

***School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* Edited By John Charles Boger and Gary Orfield. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Paperback, Pp. 380, \$24.95)**

Initially presented at a 2002 University of North Carolina symposium, the research contained in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* provides a comprehensive collection of the scholarly works discussed at the conference. While these collective works focus primarily on trends in school demographics, the researchers also explore secondary influences of school assignment patterns, including the expanding and contracting role of the federal judiciary; the potential correlation to changing housing demographics; and varying elements alleged to influence student achievement in minority schools. *School Resegregation* establishes the obstacles plaguing public school integration, initially identifying the role of the courts. Opening with a historical perspective, former Duke University Professor of Law Erwin Chemerinsky is heavily critical of the declared unitary public school districts that have resulted in a reduced judicial presence during the development of integration policies and a failure to sustain the long-term desegregation progress that began in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) (32-38). Specifically, Chemerinsky uses current resegregation trends to attack the Court's decisions in *Milliken v. Bradley* (a decision overruling inter-district remedies to segregation), *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973) (a decision upholding disparities in education funds obtained through property taxes), and *Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver Colorado* (1973) (a decision shifting the burden of proof to plaintiffs alleging intentional acts of segregation).

Subsequent entries attempt to support findings through methodically designed empirical research, evaluating competing educational theories to find numerical trends and substantive data. Through multiple case studies, Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, a Professor of Sociology at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Luis M. Laosa, former chief psychologist of a large Texas school district, find support for claims of resegregation by exploring school composition in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District and the Texas public school system, respectively. By identifying trends of resegregation between school districts, within school districts, and among various academic tracks within the classroom, the researchers identify the problem through comprehensive analysis. Additionally, the research explores the association of public school segregation trends with standardized testing scores and residential housing patterns. Russell W. Rumberger, a Professor of Education at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Gregory J. Palardy, an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Georgia, find that Southern schools differ from non-Southern schools, illustrating that in southern schools "with whom children go to school rather than where they go to school matters" (145). Drawing upon these conclusions, Rumberger and Palardy suggest the implementation of correctional policies, designed to redistribute students or increase the quality of low-performing schools. *School Resegregation* concludes with Susan Leigh Flinspach, a researcher at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and Karen E. Banks, an assistant superintendent for the Wake County Public School System, evaluating the race-neutral policies of the Wake County Public School System, and noting the achieved success through school assignment policies based on student achievement and socioeconomic factors.

At times, the writing deviates from the research and makes politically charged allegations without evaluating the opposing view. Additionally, elements of individual pieces of research fail to identify practical benefits associated with the findings, leading to inconclusive assumptions that the findings would improve student achievement results. Nevertheless, the

collection of research presented in *School Resegregation* is both comprehensive in nature and sound in argument, providing necessary historical background information, establishing a problem and illustrating its negative effects, and assessing solutions attempted since *Brown v. Board of Education*. I recommend this book for anyone seeking to gain comprehensive knowledge of trends in education and the effects of current educational policies.

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