

# Unit Plan: Examining the Struggle for an Equitable Education System in Portland, Oregon

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This unit is designed for five 90 minute periods in US history or African American history

## Unit Overview

Using an array of primary sources, as well as select secondary texts, students will investigate the history of segregation, desegregation, and multicultural school reforms in Portland, Oregon. The unit will explore the relationship between local community organizations and Portland Public Schools, having students evaluate the effectiveness of both groups in terms of school reform. In the culminating project students will create a three-minute policy proposal that they present as testimony in a Portland Public Schools Board meeting.

## Unit Essential Questions:

Are there equal opportunities for all students in Oregon regardless of ethnicity?  
Evaluate the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of both schools' and local activists' efforts to ensure equal treatment of and outcomes for all students regardless of ethnic heritage.

## Student Prerequisite Knowledge:

Students will have studied the national Civil Rights Movement (1940's to 1968)  
Students will have previously worked with terms and concepts: Jim Crow, segregation, Brown v Board of Education, civil disobedience, Civil Rights Act of 1964, and affirmative action

See individual lesson plans for specific standards addressed by the unit.

## Teaching Guide:

EducEquitylessonsTeacher'sGuide

### Lesson Plan 1: Evaluative Timeline: Equal Opportunity and Education in Oregon

In this lesson, students will discuss and evaluate the effects of significant civil rights related events in Oregon between 1840 and today. This lesson is designed for one 90-minute class.

#### **Teaching Plan and Links:**

EducationEquityUnit1TeachingGuide

#### **Handouts:**

Oregon Timeline of Events Handout:

Clark's Doll Test:

Web: <http://www.naacpldf.org/brown-at-60-the-doll-test>

Clark's Doll Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0BxFRu\\_SOw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0BxFRu_SOw)

### Lesson Plan 2: A study of *To Life as We Climb: A Textbook Analysis of the Segregated School Experience*, by Anthony Pellegrino, Linda Mann, and William Russell

In this lesson, students will evaluate what textbook editors choose to include in the narrative of race relations, as well as the complexity and long term significance of the content choices those editors make. After completing the lesson, students will have developed personal criteria for evaluating narrative, context, and content in history textbooks related to African American education in the United States and will be able to discuss the implications of agency as a factor in African American education. This lesson is designed for one 90-minute class.

#### **Teaching Plan and Links:**

EducationEquityLesson2

#### **Handouts:**

Handout A:

ExaminingTextsHandoutA

#### **Handout B:**

ExaminingTextsHandoutB

#### **Final Group Discussion Questions:**

Final Group Discussion Questions

### Lesson Plan 3: The Desegregation of Portland Public Schools

This lesson explores the question of whether Oregon schools have effectively promoted equal opportunities for all students, regardless of ethnicity. In doing so, students will evaluate how effective desegregation efforts have been and analyze different perspectives in the current debate on combating de facto segregation. Utilizing scholarly articles, newspaper articles, and other primary documents, students will be asked to take positions and debate, and ultimately take a position on the effectiveness of Portland Public Schools desegregation efforts and whether the goal of racial and ethnic school desegregation is a worthwhile endeavor. This lesson is designed for one 90-minute class.

#### **Teaching Plan and Links:**

EducationEquityLesson3

### Lesson Plan 4: The Baseline Essays

In this lesson, students will examine whether or not Oregon schools have effectively promoted equal opportunities for all students regardless of ethnicity through the examination of the controversial “Baseline Essays”. “Baseline Essays” were utilized by PPS in its attempts at desegregation under the consultation of Dr. Asa Hilliard III during the 1980’s. The term when used by Portland Public Schools means a series of essays that gives information about the history, culture and contributions of a specific geo-cultural group in the areas of art, language arts, mathematics, science, social science and music. But were they an effective tool? In this lesson, students will develop their own conclusions about the efficacy of the Baseline Essays and decide whether they would utilize them in their own school district. This is designed for one 90-minute class period.

#### **Teaching Plan and Links:**

EducationEquityLesson4

#### **Handouts:**

BaslineEssaysHandout

### Lesson Plan 5: DBQ Education and the Struggle for Equality Opportunity in Portland Public Schools

In this culminating lesson, students examine six primary document packets relating to the struggle to establish equal rights in Portland Public Schools. After carefully analyzing each document and answering as a group “guiding questions” about each of the documents, the groups will prepare and present a three minute testimony to the “mock” PPS board in which they present their findings about the following questions:

1. How do schools effectively promote equal opportunities for all students regardless of ethnicity?
2. Have state or federal laws effectively tackled the issue of segregation and equal opportunity? (Reference your timeline information for this.)

3. Have community activists (the NAACP, teachers, student, parents) been effective in ensuring equal treatment of and outcomes for all students regardless of ethnic heritage?

**Teaching Plan and Links:**

EducationalEquityDBQ

**Handouts:**

Student Directions:

EducationEquityDBQStudentDirectionsHandout

DBQDocuments&GuidingQuestionsPacket:

EducationEquityDBQDocuments