

RACING TO CHANGE:

Oregon's Civil Rights Years

Middle 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.

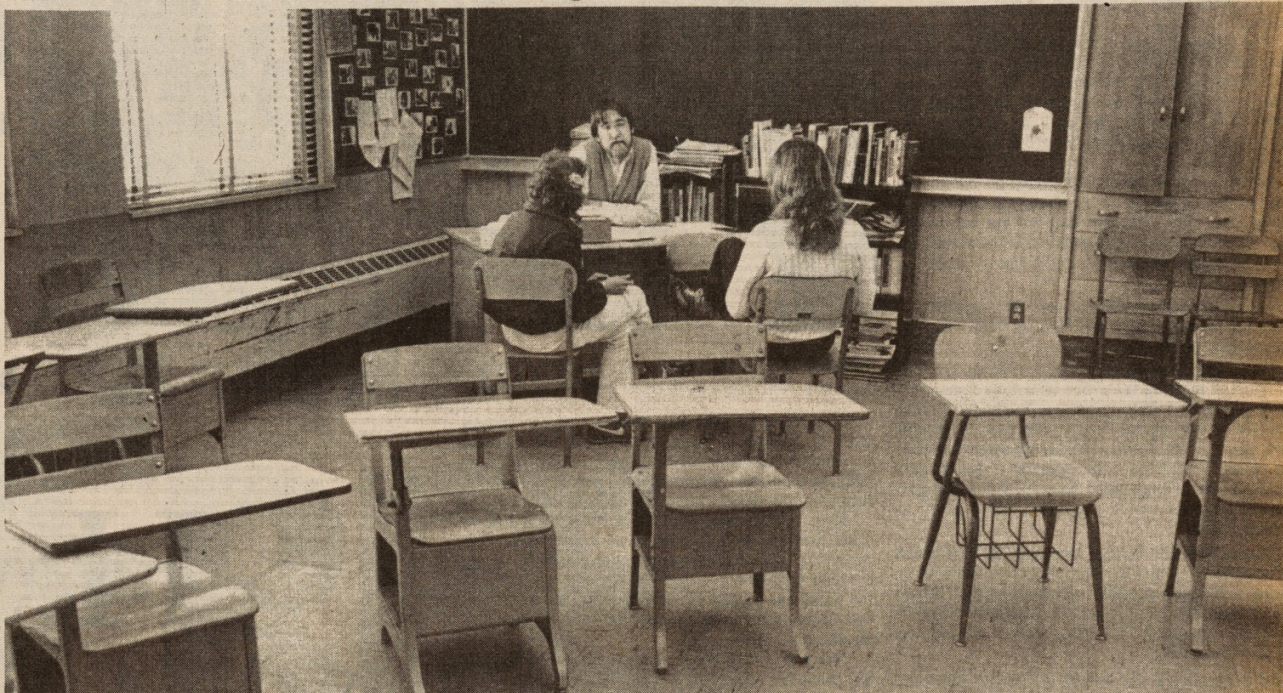
The boycott was the first of a series planned by the Front to protest the Portland School Board's refusal to locate Harriet Tubman Middle School at Eliot School near Memorial Coliseum, as promised in the board's 2-year-old desegregation plan.

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							
Academic Vocabulary Note: Make sure that students are familiar with these words before you start the lesson.	<table><tr><th>Word</th><th>Definition</th></tr><tr><td>Quota</td><td>An official minimum or maximum on the number of something that is allowed</td></tr></table>		Word	Definition	Quota	An official minimum or maximum on the number of something that is allowed		
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Quota	An official minimum or maximum on the number of something that is allowed							
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>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	Segregation	When people of different races are kept apart so that they live, work, or study separately
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Segregation	When people of different races are kept apart so that they live, work, or study separately							
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							



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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"> 1. 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 if they think Eliot Elementary is a segregated school. If so, why would the article say schools in Oregon are not segregated? ■ 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." 2. Talking Point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Because of housing segregation, there was a higher proportion of Black students in Albina schools compared to other neighborhoods. This caused</i>



Portland schools to be segregated even though there were no laws saying students of different races had to be separated. 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 as we work to answer the essential question, "How did Black Oregonians use their collective power to make change occur during the Civil Rights era? How impactful were these 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 4, 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](#).
- 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:
 - The map shows the PPS district boundary and breaks down areas by percentage of White student residents.
 - Northeast is predominately 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:
 - The 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 shown on [slide 6](#) and work with a partner to answer the analysis questions on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#). Define desegregation if needed.
- Quick class discussion: Call on a few students and have them share out. Make sure the following idea is 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 on the [Map Analysis and Online Exhibit Questions](#).
- Have a quick class discussion on the connections.
- 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 about how they felt regarding 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.
 - Question 5: How did the Black community respond to PPS's desegregation plan? What change actions did they utilize?
 - Question 6: What was the Black United Front? What did they accomplish?
- [Watch the video "Desegregation in Portland"](#) in the



Racing to Change exhibit or embedded in [slide 8](#).

- After the video, give students another minute to finish writing 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 [Black United Front Primary Source Analysis Worksheet](#).
- 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



	<p>desegregation plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>6. Lesson Closure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass out a new copy of the Racing to Change Lesson Closure Worksheet or have students take out their Lesson Closure Packet. Project slide 13 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 essential question. 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 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 analyze the Black United Front Primary Sources as a group of four. Split the group into two sets of partners, one for each primary source. Each pair analyzes their own source and then comes back together to share their ideas.</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>6th Grade</p> <p>6.4 Identify and analyze historical and contemporary means that societies have undertaken for the expansion of justice, equality, and equity for individuals and/or groups of previously historically underrepresented groups.</p> <p>6.20 Identify and analyze the causes and effects of oppression and resistance in the living histories of historically marginalized groups in the Western Hemisphere.</p> <p>6.21 Identify the motivations, tools, and implications of power, authority, and governance as it relates to systems and tools of oppression (e.g., bias, injustice, discrimination, antisemitism, and stereotypes) and its impact on ethnic and religious groups and other historically marginalized groups of the Western Hemisphere.</p> <p>6.23 Explain and analyze the historical context of key people, cultures, products, events, and ideas over time including the examination of different perspectives from indigenous people, ethnic and religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups throughout the Western Hemisphere.</p> <p>6.24 Gather, interpret, document, and use information from multiple sources and diverse media, distinguish facts from opinions while recognizing points of view through inquiry and research.</p> <p>6.27 Assess individual and collective capacities to take action to address local and regional issues, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.</p> <p>6.28 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of these arguments.</p> <p>7th Grade</p>



7.1 Describe the role of citizens in governments.

7.5 Identifying and analyzing historical and contemporary means societies have undertaken for the expansion of justice, equality, and equity for individuals and/or groups of previously historically underrepresented groups.

7.27 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information.

7.28 Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

7.29 Assess individual and collective capacities to take informed action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies, and potential outcomes.

7.30 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources and diverse media while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

8th Grade

8.6 Examine and evaluate legal structures (e.g., Black Codes, Jim Crow, etc.) and Supreme Court decisions up to 1900 and their lasting impact on the status, rights, and liberties of historically underrepresented individuals and groups.

8.7 Analyze the methods of individuals and movements responsible/necessary for the expanding eligibility of citizenship and the continuing struggle for the expansion of rights and responsibility for ethnic and other historically underrepresented groups at both the local and national level.

8.9 Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies and identify individuals and/or groups promoting the common good including the importance of advocacy and activism related to socio-economic resistance (i.e. civil rights, LGBTQ+ rights, worker's rights) for the expansion of justice, equality, and equity for individuals and/or groups of previously historically underrepresented groups.

8.22 Evaluate continuity and change over the course of United States history by analyzing examples of class, gender, religious, regional, and racial conflict, compromise, cooperation, interdependence, and the pursuit of social justice from multiple perspectives.

8.27 Determine and explain the importance and contributions (products, events, actions, and ideas) of key people, cultures, and



	<p>ethnic groups, religious groups, and other historically underrepresented groups in Oregon, the United States, and the world.</p> <p>8.28 Critique and analyze historical events to recognize power, authority, religion, economics, and governance as they relate to systemic oppression and its impact on Indigenous peoples, ethnic and religious groups, and other historically marginalized groups in the colonial and modern era.</p> <p>8.30 Use and interpret relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. History from multiple perspectives.</p> <p>8.31 Synthesize information and data to construct an account of historical events that includes multiple sources and varied perspectives.</p> <p>8.32 Identify and analyze methods of subversion, resistance, challenge, and perseverance, within and among the intersecting identities of ethnic and social groups traditionally excluded from historical narratives.</p> <p>8.33 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, bias, propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information in order to question the dominant narratives in history.</p> <p>8.36 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.</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> <p>(h) Provide students with a foundation for examining the history of discrimination in this state.</p>

