk and Arlington, Virginia, twenty-one black students enter previously all-white schools without any problems. Virginia's era of massive resistance ends.

February 24, 1959: Charlottesville, Virginia's Venable and Lane schools reopen (see September 19, 1958).

September 1959: Prince Edward County schools in Virginia close to avoid integration.

February 24, 1960: All three members of Virginia's Pupil Placement Board announce their resignation, leaving the Board effective June 1.

March 1, 1960: Virginia's new local option pupil assignment plan goes into effect; Governor Almond appoints three new members of the Pupil Placement Board.

August 15, 1960: New Pupil Placement Board approves the transfer of two black students to all-white Chandler Junior High School beginning September 6, 1960.

September 1960: Fewer than 170 black students out of the 204,000 black students in Virginia are enrolled in white schools.

1961: Eleven black parents bring a class action suit (*Bradley v. Richmond School Board*) against the Richmond School Board to desegregate the public schools because students are assigned to schools based on "dual attendance zones." (There was a directory that listed all the white schools in one division and all the black ones in another, which was used to make pupil assignments).

July 5, 1961: *Warden v. Richmond School Board* settled (see September 2, 1958.)

July 26, 1962: In *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, the District Court orders the eleven students to be admitted to the all-white schools they had chosen.

1963: Out of 26,000 blacks in Richmond schools, only 312 are enrolled in 12 white schools.

March 1963: Lawyers win a court order requiring the school board to get rid of the system of dual attendance zones. The Freedom of Choice plan is established, which permits students to request which school they would like to attend.

1964: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 passes.

May 25, 1964: US Supreme Court demands that a law is made that would guarantee public education for black children in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

June 23, 1964: Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors votes to comply with federal courts and reopen as an integrated public school system.

November 15, 1965: Supreme Court rules against Richmond's Freedom of Choice plan because teachers are still segregated.

March/April 1966: District Court approves revised freedom of choice plan that includes integration of faculty assignments. Children can get to school by walking, parents taking them to school or by paying to ride the Virginia Transit Company buses. This plan remains in effect for almost five years.

1968: The Fair Housing Act passes, legally preventing businesses from denying African Americans the choice to rent or own houses in mostly white neighborhoods; U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* that the Freedom of Choice concept is illegal because students are choosing to attend racially segregated schools. This ruling places the responsibility of desegregation on local school boards instead of forcing black parents to demand change.

June 30, 1966: Virginia General Assembly allows the Pupil Placement Board to end.

January 1, 1970: Richmond City adds 23 miles of neighboring Chesterfield County (a predominantly white county) to help integrate Richmond City schools.

March 1970: Richmond School Board adopts grade pairing desegregation plan created by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In Lamar, South Carolina, two school buses transporting students to a newly integrated school are overturned.

June 26, 1970: District Court Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr. rejects Plan I (pairing plan) because of residential segregation.

August 1970: Both black and white Richmond City school teachers participate in federally funded integration training program.

August 31, 1970: On the first day of school in Richmond City, approximately 5,000 white students are absent; 13,000 out of 50,000 students in the city are bused; Virginia Governor Linwood Holton personally escorts his daughter Tayloe to predominantly black John F. Kennedy High School, the school she was assigned to under Judge Merhige's busing plan.

December 5, 1970: Judge Merhige rules that Henrico and Chesterfield counties, as well as the State Board of Education, have the legal duty of helping Richmond desegregate its schools.

January 1971: Judge Merhige rules that the desegregation level in Richmond Public Schools is poor; students bully Virginia Transit Company bus drivers to obtain free rides.

April 5, 1971: To speed up the desegregation process, Judge Merhige orders mass busing in addition to student and faculty reassignments.

April 12, 1971: The U.S. Supreme Court in *Swann v. Charlotte - Mecklenburg Board of Education* approves the use of extensive busing to promote school desegregation, which upholds Judge Merhige's order of mass busing in Richmond.

September 1971: Black families demand that Richmond City's school system be combined with those of Henrico and Chesterfield counties to prevent "White-flight" to those counties and effectively resegregating city schools.

January 10, 1972: Judge Merhige approves the county-city school merger.

February 1972: To protest the county-city school merger decision, county residents drive 108 miles from Richmond to Capitol Hill in Washington DC in a 3,261 car motorcade.

June 5, 1972: Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals overturns Judge Merhige's school merger order.

May 21, 1973: The US Supreme Court upholds Circuit Court's decision to overturn school merger.

1977: Supreme Court rules in *Milliken v. Bradley* that school desegregation through school system mergers is illegal.

1978: Plan G is implemented, which prevents the closing of Richmond area high schools by merging the seven schools into three.

April 1986: Judge Merhige approves a neighborhood school plan that ends mass busing.

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