Supreme Court Opinion: *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)
(Modified Excerpt)

Source: Chief Justice Earl Warren, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954.

Note: Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the Supreme Court's **unanimous** decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954. The decision largely overturned the earlier decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which allowed for legal segregation under its "separate but equal" principle.

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments…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. It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education….

We come then to the question presented: does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "**tangible**" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does….

We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the **plaintiffs…**by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the **Fourteenth Amendment…**

Vocabulary

- Unanimous – fully in agreement
- Tangible – something that is clear, definite, or able to be touched.
- Plaintiffs – a person who brings a suit to court.
- Fourteenth Amendment – ratified in 1868, granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States—including formerly enslaved

According to this document, did *Brown* promote greater racial equality? Explain.

U.S. Government Memo (Modified Excerpt)

Source: Memo regarding the FBI examination of attacks on Andre Yvon Jean Louis in October 1974.

Note: In June 1974, a Federal judge found in *Morgan v. Hennigan* that the Boston Public Schools systematically segregated students and faculty based on race. The court ordered a desegregation plan that used busing to transport students to schools outside of their neighborhoods.

To: Mr. Gebhardt Date: 10/9/74
From: C.L. McGowan

Subject:
Joseph Griffin and others; Andre Yvon Jean Louis - Victim
Civil Rights

Purpose: This concerns the incident in Boston, Massachusetts, wherein a Black male was forcibly removed from his vehicle on 10/7/74 and criminally assaulted by several white males.

Details: For the past three weeks, the South Boston area has experienced instances of civil unrest as a result of a Federal court order **mandating** the integration of the Boston School System by forced busing.

On 10/7/74, victim's vehicle was blocked by a group of white males and forced onto a median strip where victim abandoned vehicle to escape white males. Incident occurred near the Gavin School and witnessed by a Boston police officer who went to victim's aid. Victim, identified as Andre Yvon Jean Louis, Black male, DOB 10/30/41, was treated for scalp **lacerations** and released from hospital. Joseph Griffin, white male, DOB 8/9/41, arrested and charged with assault and battery in connection with this incident. Griffin released on bond.

Vocabulary

- Mandating – ordering
- Lacerations – deep cuts or tears

According to this document, did *Brown* promote greater racial equality? Explain.