

CHALKBEAT NEWARK

How ✖ we did the story: school segregation

2025 EWA National Seminar

May 29, 2025

Catherine Carrera, Newark Bureau Chief

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The Garden State's segregated schools

- New Jersey ranks 6th among the states in terms of the highest segregation of Black students and 7th in segregation of Latino students.
- The state has invested billions of dollars and many years in trying to equalize school funding under a series of orders from the NJ Supreme Court. And yet, racial and socioeconomic school segregation persists.
- There have been no significant efforts to change these patterns.
- The Civil Rights Project report helped set a path to the lawsuit filed in 2018.
- NJ's state constitution creates a path for this as well: it's rare in its explicit ban on school segregation — even de facto school segregation.

Source: *New Jersey's Segregated Schools: Trends and Paths Forward*, UCLA Civil Rights Project, 2017

Taylor Jung/NJ Spotlight News

MEANINGFUL COVERAGE, FRAGMENTED

SCHOOL SEGREGATION / INTEGRATION

Does New Jersey have to desegregate its schools? A judge will soon decide.

By Patrick Wall | March 3, 2022, 6:03pm EST

northjersey.com

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WNYP News

Court weighs potentially landmark NJ school segregation case

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How segregated are New Jersey's schools and what can be done about it?

Hannan Adely and Dave Sheingold NorthJersey

July 13, 2018 | Updated July 16, 2018, 12:43 p.m. ET

SCHOOL SEGREGATION / INTEGRATION BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION DIVERSITY & EQUITY

Mar 2, 2022 · by [Karen Yi](#)

Newark area has some of the country's most segregated schools, study finds

Black-white segregation rate is three times the national average

By Patrick Wall | May 18, 2022, 1:37pm EDT

65%

Despite the potentially enormous repercussions of the case, the ongoing legal proceedings have fallen under the radar for most New Jersey voters.

Only 1 in 6 New Jersey voters (16%) say that they've heard “a lot” or “some” about the case, with the majority (65%) saying that they've heard “nothing” about it.

Source: Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll, 2024

Collaborating on shared goals, vision

- In January 2023, casual conversations about collaborating began to solidify with plans and support.
- Center for Cooperative Media helped us get organized with an MOU and project overview, among other project management tools.
- We started meeting biweekly and setting up deadlines, a Slack group, shared Google folder, and story tracker.
- A spring deadline for stories turned into a mid-summer project launch.

Tentatively: NJ Spotlight News plans an overarching look at the data and statewide context -- a snapshot of where we are in terms of segregation. WNYC plans to examine the issue of school segregation as one indicator of whether the Mount Laurel doctrine has been successful in its goals. Either or both outlets would also follow publication of our pieces with audience engagement discussions (for instance, call-in shows) reflecting coverage by other partners on this project -- either other journalists working on it, or sources they recommend.

We're aiming for publication sometime in March. You're each invited because we're aware of segregation-related issues or histories in your communities, and think you may have some insights and interest in coordinated coverage as well.

Each publication would be responsible for its own stories. We'd work together on a plan for scheduling, co-promoting each others' stories with links and a common tagline or blurb, etc.

In this call, we'll aim to:

- Discuss and refine the plan above
- Aim to set check-in points for progress on stories (and, as appropriate and with your agreement, sharing data or other info that may give further context to each others' reports)
- Set any terms or ground rules we all want to agree to, to participate.
- Brainstorm ideas for coverage.

Nearly 70 years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional, New Jersey's public education system remains ...

SEGREGATED

About a dozen news partners with the support of the Center for Cooperative Media began regular meetings to look at the state's segregated classrooms through their specific lenses, be it a topical beat or geographic boundary. The result was Segregated, a collaboration that produced more than 20 stories and culminated in an October event that drew nearly 100 attendees.

ers' reports

Chalkbeat
NEWARK

SPANISH TRANSLATION

**Caso de segregación
escolar en Nueva Jersey**

Una mirada a lo que sigue en LAN
vs. NJ

PUBLISHED: NOVEMBER 10, 2023

NJ Spotlight News

NJ SPOTLIGHT NEWS

Case in mediation

State and lawyers for plaintiffs
meet with state mediator to
resolve NJ school segregation
case.

PUBLISHED: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

FALLOUT FROM JUDGE'S RULING

Suggested solutions

Advocates on Friday pressed
lawmakers to end New Jersey's
legal mandate that students
attend neighborhood schools,
which has contributed to
statewide racial segregation in
public schools.

PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 18, 2023

Gothamist

LIVE EVENT

Newark and NJ talk school segregation

In one of NJ's highly segregated school districts, students and
parents seek accountability

We asked students, what issue mattered to them? Teacher diversity

Chalkbeat looked at the way teaching staff and school leadership do not always reflect their schools' diverse student bodies, a piece that included a tool so readers could look up how a Newark school's student and teacher demographics matched up.

Find your school's teacher and student demographics

 Search in table

Page 1 of 5 >

School	Largest teacher demographic	Largest student demographic
NJ Regional Day School - Newark	White (47.1%)	Black (53.8%)
Arts High School	White (46.2%)	Black (52.1%)
Barringer High School	White (42%)	Hispanic (80.5%)
Central High School	Black (53.4%)	Black (74.1%)
East Side High School	White (52.7%)	Hispanic (68.5%)
Newark Vocational High School	White (51%)	Black (53%)
Malcolm X Shabazz High School	Black (46.7%)	Black (84.8%)
Science Park High School	White (41.7%)	Hispanic (47.1%)
Technology High School	White (52.2%)	Hispanic (66%)
University High School	Black (35%)	Black (82%)
Weequahic High School	Black (46.9%)	Black (90%)
West Side High School	Black (56.8%)	Black (79.9%)
American History High School	White (37.5%)	Black (51.6%)
Abington Avenue School	White (55.8%)	Hispanic (91.8%)
Ann Street School	White (72.5%)	Hispanic (70.4%)

Schools marked with a dash do not have demographic data for their staff.

Table: Thomas Wilburn • Source: [New Jersey Department of Education](#)

“We are living with the fallout of the history that occurred — not as a result of the Brown decision, but of the massive white resistance to it.”

Source: Leslie Fenwick, author of *“Jim Crow’s Pink Slip: The Untold Story of Black Principal and Teacher Leadership”* and dean emerita at Howard University.

Students, educators, researchers discuss in public forum

Engagement was at the heart of our work. News outlets sent out surveys to readers. Several of the pieces were translated into Spanish. As broadcast partners, NJ Spotlight News and WNYC amplified reporting by outlets from throughout the collaborative, hosting discussions on WNYC's Brian Lehrer Show and All Things Considered, and Spotlight's broadcasts.

We held a forum at the Newark Public Library where we explored the issue and lived experiences of school segregation.



Where things are today

- When the judge's complicated, 90-page ruling landed late on a Friday of a holiday weekend, reporters throughout the collaborative pulled together spot pieces and analysis that explained the mixed outcome.
- Eventually, the plaintiffs and defendants decided to go through mediation but after 15 months, they're back in the courts.
- The collaborative worked together to put human faces on a complicated topic and also built lasting relationships with each other. We plan to continue working together as the lawsuit continues.

CHALKBEAT NEWARK

Thank you!

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