

2024 Fourth Circuit Student Essay Contest

BROWN v. BOARD of EDUCATION

Background: A nearly empty hallway at Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, during the time that it was closed to avoid integrating, Sept. 1958. *Thomas J. O'Halloran, courtesy of the Library of Congress*
Foreground: Excerpt from page 9 (emphasis added) of the unanimous Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, May 17, 1954. *Courtesy of the National Archives & Records Administration*

1, 2, 4 & 10
BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION. 9
attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.
We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis

Win up to
\$2,000
in cash!

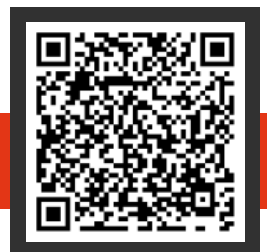
Has the decision in *Brown*, viewed through the lens of 2024, achieved its purpose of ensuring equal opportunity in public education?

An essay contest open to all students currently in grades 6 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. **Full contest prompt, rules, and entry instructions available at: www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest**

Deadline for entries is Friday, May 31, 2024. Presented by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.



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Prompt & Guidelines

Prompt

Seventy years ago, the Supreme Court held in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), that racial segregation in public schools violates the U.S. Constitution. The Court recognized that public education is “the very foundation of good citizenship,” and *Brown’s* impact on education and society has been the subject of much discussion and debate in our nation’s history.

Has the decision in *Brown*, viewed through the lens of 2024, achieved its purpose of ensuring equal opportunity in public education?

Consider one or more of these questions in preparing your essay:

- What purpose, or purposes, does *Brown’s* goal of diversity in schools serve in educating citizens in a democracy?
- What is the importance of *Brown* and the equal protection of the laws in later educational or societal changes?
- What institutions or groups should play a role in ensuring racial diversity in education, and how?
- How did the decision in *Brown* impact other landmark Supreme Court decisions?
- In deciding cases with a major impact on society, like *Brown*, should the Supreme Court consider public opinion on the subject at issue? If so, how would the Court evaluate the public opinion in making its decision?

Questions

Contact the Clerk’s Office at (804) 916-2715 or essaycontest@ca4.uscourts.gov.

Who May Enter

The 2024 Fourth Circuit Student Essay Contest is open to all students currently in grades 6 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Note: Prior award winners as well as children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and members of the household of a federal judge or federal judiciary employee are excluded from the competition.

Group	Length	Awards
Grades 9–12	500–1,000 words	1 st = \$2,000 2 nd = \$1,500 3 rd = \$1,000
Grades 6–8	250–500 words	1 st = \$500 2 nd = \$350 3 rd = \$200

Submission Deadline

Your essay and contest entry form must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, May 31, 2024**. Go to www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest to complete the contest entry form and submit your essay.

Format

Citations should be placed in footnotes, endnotes, works cited, or a bibliography and are excluded from the word count. Submit essay as a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF document (**Grades 9-12**) or plain text (**Grades 6-8**), not as a link.

Full contest rules and entry instructions available at:

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