

1954

the year of the *Brown v Board of Ed.* case ruling

\$23 billion

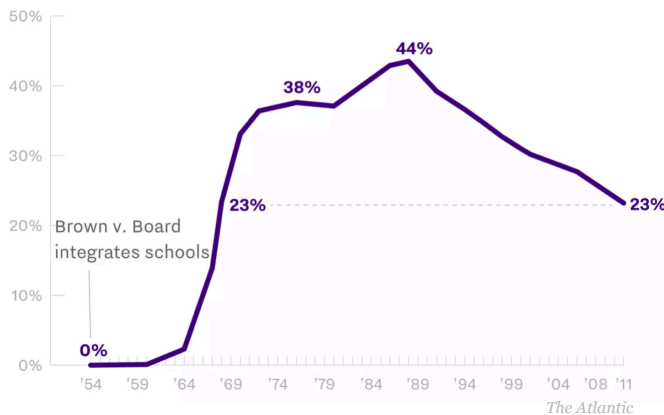
less in education funding is what majority minority districts receive in the US ⁵

1

research paper has been published claiming funding and student achievement have no correlation - its methods have been discredited by numerous other studies on the subject ⁶

REDISTRIBUTIVE POLICY TO END PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING DISPARITIES

Percentage of black students in the South who attend schools that are at least 50 percent white



those opportunities to equal education is a violation of constitutional rights, as ruled by *Brown v. Board*.⁴ Evidence backs the statement that funding does affect quality of education and that the correlation between race and funding that currently exists disproportionately disadvantages children of color. In order to alleviate this inequality, the federal and state and local governments should work together to create policy that will redistribute funding to schools equally, and protect the equal rights that every child is entitled to.

Research indicates that public schools are just as segregated as they were 60 years ago, before the Brown decision.

Introduction

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States, in a unanimous decision, ruled to prohibit racial segregation in public schools. Although this judicial move was initially effective in decreasing segregation, research indicates that public schools sixty years later are nearly as segregated as they were before the Brown decision.² Data is also revealing a troubling pattern that was found under Jim Crow segregation - there is a correlation between race and school funding and quality. Because public schools are a government provided and funded good that all children are granted access to, its failure to provide

Evidence for increased segregation in schools

Research has shown that the greatest level of segregation exists not inside of individual schools and individual districts, but amongst different districts. Coincidentally, districts happen to be racially homogenous. On maps that show percentages of the population of color

in each district, districts are largely either very white or have a very large population of color.¹ There is undeniable evidence that schools that receive the lowest funding have the highest number of students of color.⁷ Additionally, the study found that districts, despite poverty level, were awarded less state funding if they had a higher percentage of students of color. This trend is not present in inter-district studies, but one study found that districts that were composed of mostly students of color received \$23 billion less in funding.⁵

Where Does Funding Come From?

Public schools receive funding from three different sources: the federal, state, and local governments. The amount schools receive from each source is different amongst the states, but on average, about 45% of funding comes from local government, 45% from state government, and 10% from the federal government. The large amount of funding that comes from local government has the biggest implications for schools. If funding comes from local tax revenue, then the amount of funding depends largely on property income tax.⁸ Because public school funding is largely dependent on property tax, schools in more affluent districts experience greater funding.

Misconceptions about the role of funding

One of the biggest challenges to increasing funding for low-income schools is the pushback that policy receives from those who believe that increased funding does not improve student performance. Many cite one study, *The Coleman Report*, which says to have found evidence suggesting that increased funds do not produce results. The report credited the differences in test scores between different districts to factors outside of public funding. Coleman's team found that the students in poorer districts showed different results based on their home life. The data not been able to be reproduced; any other research that has followed increased spending

and student progress has trumped what was found in the report. Although the new studies agree that home life has an effect on student outcome, most researchers criticize Coleman's methods and refute his findings.⁵

Setbacks to Reform Attempts

“White flight” phenomenon: The movement of white people out of minority spaces and into white spaces. In regards to those in less segregated districts, white flight refers to white parents' moving their children to out-of-district charter or private schools, or leaving the district altogether. If families with available resources move to other districts, whatever funding in the form of their taxes they were contributing goes away with them.¹

Judicial Court pushback Nearly every state in the country has been sued over school funding. These lawsuits are largely unsuccessful, and whenever any of them has made it to the Supreme Court, they have been shut down.³

Redistribution of Funding as a Solution

It has been established that funding does matter, especially in the long-run. Offering all schools the same amount of funding, although not directly decreasing segregation, will at least be a step towards providing all children with an equal education. It is also possible that a long-term effect of redistributing funds would be less segregation. As the qualities of all schools begin to reflect each other, incentives for families of higher incomes to move out of lesser-funded districts will decrease, dampening the effect of white flight.

Chang, Alvin. "The Data Proves That School Segregation Is Getting Worse." *Vox.com*, Vox Media, 5 Mar. 2018, www.vox.com/2018/3/5/17080218/school-segregation-getting-worse-data.

Fiel, Jeremy E. "Decomposing School Resegregation: Social Closure, Racial Imbalance, and Racial Isolation." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 78, no. 5, Oct. 2013, pp. 828–848, doi:10.1177/0003122413496252.

Gamoran, Adam, and Brian P. An. "Effects of School Segregation and School Resources in a Changing Policy Context." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, vol. 38, no. 1, Mar. 2016, pp. 43–64, doi: 10.3102/0162373715585604.

"History - Brown v. Board of Education Re-Enactment." *United States Courts*, www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment.

"\$23 Billion." *EdBuild*, edbuild.org/content/23-billion.

Payne, Kevin J., and Bruce J. Biddle. "Poor School Funding, Child Poverty, and Mathematics Achievement." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 28, no. 6, 1999, pp. 4–13. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1177291.

Saporito, Salvatore, and David Van Riper. "Do Irregularly Shaped School Attendance Zones Contribute to Racial Segregation or Integration?" *Social Currents*, vol. 3, no. 1, Mar. 2016, pp. 64–83, doi: 10.1177/2329496515604637.

Turner, Cory. "Why America's Schools Have A Money Problem." *NPR*, NPR, 18 Apr. 2016, www.npr.org/2016/04/18/474256366/why-americas-schools-have-a-money-problem.

