

## Title: Recognizing and Combating Segregation in U.S. Schools Today

**Background:** Fifty years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision outlawed segregated schools, many students today still find themselves attending segregated schools. Upon examining the statistics, it is safe to say that a major factor in today's segregation is poverty. According to statistics, "Only 15 percent of highly-segregated white schools have student bodies living in concentrated poverty. Some 88 percent of highly-segregated minority schools have student populations living in concentrated poverty." In addition to poverty, segregation also occurs inside integrated schools as well. Because of ability tracking, "You have Latino kids who go through their entire school day without seeing a white kid, and you have white kids who have almost no interaction with their Latino classmates, and it is all done within the same school," says North Hollywood High School teacher Randy Vail. Looking at these and other factors, we must examine ways to identify segregation within today's schools and make an active effort to combat against it in order for students to learn to work together.

**Grade Levels:** Grades 9-12

**Subject Areas:** Civics, Government, Citizenship, Debate, Math, Language Arts

### Learning Objectives:

#### Students will:

1. Use decision making skills to cast ballots about school segregation and justify these decisions using their own examples and reasons in a class discussion.
2. Use basic computation skills to tabulate the results of class voting on school segregation as well as the results of their independent surveys about segregation in their school.
3. Utilize discussion skills and reinforce personal opinions through the use of reasons, facts, and examples.
4. Utilize critical viewing and/or reading skills to learn facts about school segregation in the U.S. today.
5. Conduct primary source research about segregation issues within their school.
6. Create, administer, and tabulate the results of a survey about segregation within their own school.
7. Create graphs, tables, or charts to represent the statistical data they have collected about segregation in their school through the form of research, interviews, or surveys.
8. Utilize group work skills when working with group members to conduct research and/or surveys and create group projects related to school segregation issues.
9. Use group presentation skills to showcase what they have learned about segregation in their school and ideas they have for addressing the school's segregation issues.

### Relevant National Standards:

This lesson correlates to the national McREL standards located online at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks>

#### Civics:

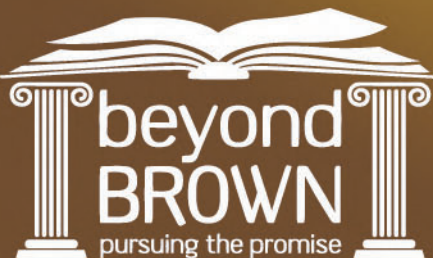
Standard 11: Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

#### Behavioral Studies

Standard 4: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

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### **Mathematics**

Standard 2: Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of numbers

Standard 3: Uses basic and advanced procedures while performing the processes of computation

Standard 6: Understand and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis

### **Language Arts**

Writing

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Viewing

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

### **Thinking and Reasoning**

Standard 1: Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument

Standard 5: Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques

Standard 6: Applied decision-making techniques

### **Working With Others**

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

### **Estimated Time:**

Students will need 3-4 forty-five minute class periods to complete the lesson.

### **Materials Needed:**

- red and green paper cut into strips for students to use as ballots
- box/container to use when collecting ballots
- television and vcr for viewing the film
- computers with Internet access for viewing "Beyond Brown" web site content or photocopies of "Facts" section from the "Beyond Brown" web site (see plan)
- Take Action Planning Guide (provided with plan)
- computers with word processing, multimedia, and desktop publishing capability
- assorted art supplies such as poster board, paints, markers, stencils, glue, scissors

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### **Procedures:**

#### **Part 1: Are American School Still Segregated?**

1. As students are entering the classroom, hand each one a slip of red paper and a slip of green paper.
2. Once students are seated, have them write their first and last name on both the red and green slips of paper. Next, reveal the following question:
  - Do you believe that American schools today are still segregated (separated by race)? Yes or No.

Explain to students that they will have to use their papers to vote on this question. If they think the answer is Yes, they should put their red paper slip in the box. If they think the answer is No, they should put their green paper slip in the box. Remind students that they should have at least one specific reason for why they voted the way they did and that they will need to be prepared to share it with the class. Begin circulating around the classroom and collecting student votes in your box. All students must vote.

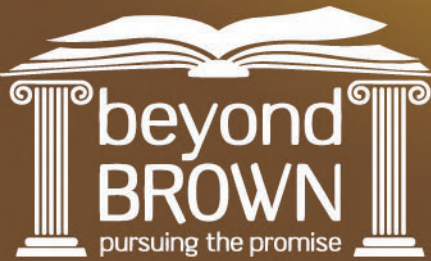
3. When all votes have been collected, take a moment to review the term segregation. Explain to students that school used to be separated by race. Next, facilitate a short discussion about the question:
  - Do you believe that American schools today are still segregated (separated by race)? Yes or No.

Randomly choose a vote from the box. Reveal whether it is a Yes or No vote. Then, reveal the name of the person who voted this way by reading it from the slip of paper. Ask this student to explain why he/she voted this way. Repeat this process until all votes have been taken out of the box. Throughout the discussion, use the overhead or board to record the reasons why students voted the way they did. Make an area for YES vote reasons and an area for NO vote reasons and record these reasons as each student explains why he/she voted the way he/she did.

4. Tabulate the results of the voting as a class. Count the total number of votes for Yes and No and complete the basic math computations necessary to determine the percentage of students in the class who voted each way.
5. Now that students have discussed the idea of school segregation today, view the following portions of the program "Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise"
  - Watch from 14:36 to 23:20 to learn about how tracking has segregated students in North Hollywood High School
  - Watch from 34:39 to 43:16 to see how METCO, a voluntary desegregation program is being used to promote diversity within the Lincoln school system.

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6. To get students to see that statistically school segregation still exists, have them visit the Beyond Brown web site “Do We Still Care About Integration” facts section at [http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate\\_facts.html](http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate_facts.html) to see the numbers related to school segregation in the U.S. In addition, direct them to the “Are You Gifted” portion of the site to see more facts related to segregation at [http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate\\_facts.html](http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate_facts.html). Go to the “For Educators” section of the site to see charts and graphs from the Ellis Cose report that illustrate the racial disparities in education today at <http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/foreducators/> Discuss a number of key facts from each of the resources so students can see the scope and effects of school segregation in the U.S today. Talk about how school segregation impacts:

- **the economy**
  - how communities and races have become segregated based on income
  - how economic segregation affects availability of jobs and future earnings of students living in poverty stricken areas
- **society**
  - racial interaction among groups in communities
  - racial interaction among adults in college and work environments
- **politics**
  - involvement of minorities in the political process
  - political representation for minority issues and agendas
  - policies related to education and minority rights

**NOTE:** Printed photocopies of these statistics and facts could also be distributed for review and discussion if Internet access is unavailable.

### Part 2: Is Your School Segregated?

7. It is now time for students to make some generalizations about how their own school compares to others they have seen and heard about. This could be a statistical comparison using research data or it could be a more informal set of data gathered by students through the use of surveys given to peers. It could also be a combination of both types of data, depending on the interest of the groups. As groups work to form ideas for addressing the problem of school segregation, have them use the Take Action Planning Guide worksheet to develop their project and action plan.

8. Give students time to work in groups to conduct research/surveys and compile their information into a format for presentation. Be sure all students are contributing to the formal presentation by circulating among groups and checking progress frequently.

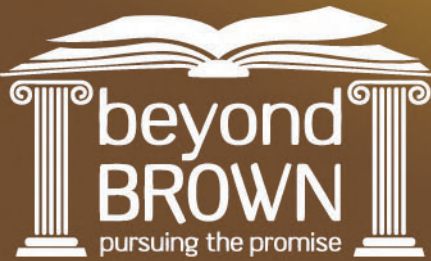
9. When all groups have completed their projects, have each group present what they have created to the class. In addition, have groups submit their projects to the appropriate school leaders (student council, principal, superintendent, other students, parent-teacher organizations, etc.) to call attention to the school segregation issues that exist within the school and make others aware of things they can do to address the situation. In addition, encourage the people seeing the project to respond in some way so that groups know their concerns have been heard.

10. To provide students with closure on the project, ask them to write a 1-2 paragraph response for each of the items below.

- As you completed the project, what surprised you about the data you were able to collect? Did you feel the data collected was an accurate reflection of the school?
- Did the data you collected match the type of school experience you have had at this school? Explain why or why not.
- Do you feel that your presentation was effective and taken seriously by those it was presented to? Why or why not?
- Do you think that by presenting your findings, you will be able to make a difference in the experiences of other students in the school?

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### **Evaluation Ideas:**

1. Students could receive a participation grade for the class discussion activities.
2. Each student could earn an individual grade on his/her portion or contribution to the overall group project and presentation. This could be assigned using a scoring guide of through the use of teacher, peer, and individual evaluation checklists.
3. Each student should receive a grade for completing the written response questions in Step 10 of the lesson.

### **Extension Activities:**

1. Help students work as a class to host a diversity fair for the student body. Invite other students in the school and community groups in to conduct short workshops about different cultures and cultural awareness, communication, and problem-solving. Have booths created by students and groups to showcase cultural identity. Utilize appropriate class projects created in the lesson above to get students thinking about segregation in the school and what each person can do to promote a more integrated school and sense of community within the building.
2. Have students arrange a panel discussion where they invite members of the school leadership, community, and legislators to answer questions related to their research findings and action plan ideas.

### **Online Resources:**

#### **Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise**

“Do We Still Care About Integration” facts section at [http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate\\_facts.html](http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/legacy/integrate_facts.html) to see the numbers related to school segregation in the U.S.

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#### **U.S. Department of Education**

<http://www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml?oq=Special%20Education%20Statistics&rq=1&tx=by%20race&GO%20-%20Submit%20Search.x=19&GO%20-%20Submit%20Search.y=13>

Visit the site for statistics and data about achievement levels of students by race as well as students receiving special services by race

#### **ENC Online**

<http://www.enc.org/topics/equity/articles/document.shtm?input=ACQ-111442-1442>

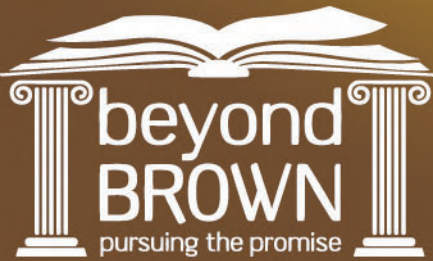
The article “Keeping Track, Part 1: The Policy and Practice of Curriculum Inequality” describe the tracking process and discusses how this negatively impacts poor and minority students

#### **Applied Research Center**

The report “No Exit? Testing, Tracking, and Students of Color in U.S Public Schools” discusses tracking and the use of high stakes testing and how it puts minority students at a disadvantage in U.S. schools. See the report at <http://www.arc.org/Pages/Estudy.html>

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### **Teaching Tolerance Magazine**

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/expand/mag/features.jsp?p=0&is=34&ar=485>

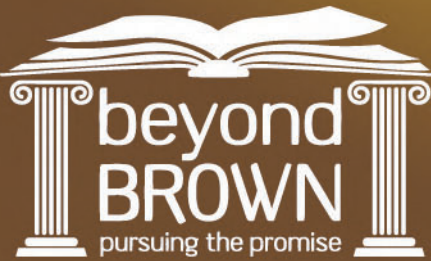
Produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, this site contains information about the impact of the Brown decision while addressing the resegregation of American schools because of factors such as poverty. It addresses what we can do to continue to fight segregation and offer equal educational opportunities to all students

### **About the Author:**

Lisa Prosocki is an independent educational consultant who taught middle school and high school English, social studies, reading, and technology courses for twelve years. Prosocki has worked extensively with PBS authoring and editing many lesson plans for various PBS programs and Teacher-Source. In addition to conducting workshops for teachers at various state and national meetings, Prosocki also works with many corporate clients creating training programs and materials, facilitating leadership and operations workshops, and providing instructional support for new program rollouts. Prosocki has authored one book and also serves as an editor for other writers of instructional materials.

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Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Take Action Planning Guide

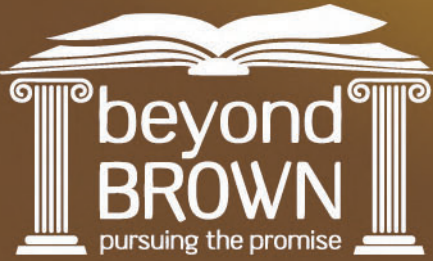
**Directions:** Follow the guidelines below to create an action plan for addressing school segregation issues your group has identified within your school. You will present your project to the class as well as appropriate school leaders in order to create awareness of these issues and offer solutions for addressing them.

#### Goal 1: Identify Educational Inequities Within Your School

You have read and heard information about the facts and statistics describing how a variety of factors including poverty and ability tracking can contribute to segregated schools or racially segregated groups within schools.

Work as a group to collect data from other students and school resources to determine the ways that your school is segregated. By answering the questions below, you should be able to identify areas of concern. You can answer these questions by conducting research and interviewing school officials, and/or by creating, administering, and tabulating the results of student surveys. You may also have additional questions that your group develops in order to identify what is happening in your school.

- What are the opinions of students in your school regarding segregation?
- Do students think the school is segregated? In what ways?
- Do students see certain groups of students as “smarter” or “less smart” than others?
- What are their “self-fulfilling prophecies” Are they positive (I am entitled to achieve, I can, and I will) or negative (I am not worthy of my teacher’s time, I can’t achieve, and I won’t be successful in life)?
- Do students feel segregated from one another within the school?
- Do students believe racism contributes to the opportunities that are given to them by the school?
- How does the school rank statistically when it comes to segregation?
- Which students receive special education services?
- Is there a disproportionate number of minority students in this group (special education)?
- Which students are taking advanced/college level classes?
- Is there segregation in the school based on the types of classes students are offered and assigned to?



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**Take Action Planning Guide**

**Goal 2: Preparing and Organizing Information**

Whether you decide to conduct research, do interviews, administer surveys, or do a combination of these things, you must divide the work equally among group members. Use the space below to decide what each person in the group will be responsible for doing and how they should organize their information. Keep in mind that if you are doing interviews, you will need to prepare questions in advance and schedule a time to complete the interviews. If you are conducting surveys, you will need to determine the survey questions, find an appropriate time and place to administer surveys, and tabulate the results accurately. This will take some advance planning. It is recommended that you survey no more than 100 students and that the survey not exceed 1 page in length.

<b>Group Member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Organize Information Gathered By:</b>



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### **Take Action Planning Guide**

#### **Goal 3: Take Action to Inform Others and Work for Positive Changes**

Once you have identified potential problems in your school, you must organize your findings into some sort of format that can be easily presented to others and understood. Working as a group, create a PowerPoint presentation, a flyer or brochure, a series of graphs or charts, or some other way to present your findings to others. In addition to presenting the issues related to segregation in your school, you must offer some potential solutions for addressing the issues. These need to be things that could actually be done to improve the situation. For some issues, solutions may be simple things that can be done at the school level. Other issues might require a more sweeping type of change that requires changes in policy or legislation. Be prepared to offer viable solutions for issues in order to be taken seriously. Answer the questions below to help you create your Action Plan

1. List the specific issues related to segregation that you plan to address in your presentation.
2. Describe how you will present your findings/data (i.e. graphs, charts, pictures, written descriptions and use of statistics, etc.).
3. What format will you use to present your findings (i.e. PowerPoint/multimedia presentation, brochure or flyer, letter, petition, play, public service announcement, etc.)?
4. Who will you present your findings and ideas to? (i.e. student council, parent-teacher-student organization, school principal, school board or district representatives, state legislators, etc.)?
5. What are your ideas for potential solutions to the school segregation issues you have identified?
6. What kind of feedback would you like or expect from the group(s) you present your project to?
7. How will you divide the presentation responsibilities within your group. Decide who will present what and how it will be presented.