

STATE OF MICHIGAN LAW DAY 2004 ESSAY CONTEST
“To Win Equality by Law: Brown v. Board of Education at 50”
8th Grade – 2ND Place - By Elasha Wallace
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Should Michigan schools be more diverse and desegregated than the rest of our society?

Yes, Michigan schools should be more diverse and desegregated than the rest of our society. Over the years, all across the world, different cultures form boundaries around themselves. This is natural and admissible to many people, but society has become comfortable with segregation, the very thing that some of our greatest leaders in history have lost their lives trying to erase.

Children are in a constant state of learning. Many children only experience social diversity in the classroom, because of the social isolation that exists with parents. The diversity in the educational system allows children to have exposure and social experiences with people of different ethnicities, which in turn is beneficial in eliminating learned prejudice. Why do parents teach their children separation and disparity? It is because of the ignorance of society, and the misunderstanding of life. Integration is rapidly becoming more and more important in our society.

I cannot stress enough the significance of integration. It is imperative that schools are desegregated because that is where children begin their road to social development. They begin to understand difference. With this understanding, they are no longer limited to the basics of life.

In the story of “A Famous Kansas Child,” Linda Brown was a black student whose father fought for integration. Even in the 1950's people knew it was pivotal that all children felt equally astute in their learning environments.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483,494(1954), states that “[s]uch considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.” Children are only human. If they are denied the right to go to school with children who may be “different” from them, they make assumptions that they are not as good as their peers.

We were given our many Core Democratic Values to ensure and protect our many precious rights. The right to our own religion, the right to a fair trial but we tend to overlook our precious rights of equality. We were given these rights as a reminder of America and to hark back all of the equal rights we have as Americans. Michigan has one of the largest educational institutional systems in America affecting millions of children that will shape our future.

Michigan educational facilities should be run as a “melting pot” where many different people come together as one. Albeit we cannot change the housing patterns and other man-made barriers in our society, we should not allow them to infringe upon our precious rights of equality. Let's set out to make our future historical, people living and loving, respecting one another not in the aspects of biological race but as the “Human Race”.