

RACING TO CHANGE:

Oregon's Civil Rights Years

High School Unit

Lesson Seven

Black students boycott classes

By HUNTLY COLLINS
of The Oregonian staff

More than 4,000 black students in the 52,000-student Portland School District stayed out of school Monday as a one-day boycott sponsored by the Black United Front turned dozens of city classrooms into nearly empty shells.

District officials said absenteeism among blacks represented about 65 percent of the school system's total black enrollment. The overall absentee rate was 19 percent, up from an average of about 9 percent per day.

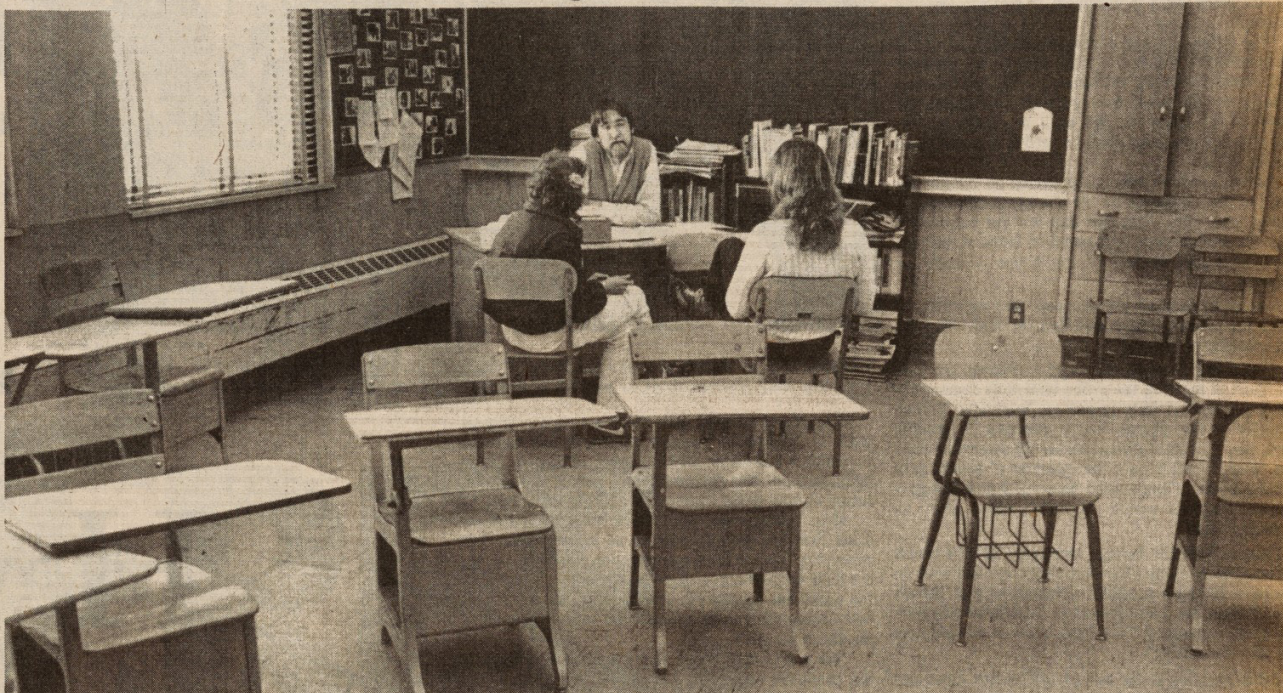
The boycott was the first of a series planned by the Front to protest the Portland School Board's refusal to locate Harriet Tubman Middle School at Eliot School near Memorial Coliseum, as promised in the board's 2-year-old desegregation plan.

Despite the plan and protests by the Front and other groups in the black community, the board has so far refused to reverse its decision, citing cost savings and other factors that influenced the vote to put Tubman at Boise School in North Portland instead of at Eliot.

A statement by Superintendent Matthew W. Prophet expressed "regret" that the dispute had led to a boycott causing students to lose a day of class.

"We hope that all the students will return to their classrooms tomorrow morning so the normal educational program can be resumed," he said.

Prophet said he hoped efforts to set up mediation talks between the board



Staff photo by RANDY L. RASMUSSEN

CLASS FOR TWO — Heidi Moore (left) and Gretchen Greiner were the only students to show up for Bill Bigelow's U.S. history class at Jefferson High School Monday as black student boycott of Portland School District kept more than 4,000 at home. Normally, 20 students attend Bigelow's class.

predominantly black schools in North

Asked about the threatened legal ac-

And in Chase's fifth-grade class-

Gretchen Greiner, a 10th-grader,



THE OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1898



A collaboration between the Oregon Historical Society and Oregon Black Pioneers

Developed by Emilie Krutzik and Zachary Stocks

Lesson 7

School Desegregation

Overview	Students will learn about Portland Public Schools’ plans to desegregate schools and the Black community’s reaction and resistance to the plans by learning about the Black United Front and analyzing primary sources.											
Essential Question(s)	How did Black Oregonians use their collective power to make change occur during the Civil Rights era? How impactful were these changes?											
Delivery Time	One 60 minute class period											
Lesson Specific Vocabulary Note: These are terms that need to be explicitly defined with students before or during this lesson.	<table><tr><th>Word</th><th>Definition</th></tr><tr><td>Desegregation</td><td>Ending the system that keeps races separated</td></tr><tr><td>De Facto Segregation</td><td>Latin for “in fact.” Separation that exists even though laws do not require it (Definition from Learning for Justice)</td></tr><tr><td>De Jure Segregation</td><td>Latin for “in law.” Separation that is mandated by law and enforced by the government (Definition from Learning for Justice)</td></tr><tr><td>Segregation</td><td>When people of different races are kept apart so that they live, work, or study separately</td></tr></table>		Word	Definition	Desegregation	Ending the system that keeps races separated	De Facto Segregation	Latin for “in fact.” Separation that exists even though laws do not require it (Definition from Learning for Justice)	De Jure Segregation	Latin for “in law.” Separation that is mandated by law and enforced by the government (Definition from Learning for Justice)	Segregation	When people of different races are kept apart so that they live, work, or study separately
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Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions (digital or paper copies for each student)• City Club of Portland 1980 Report Maps (for projecting)• Black United Front Primary Sources (digital or paper copies for each pair of students)• Black United Front Primary Source Analysis Worksheet (digital or paper copies for each student)• Racing to Change Lesson Closure Worksheet (digital or paper copies for each student- NOT needed if using Lesson Closure Packet)• Answer Keys• Lesson 7 Slide Deck (for projecting)• Oregon Black Pioneers’ Racing to Change Online Exhibit											



	(students will need access to the link)
Background Information for Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For background on the relationship between Black Portlanders and the public school system since the state's founding, read the Oregon Historical Quarterly article “Desegregation and Multiculturalism in the Portland Public Schools” by Ethan Johnson and Felicia Williams. Nationally, the Civil Rights movement was about ending De Jure segregation. In Oregon, the Civil Rights Bill of 1953 largely ended De Jure segregation in the state. Therefore, the focus of the Oregon Civil Rights movement was about ending De Facto segregation. For more information on De Jure laws and historical De Facto segregation, read the Oregon Encyclopedia entries Blacks in Oregon and Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon. If students are confused about why Portland schools were still segregated so many years after Brown v. Board, remind them that history is different on a local level. Even though school segregation was illegal after 1954, neighborhood segregation was still an issue in Oregon and elsewhere into the 1980s and even today.
Step by Step Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Warm Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project the <i>Oregonian</i> article quote about Eliot Elementary (slide 2 of the Lesson 7 Slide Deck) and the following warm up prompt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do these statistics tell us about Eliot Elementary in the 1950s? Give students a minute to think about an answer. Have them share out with a partner. Class discussion: Call on a few students to share out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the conversation is lagging, ask students: <i>Do you think Eliot Elementary is a segregated school? Why would the article claim that “Public schools in Oregon are not segregated”?</i> Students should recall the discussion from Lessons 4, 5, and 6 about housing segregation as reasons for Black students to make up such a majority of the student population. This would also be a good time to make sure



all students understand the words
“segregated” and “desegregated.”

- Define De Jure Segregation and De Facto Segregation for students (definitions on [slide 3](#)).
- Once students understand the definition, have them apply it by asking the following questions:
 - What laws in Oregon’s history are De Jure segregation?
 - What factors contributed to De Facto segregation in Oregon during the Civil Rights movement?
- Have students turn and talk with a partner.
- Class discussion. Call on students to share their answers.
- Answers should include:
 - De Jure laws include the Black exclusion laws from the territorial government’s Organic laws and Oregon’s state constitution, 1866 act prohibiting interracial marriage.
 - Factors for De Facto segregation were lack of enforcement of civil rights laws, housing segregation/redlining, presence of racist groups in the state.

2. Talking Point:

- *Because of housing segregation, there was a higher proportion of Black students in Albina schools compared to other neighborhoods. Today we are going to learn about Portland Public Schools’ desegregation plan and how Black Oregonians used their collective power to push for change in schools. This will further our understanding of our essential questions “How did Black Oregonians use their collective power to make change occur during the Civil Rights era? How impactful were those changes?”*

3. Map Observation and Analysis Activity:

- Pass out a copy of the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#) to each student.
- Project the [City Club of Portland 1980 Report Maps](#) (also on [slides 5 and 6](#))
- Starting with Illustration No. Two, give students a few



minutes to look at the map and answer the five observation questions on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#).

- Quick class discussion: Call on a few students and have them share out. Make sure the following ideas are brought up in the discussion:
 - Map shows the PPS district boundary and breaks down areas by percentage of White student residents.
 - Northeast is predominantly Black/non-White.
- Show students Illustration No. One and give students a few minutes to look at the map and answer the observation questions on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#).
- Have students share their ideas with a partner.
- Quick class discussion: Call on a few students and have them share out. At this point, keep discussion focused just on this map rather than how the two are related- this will come next. Make sure the following ideas are brought up in the discussion:
 - Map is showing “Proposed Desegregation Patterns” for 1979-1980.
 - Most of the arrows are going out from the central Northeast.
- Now give students time to look at both maps on [slide 7](#) and work with a partner to answer the analysis questions on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#). Define desegregation if needed.
- Have students share their ideas with a partner.
- Quick class discussion: Call on a few students and have them share out. Make sure the following ideas are brought up in the discussion:
 - PPS’s desegregation plan seems to be bussing students from the Albina district to outlying schools in majority White areas.

4. Understanding PPS’s Desegregation Plan:

- Have students read the [Racing to Change Online Exhibit](#) section “Fighting School Inequality.”
- As they are reading, they should think about the connections they see between the text and the two



maps. Have them write down their thoughts to questions 3 and 4 on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#).

- Have a quick class discussion on questions. Possible student answers:
 - 25% quota for all schools, possibly closing Albina's majority-Black schools
 - Black students were bussed from Albina to predominantly White schools (22% by 1975) but White students were not being bussed as much.
- Tell students they will now hear from some members of the Black community on how they felt about PPS's desegregation plan and how it affected students. It will also introduce a group called the Black United Front. As they are watching the video, they should write down answers to questions 5 and 6 on their [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#) worksheet.
 - How did the Black community respond to PPS's desegregation plan? What change actions did they utilize?
 - What was the Black United Front? What did they accomplish?
- [Watch the video "Desegregation in Portland"](#) in the Racing to Change exhibit (embedded in [slide 9](#)).
- After the video, give students another minute to finish jotting down their thoughts.
- Have students turn and share with a partner.

5. Black United Front Primary Source Analysis:

- Tell students the exhibit and video introduced a group called the Black United Front. We are going to focus today on the change actions they used to improve Portland's schools for all students.
- Hand out a copy of the [Black United Front Primary Source Analysis Worksheet](#) to each student. Pair up students and give each pair one copy of the [Black United Front Primary Sources](#).
- Give students time to view the [Black United Front Primary Sources](#) and answer the questions on the



[Primary Source Analysis Worksheet](#) with their partner

- Once pairs are finished, bring the class back together and prepare for a class discussion on the following questions:
 - Based on these sources, what change actions did the Black United Front use to change school policies?
 - How impactful do you think these actions were?
- Give pairs a few minutes to look over their [Black United Front Primary Sources](#) and [Worksheet](#) and discuss their answers.
- Class discussion. The discussion should cover the following points:
 - The BUF used boycotts and public demonstrations at school board meetings.
 - Push students to talk about the two photos when discussing the impacts. For example, the school boycott seemed impactful because of the picture of the mostly empty classroom.
- As a whole class, read through the final paragraph of the “Fighting School Inequality” in the [Racing to Change Online Exhibit](#). This paragraph outlines the impacts the Black United front had on PPS’s desegregation plan.
- Also share with students that the BUF provided community oversight to ensure that PPS kept its promises, including the location of Harriet Tubman Middle School and keeping Jefferson High School open.

6. Completing Racing to Change Closure Worksheet:

- Pass out a new copy of the [Racing to Change Lesson Closure Worksheet](#) or have students take out their [Packet](#).
- Project [slide 16](#) and read the question: How did Black Oregonians use their collective power to push for change in schools?
- Brainstorm a few ideas together as a class before students start filling out the closure worksheet individually. Call on a few students to answer the



	<p>essential question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students time to fill out the worksheet. The Black United Front needs to be included. The Community Coalition for School Integration and the NAACP are optional. See the Teacher Answer Key. • Call on students to share what they wrote on their Lesson Closure Worksheet. Fill out one based on the shared answers as an exemplar.
Formative Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect the Racing to Change Lesson Closure Worksheet from students to review for understanding. Note that students will need it back for the end of unit assessment. Hand them back to students before starting Lesson 10. • Collect students' Black United Front Primary Source Analysis Worksheet. Assess student answers for their ability to observe and analyze the sources.
Support for All Students	<p>Have students look at the Black United Front Primary Sources in groups of four. Split the group into two sets of partners- evens and odds. The even pair will be responsible for Sources 2 and 4 while the odd pair will be responsible for Sources 1 and 3. Once pairs have analyzed their sources, have them share with the original group of four.</p>
Extensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To dig deeper into PPS desegregation, use the “Unit Plan: The Desegregation of Portland Public Schools” lessons for 8th to 10th graders created by history students at Portland State University. • The picture of the Black United Front protesting at a PPS school board meeting is also part of the Experience Oregon History 9 – 12 Analyzing Primary Sources Packet. This source has more primary source documents and links to other extensions on the topic.
Oregon Social Science Standards Integrated with Ethnic Studies	<p><i>The listed standards are pertinent to the entire unit. Please use your discretion for discerning applicability for each individual lesson.</i></p> <p>Civics and Government</p> <p>HS.2 Identify and analyze the existence and perpetuation of discrimination and inequity in the local, state, national, or global context.</p> <p>HS.3 Identify, discuss, and explain the exclusionary language and intent of the Oregon and U.S. Constitution and the provisions and process for the expansion and protection of civil rights.</p>



HS.9 Analyze political parties, interest and community groups, and mass media and how they influence the beliefs and behaviors of individuals, and local, state, and national constituencies.

HS.11. Analyze and evaluate the methods for challenging, resisting, and changing society in the promotion of equity, justice and equality.

Geography

HS.41 Analyze migration patterns to understand the relationships among major events, government policies, private action, and spatial diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices, in the distribution of human populations, segregation of communities, and marginalization and empowerment of individuals and groups.

HS.42 Analyze the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.

HS.50 Identify and analyze how map-making, zoning, and other policy decisions create social, political, and economic realities for various population groups.

HS.51 Explain how power and privilege influence where people live and how they interact with their environment at the intergroup and institutional levels and how they have been affected.

Historical Knowledge

HS.52 Evaluate continuity and change over the course of world and United States history.

HS.53 Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of world, U.S., and Oregon history.

HS.60 Analyze and explain the historic and contemporary examples of social and political conflicts and compromises including the actions of traditionally marginalized individuals and groups addressing inequities, inequality, power, and justice in the U.S. and the world.

HS.62 Identify, analyze, and celebrate the histories and contributions of traditionally marginalized groups and individuals in shaping the cultures of Oregon, the United States, and the world.

HS.65 Identify and explain strategies of survivance, resistance and societal change by individuals

and traditionally marginalized groups confronting discrimination, genocide, and other forms of violence, based on race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender.

HS.66 Identify and analyze the nature of structural and systemic



	<p>oppression on LGBTQ, people experiencing disability, ethnic and religious groups, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, and their role in the pursuit of justice and equality in Oregon, the United States, and the world.</p> <p>Historical Thinking</p> <p>HS.67 Evaluate historical sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.</p> <p>HS.68 Select and analyze historical information, including contradictory evidence, from a variety of primary and secondary sources to support or reject a claim.</p> <p>HS.69 Create and defend a historical argument utilizing primary and secondary sources as evidence.</p> <p>Social Science Analysis</p> <p>HS.71 Construct arguments using precise claims, integrating and evaluating information provided by multiple sources, diverse media, and formats, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>HS.73 Identify and analyze multiple and diverse perspectives as critical consumers of information.</p> <p>HS.75 Evaluate options for individual and collective actions to address local, regional and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.</p> <p>HS.76 Propose, compare, and evaluate multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions to issues or problems; then reach an informed, defensible, supported conclusion.</p> <p>HS.77 Engage in informed and respectful deliberation and discussion of issues, events, and ideas applying a range of strategies and procedures to make decisions and take informed action.</p> <p>HS.78 Identify and critique how implicit bias, institutional racism, racial supremacy, privilege, intersectionality, and identity, influence perspectives in the understanding of history and contemporary events.</p>
<p>Holocaust and Other Genocides Learning Concepts:</p>	<p>(d) Stimulate students' reflection on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in democratic societies to combat misinformation, indifference and discrimination through tools of resistance such as protest, reform and celebration.</p> <p>(f) Enable students to understand the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping.</p>



	(h) Provide students with a foundation for examining the history of discrimination in this state.
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