

Tuesday Seminars Lessons for Life

As a young person, as a community member how can I work with my peers to improve my school and community?

What inspiration can I gain from struggles in the past to help me with my action project today?

How is it that schools came to have such large achievement gaps between whites and people of color or between the middle and working classes?

How did I gain the rights that I enjoy today?

Why do some people have so much material wealth while others have so little?

The Tuesday Seminar

In our everyday lives we ponder these questions consciously and unconsciously. Through Austin Voices we will ignite a conversation about these issues every Tuesday as we tackle the pressing challenges of our time. As a result you will come to see the world not just through your own experience but the experiences of people across the country and the world.

Using music, video, readings and our own experiences we will explore the social issues associated with gender, race, class and sexuality. In the process, we will learn more about ourselves and others.

Ground Rules

You will be asked to stay engaged and aware. To know that it's ok if someone disagrees with you. It's ok if you don't know something someone else does. And it's ok to take a risk when it comes to learning. At times you will become angry, confused, saddened, exhilarated and hopeful. Check in with your facilitators about how you are feeling and when appropriate share your thoughts with the group.

Evaluation

You will be asked periodically to show us what you have learned by completing weblogs (at least two per quinmester) for the public to view at www.austinvoices.org/mobilizers or completing an in-class quiz. Every quinmester you will be asked to present what you have learned to the class and at once a year you will be asked to present what you have learned to the community.

Information you gain from the Tuesday Seminars will become a part of your grade for Special Topics in Social Studies, Government, Economics and U.S. History.

ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW, YOU WILL FIND A SAMPLE UNIT FROM THE TUESDAY SEMINAR CURRICULUM. THE FULL CURRICULUM INCLUDES 8 DIFFERENT UNITS, FROM "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CORETTA SCOTT KING" TO "DEMOCRACY'S REBIRTH ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO."

This curriculum was produced by Tim Eubanks. If you have any questions, please contact him at 52-363-0248 or teubanks@austinvoices.org

Boston's Schools and Race Past and Present



(A white boy is bussed from a white school to a black school in Boston, 1974)

(Photos from Boston student researchers showing disparity between city and suburban schools, 2004; reprinted with permission from What Kids Can Do))

Synopsis

America's schools are places where the conflict between races and economic classes are played out on a daily basis. While segregation in public education has been technically illegal since the 1954 Brown V. Board of Ed. decision, it was not until the mid 1960's than many schools began to desegregate and schools have become increasingly segregated ever since the late 1980's. All of this speaks to the fact that while de jure segregation is illegal- segregation by law- de facto segregation is perfectly legal- segregation by residence, choice or custom. Our nation has never addressed segregation between those who make an adequate living and those who do not.

Throughout our nation's history it is young people who have had to deal with both the realities of segregation and who have presented the challenge to the nation to deal with segregation. It was Linda Brown's walk past a white school to attend the all black school that troubled the justices in the Brown vs. Board of Ed. decision. It was Chicano high school students in East L.A. who in the 1960's alerted the nation to the reality that they were being drafted away to Vietnam because their inadequate education did not allow for them to escape the draft by going to college as so many middle- class white youth had done. And it was poor black and white students in Boston who had to deal with the consequences of immediate state court imposed bussing in the 1970's.

Busing. Today this word does not hold much meaning but in the 1970's it was one of the major social issues of the day. In 1969, fifteen years after the Brown vs. Board decision the Supreme Court was tired of school districts dragging their feet on the integration of schools. The justices declared that segregated school systems must be dismantled "root and branch" immediately. The decision was met largely with compliance in the south. Across the Deep South schools systems that had to make a choice between lawsuits and a loss of federal funding or integration by and large choice integration. In 1969 and 1970 school systems finally dismantled the white only and colored only schools. Integration had become inevitable as the late Dr. King, assassinated one year earlier, had preached it one day would. However, some southern whites began to set up private schools to avoid sending their children to the new integrated school systems. The battle over segregation appeared to be over the battle over school choice appeared to begin.

In the north, the decision was met with dread. For years, northerners had thought that

desegregation was not an issue that concerned them, After all, their schools were not segregated by law. Still, northern civil rights workers began to assert that northern schools were just as segregated as those in the south. Its true, they asserted that there may not have been a law but the schools were still segregated by residential living pattern and something had to be done.

That something, the courts found, was busing. In cities where the neighborhoods were segregated, school systems would be required to bus children from one neighborhood to another. The reason behind this was that the courts and civil rights activists consistently found that black and Latino schools suffered from inadequate funding and attention from the invariably white controlled school system.

In Boston, some students would be bused from the working class black neighborhood of Roxbury to the working class Irish neighborhood of South Boston and vice versa. The situation became explosive as many white youth in South Boston threw rocks, fought and rioted against the arrival of black students from Roxbury. Still, the courts demanded that busing continue.

Many white families responded by moving to the suburbs outside of the control of city schools. In 1973 the Supreme Court declared that metropolitan wide desegregation was not an appropriate means of desegregation. So cities that lost many of their middle-class and white students could become constitutionally segregated.

In 2004, a group of student researchers in Boston set out to document the divide between city and suburban schools. While Boston's city schools are majority students of color, many suburban schools are majority white. While Boston's city schools contain mostly a working class population many of the suburban schools are majority middle and upper income. While Boston city schools have large at-risk and English as a second language students many suburban schools do not have such large populations of these students. Finally, the students documented the large gap in educational and extra-curricular opportunities between city and suburban students.

Materials

Eyes on the Prize II Keys to the Kingdom: Chronicles the struggle of African-American neighborhoods in Boston to achieve a quality education for their community's children.

The Problem We All Live With: Inequalities between Boston's Urban and Suburban Schools. A documentary film produced entirely by current Boston high school students. It illuminates the gap in educational options and extracurricular activities between suburban and city schools.

Evaluation

After a discussion of the Eyes on the Prize and Student video students will be asked to research Austin's response to desegregation and its current levels of segregation in Austin's schools. To do this the students will divide into research teams of three.

The first research team will investigate:

- 1) What was Austin's response to Brown Vs. Board of Ed?
- 2) What was Austin's response to the 1969 Supreme Court ruling requiring schools desegregate root and branch immediately?
- 3) Did Austin ever bus its students under desegregation plans?

-For these questions please consult PODER at 472-9921

The second research team will investigate:

- 1) When did Austin end its desegregation and busing plans?

- 2) What does Austin's desegregation plan look like now?
- 3) What are the percentages of students of color and white students/ low-income students and middle and upper income students on High School campuses now?

-Please research PODER 472-9921 and a class handout on rates of segregation on AISD high school campuses.

The third research team will investigate:

- 1) What educational opportunities differ for students in LBJ's Science academy that are not available to regular classes?
- 2) What educational opportunities are available to magnet students at Kealing Middle School that are not available to regular students at Kealing?
- 3) What educational opportunities are available for Honors students at Austin High School that are not available to regular students at Austin High?

-Please consult Ms. Grayson (former LBJ teacher), Yolanda Padilla (current academy Kealing parent) and Vice Principals at Austin High Schools for information on the above questions.

TEKS Covered

U.S. History-1970's and 2000's, School Desegregation, busing

U.S. Government- School Board, State courts, Federal Courts, U.S. Supreme Court

Vocabulary/Key Terms and People

Segregation/Integration

Busing

Judicial Decisions

Judicial Oversight

Geography

Massachusetts- Boston, MA- Boston Neighborhoods of Allston, Brighton, Roxbury, South Boston and Suburban areas of Brookline and Newton, MA.

Please Note

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