

Before Brown v. Board of Education: Mexican Americans' Fight Against School Segregation

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™		
Compelling Question	What strategies did Mexican Americans use to fight back against school segregation before the landmark <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> Supreme Court case?	
Standards and Practices	<p>U.S. History</p> <p>USH.22A Identify and analyze methods of expanding the right to participate in the democratic process, including lobbying, non-violent protesting, litigation, and amendments to the U.S. Constitution.</p> <p>Mexican American Studies</p> <p>(4) History. The student understands the causes and impact of the Mexican American civil rights movement from the 1930s to 1975. The student is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (A) explain the significance of the following events as turning points relevant to Mexican American history: U.S. entry into World War II, Bracero Program, Longoria Affair, Operation Wetback, Hernández v. Texas, Brown v. Board of Education, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Farmworkers strike and boycott, and establishment of La Raza Unida Party; 	
Staging the Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before students enter, have copies of the See, Think, Wonder Worksheet (page 4 of this document) set out at each table 2. Project the image: Scene with signs for White Clinic and Mexican & Colored Clinic waiting rooms for students <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A downloaded version is included on the worksheet, however it is not very high quality so I suggest either giving students the link or projecting the photo from the link so that students can zoom in 3. Have students complete the “see” section of the chart, share with a partner or their table, then choose a few students to share out with the whole class <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Repeat this with the “think” and “wonder” sections <p>Possible Transition: As you can see, Mexican Americans were also segregated from White Americans in public spaces such as doctor’s offices, restaurants, pools, schools. You have probably learned about the ways African Americans fought back against segregation and the landmark Supreme Court case, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, which officially ended school segregation across the United States. Less known is how Mexican Americans also fought back against school segregation using similar methods of litigation and support from civil rights organizations. In this lesson, we are going to learn how Mexican Americans fought to end school segregation before <i>Brown v. Board</i> officially declared school segregation based on race unconstitutional across the country.</p>	
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3

<p>What role did court cases such as <i>Mendez v. Westminster</i> and <i>Delgado v. Bastrop ISD</i> play in ending school segregation for Mexican Americans?</p>	<p>What role did the civil rights organization, LULAC, play in ending school segregation for Mexican Americans?</p>	<p>What other ways did Mexican Americans fight back against school segregation?</p>
<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>
<p>Students will complete the court case graphic organizer as they read/listen to each source.</p>	<p>Students will SOAPS as they look over the primary source documents.</p>	<p>Students will answer the guiding questions while they watch the video.</p>
<p>Featured Sources</p>	<p>Featured Sources</p>	<p>Featured Sources</p>
<p>Court Case Graphic Organizer (Page 5 of this document)</p> <p>NPR audio with Sylvia Mendez: “No Mexicans Allowed: School Segregation in the Southwest”</p> <p>Primary sources from each court case, on pages 6-7 of this document</p> <p>Newsela Article on Delgado v. Bastrop ISD (All HISD teachers have access to Newsela and can change the text reading level)</p> <p>For extra support in understanding the rulings of each case, have students check the “Case Summary” and “Decision” on Oyez for each case.</p> <p>Mendez v. Westminster Delgado v. Bastrop ISD</p>	<p>SOAPS: The Role of LULAC Graphic Organizer (Page 8 of this document)</p> <p>LULAC Letter and Meeting Minutes, on pages 9-10 of this document</p>	<p>Segregation in California: Separate Schools for Mexicans and Whites Guiding Questions (Page 11 of this document)</p> <p>PBS video with Jessica Alba: Segregation in California: Separate Schools for Mexicans and Whites</p>
<p>Summative Performance Task</p>	<p>Argument</p>	<p>Question: What strategies were most useful to Mexican Americans fighting against school segregation in places like California and Texas? Why were these strategies effective?</p> <p>Directions: Write a one paragraph response to the question above using evidence from the primary and secondary sources provided.</p> <p>Possible Addition: Have students share their paragraph with a partner.</p>

	Extension	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you think education was such an important issue within the fight for civil rights? 2. How does this topic relate to African Americans' fight for civil rights? What similarities and differences do you notice?
Taking Informed Action		<p>Understand: What issues are still present today for Mexican Americans and other Latino Americans in education?</p> <p>Assess: What groups or organizations are fighting against these issues? What strategies are they using? Are they having success?</p> <p>Act: Bring attention to the issue you found, contact civil rights groups, elected officials, etc. to have your voice heard on the issue.</p>

Image Analysis: See, Think, Wonder: Use the image to complete the chart below. If you cannot see the image well, use the link provided so that you can zoom in more clearly.



Source: Scene with signs for White Clinic and Mexican & Colored Clinic waiting rooms, Houston Public Library, Digital Archives, <https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/images/id/4237/rec/10>

See: What do you <u>see</u> ? What stands out?	Think: What do you <u>think</u> is going on? Why?	Wonder: What does the image make you <u>wonder</u> ?

Court Case Graphic Organizer

Directions: Use the primary and secondary sources provided to fill out the graphic organizer.

	<i>Mendez v. Westminster</i>	<i>Delgado v. Bastrop ISD</i>
Year		
State		
What is the issue of the case?		
What was the court's decision?		
How did this impact Mexican Americans?		

Why do you think using the legal system is an important strategy for fighting for civil rights?

Excerpts from *Mendez v. Westminster* Conclusion & Judgement (1947)

15 "The equal protection of the laws" pertaining to the
16 public school system in California is not provided by fur-
17 nishing in separate schools the same technical facilities,
18 text books and courses of instruction to children of Mexican
19 ancestry that are available to the other public school chil-
20 dren regardless of their ancestry. A paramount requisite
21 in the American system of public education is social equality.
22 It must be open to all children by unified school association
23 regardless of lineage.

24 We think that under the record before us the only
25 tenable ground upon which segregation practices in the de-
26 fendant school districts can be defended lies in the English
27 language deficiencies of some of the children of Mexican
28 ancestry as they enter elementary public school life as
29 beginners. But even such situations do not justify the
30 general and continuous segregation in separate schools of
31 the children of Mexican ancestry from the rest of the ele-
32 mentary school population as has been shown to be the practice

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16 It is further ordered, adjudged and decreed that
17 the regulations, customs, usages and practices of defendants
18 and each of them segregating persons and pupils of Latin
19 and Mexican descent in separate schools within the respec-
20 tive school districts of defendants and each of them in the
21 City of Santa Ana, California, and elsewhere in the County
22 of Orange, State of California, are and each of them is
23 arbitrary and discriminatory and in violation of plaintiffs'
24 constitutional rights and illegal and void.

25 And it is further ordered, adjudged and decreed
26 that the defendants and each of them are hereby permanently
27 restrained and enjoined from segregating persons and pupils
28 in the elementary schools of the defendant school districts,
29 respectively, of Latin or Mexican descent in separate
30 schools within the respective school districts of the de-
31 fendants and each of them within the City of Santa Ana,
32 California, and elsewhere in the County of Orange, State of

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Excerpt from *Delgado v. Bastrop ISD* Judgement (1948)

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that:

1. This action by plaintiffs is a representative class action on behalf of themselves and of all pupils of Mexican or other Latin American descent, and the action has been properly brought as such class action pursuant to law.

2. The regulations, customs, usages, and practices of the defendants, Bastrop Independent School District of Bastrop County, et al, and each of them in so far as they or any of them have segregated pupils of Mexican or other Latin American descent in separate classes and schools within the respective school districts of the defendant school districts heretofore set forth are, and each of them is, arbitrary and discriminatory and in violation of plaintiff's constitutional rights as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and are illegal.

Rice, Ben H. [Judgment, Minerva Delgado et al vs. Bastrop Independent School District - 1948-06-15], legal document, June 15, 1948; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth248859/m1/3/>; accessed July 20, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Houston Metropolitan Research Center at Houston Public Library.

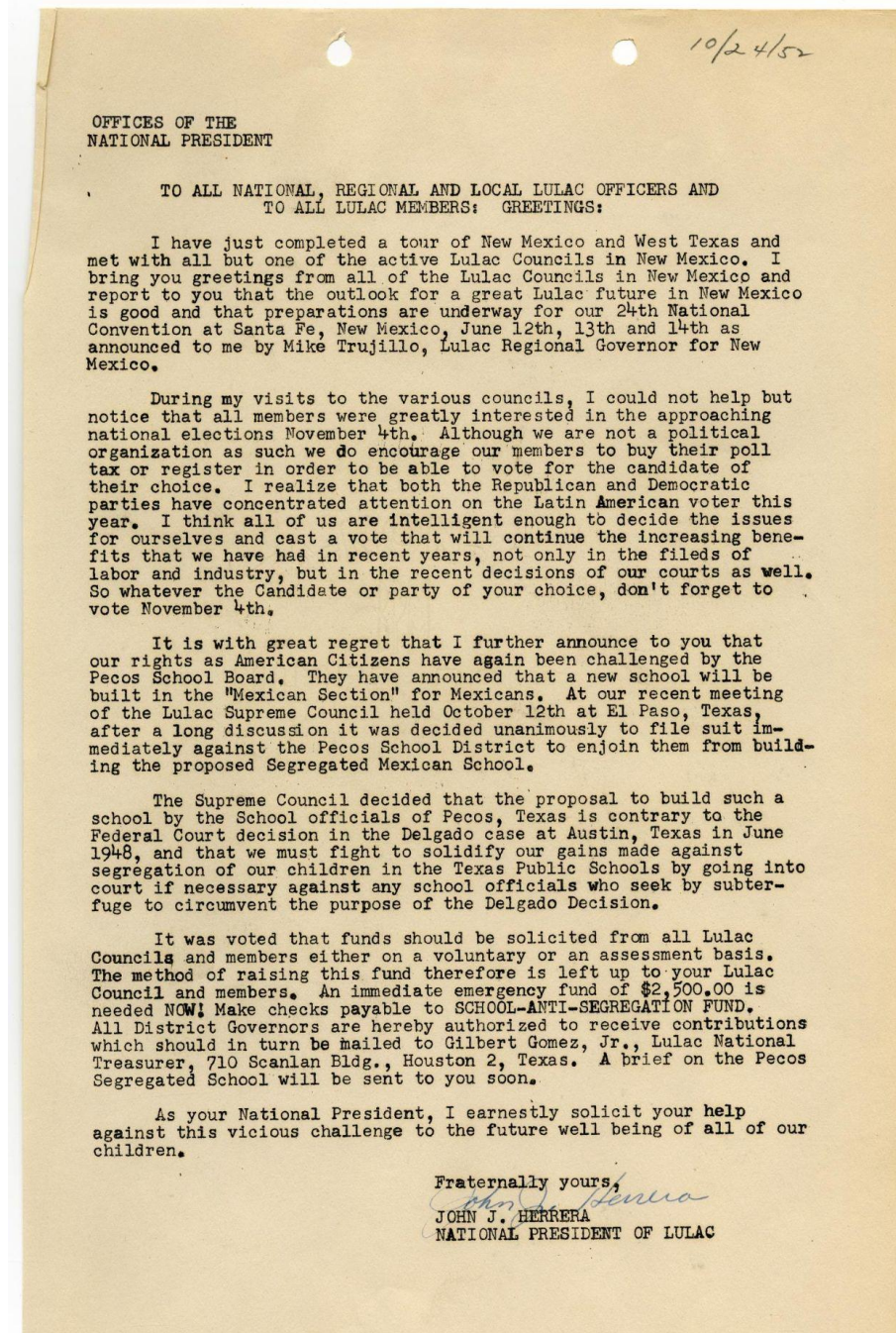
SOAPS: The Role of LULAC Graphic Organizer

LULAC: League of United Latin American Citizens. Largest and oldest Hispanic and Latin-American civil rights organization in the United States. LULAC played a huge role in the fight to end school segregation.

	Letter to LULAC Members	Minutes from LULAC Supreme Council Meeting
Speaker: Who wrote this document?		
Occasion: When and where was the document written? What else was going on at that time?		
Audience: Who was this written for?		
Purpose: Why was it written?		
Significance: How does this document relate to ending school segregation for Mexican Americans?		

Why do you think the involvement of civil rights/political organizations is important?

Letter from John J. Herrera to LULAC Members, 1952



Herrera, John J. [Letter from John J. Herrera to LULAC members - 1952-10-24], letter, October 24, 1952; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth250443/m1/1/?q=mexican%20school>: accessed July 20, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Houston Metropolitan Research Center at Houston Public Library.

Minutes from LULAC Supreme Council Meeting, 1953

Our Committee decided not to waste any time with the School Board and planned for a hearing before the Commissioner of Education on April 20, 1953. Brother Pinedo very highly commended President Herrera, First Vice President Albert Armendariz (who headed the Committee together with Brother Pinedo), Past Nat'l President George Garza, Attorney Gus Garcia, and last but by no means least, Dr. George I. Sanchez professor of the University of Texas who very volubly stated the plan of the Board for the proposed school and the obvious outcome that would develop from the undertaking of such a plan. He left them speechless!

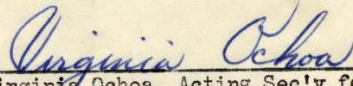
Three major accomplishments were made as a result of this hearing.

- 1) The Pecos School Board agreed to discontinue two segregated schools.
- 2) The Commissioner ordered the Board not to increase the grade on the new school under construction before consulting his office.
- 3) The Board is to submit to Brothers Pinedo and Armendariz a complete scholastic census on which recommendations for changes in the present zoning plan will be made.

Nat'l

At this time, Junior/Vice President Mike Herrera walked in and was introduced by his father, President Herrera.

At 1:00 p.m., on motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Supreme Council recessed until 2:00 p.m.



(Virginia Ochoa, Acting Sec'y for President Herrera)

Ochoa, Virginia. [Minutes from the LULAC Supreme Council Meeting - 1953-05-17], text, May 17, 1953; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph250380/m1/5/?q=pecos%20school%20board>: accessed July 20, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Houston Metropolitan Research Center at Houston Public Library.

Segregation in California: Separate Schools for Mexicans and Whites

PBS Video Guiding Questions

Directions: As you watch the video, answer the following questions. Make sure to pause/rewatch when needed!

1. In what ways did Jessica Alba's great-grandfather and his family experience segregation in California?

2. Why did some members of Jessica Alba's family go to the Mexican school, while others went to the White school? What connection can you make to Sylvia Mendez's account in the [NPR audio interview](#)?

3. How did Jessica Alba's great-grandfather fight back?

4. Why do you think the Mexican school in Claremont included lessons on Mexican history and taught Spanish reading and writing?

5. How was Jessica Alba's great-grandfather's method of fighting back against segregation different from the other two methods you have learned about?