

# The Civil Rights Project



*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*

\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\*

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## **UCLA Report Finds Changing U.S. Demographics Transform School Segregation Landscape 60 Years After *Brown v Board of Education***

*Segregation Increases after Desegregation Plans Terminated by Supreme Court*

LOS ANGELES--Marking the 60th anniversary of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v Board of Education*, the UCLA's Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles* (CRP) assessed the nation's progress in addressing school segregation in its new report released today, [\*\*\*Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future\*\*\*](#), and found that the vast transformation of the nation's school population since the civil rights era includes an almost 30% drop in white students and close to quintupling of Latino students.

*Brown at 60* shows that the nation's two largest regions, the South and West, now have a majority of what were called "minority" students. Whites are only the second largest group in the West. The South, always the home of most black students, now has more Latinos than blacks and is a profoundly tri-racial region.

The *Brown* decision in 1954 challenged the legitimacy of the entire "separate but equal" educational system of the South, and initiated strides toward racial and social equality in schools across the nation. Desegregation progress was very substantial for Southern blacks, in particular, says the report, and occurred from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s.

The authors state that, contrary to many claims, the South has not gone back to the level of segregation before *Brown*. It has, however, lost all of the additional progress made after 1967, but is still the *least* segregated region for black students.

Since the 1990s, the Supreme Court has fundamentally changed desegregation law, states the report, and many major desegregation plans have ended. CRP's statistical analysis shows that segregation increased substantially after desegregation plans were terminated in many large districts including Charlotte, NC; Pinellas County, FL; and Henrico County, VA.

“*Brown* was a major accomplishment and we should rightfully be proud. But a real celebration should also involve thinking seriously about why the country has turned away from the goal of *Brown* and accepted deepening polarization and inequality in our schools,” said Gary Orfield, co-author of the study and co-director of the Civil Rights Project. “It is time to stop celebrating a version of history that ignores our last quarter century of retreat and begin to make new history by finding ways to apply the vision of *Brown* in a transformed, multiracial society in another century.”

This new research affirms that the growth of segregation coincides with the demographic surge in the Latino population. Segregation has been most dramatic for Latino students, particularly in the West, where there was substantial integration in the 1960s but segregation has soared since.

The report stresses that segregation occurs simultaneously across race and poverty. The report details a half-century of desegregation research showing the major costs of segregation, particularly for students of color and poor students, and, conversely, the variety of benefits offered by schools with student enrollment of all races.

**Among the key findings of the research are:**

- Black and Latino students are an increasingly large percentage of suburban enrollment, particularly in larger metropolitan areas, and are moving to schools with relatively few white students.
- Segregation for blacks is the highest in the Northeast, a region with extremely high district fragmentation.
- Latinos are now significantly more segregated than blacks in *suburban* America.
- Black and Latino students tend to be in schools with a substantial majority of poor children, while white and Asian students typically attend middle class schools.
- Segregation is by far the most serious in the central cities of the largest metropolitan areas; the states of New York, Illinois and California are the top three worst for isolating black students.
- California is the state in which Latino students are most segregated.

The report concludes with recommendations about how the nation might pursue making the promise of *Brown* a reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century--providing equal opportunity to all students regardless of race or economic background.

“Desegregation is not a panacea and it is not feasible in some situations,” said co-author Erica Frankenberg, assistant professor at Pennsylvania State University. “Where it is possible--and it still is possible in many areas--desegregation properly implemented can

make a very real contribution to equalizing educational opportunities and preparing young Americans to live, work and govern together in our extremely diverse society.”

***Brown at 60*** is being released from New York University’s Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, where Orfield delivers the keynote address, on Friday, May 16, 2014, for [Brown 60 and Beyond](#).

The report includes various tables showing segregation state-by-state and can be found [here](#).

**About the Civil Rights Project at UCLA**

Founded in 1996 by former Harvard professors [Gary Orfield](#) and Christopher Edley, Jr., The Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles* is now co-directed by Orfield and [Patricia Gándara](#), professors at UCLA. Its mission is to create a new generation of research in social science and law on the critical issues of civil rights and equal opportunity for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. It has monitored the success of American schools in equalizing opportunity and has been the authoritative source of segregation statistics. CRP has commissioned more than 500 [studies](#), published more than 15 [books](#) and issued numerous reports from authors at universities and research centers across the country. The U.S. Supreme Court, in its 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision upholding affirmative action, and in Justice Breyer’s dissent (joined by three other Justices) to its 2007 *Parents Involved* decision, cited the Civil Rights Project’s research.

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