

Desegregation Timeline – From “Still Fulfilling the Dream”

1954 – On May 17, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka case “that in the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal has no place.”

1955 – The Supreme Court hears its third round of arguments in Brown concerning remedies. On May 31, the last day of the Court’s term, Brown II is handed down, ordering that desegregation occur with “all deliberate speed.”

The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins, following Rosa Park’s arrest after refusing to relinquish her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus.

1964 – Congress passes and President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing race and gender discrimination in voting, public accommodations and employment. Title IV, which prohibits discrimination in education, becomes a major tool of desegregation efforts.

1972 – Frustrated because their children were being bussed to schools some distance away from their neighborhood, a group of five black north St. Louis parents, led by Minnie Liddell, file a complaint in the U. S. District Court. The parents claimed that certain practices by the city’s school board and the State of Missouri are responsible for segregation in the St. Louis school system.

1975 – Judge Arthur Garrity issues an elaborate plan to desegregate Boston’s public schools, ordering the bussing of 21,000 students. In response, riots break out at numerous high schools. The reaction in Boston exemplifies the height of national tension over busing.

In the Liddell case, Chief Judge James Meredith approves a consent decree drawn up by attorneys for both sides whereby the St. Louis school board agrees to increase its numbers of minority teachers and attempts to relieve residence-based racial imbalances.

1976 – In the Liddell case, the NAACP objects to the settlement and seeks to intervene in the case. Although Judge Meredith refuses their request, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals grants them permission to intervene. Over the next several years, more parties are added to the case, including the State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education as defendants with the school board and as plaintiffs, the City of St. Louis and two groups of white parents.

The St. Louis Public Schools begin Magnet Schools as a segregation remedy.

1979 – In the Liddell case, Judge Meredith rules that the city school board had not intentionally segregated black students.

In Topeka, the ACLU and a group of black parents re-open the original Brown case, arguing that 25 years after the historic decision the city's schools still remain racially segregated.

1980 – In St. Louis, the Court of Appeals reverses earlier decisions and said that the city board and state were responsible for maintaining a segregated school system. In its ruling, the Court notes that until 1976, long after the separate but equal doctrine was ruled unconstitutional, the Missouri Constitution contained an article calling for separate schools. The Court suggests the development of an exchange program between the city and the county and returns the case to Meredith.

St. Louis school officials submit plans for an intradistrict (within the district) desegregation plan which is approved by the Court for implementation that September, with the transfer of 7,500 students within the city district.

Judge Meredith steps down from the case and hands it over to U.S. District Judge William Hungate.

1981 – Judge Hungate proposes a regional voluntary desegregation plan, and calls for responses from 39 school districts. On August 6, the deadline for responses to the plan, only four districts – Clayton,

Kirkwood, Ritenour and University City – had approved the plan. In less than three weeks, the Judge adds the remaining 17 St. Louis County school districts as defendants. (Excluded was the Ferguson-Florissant district which was part of an earlier desegregation case.) The Pattonville district immediately asked to join the voluntary plan and other districts considered it.

That September, 124 transfer students choose to be enrolled in the new voluntary program.

1982 – In St. Louis, Judge Hungate announces that he will consider calling for mandatory desegregation of schools by merging the city and county school districts into four sub-districts governed by a single board, if a suitable voluntary plan, agreed to by city and county districts cannot be developed, and if the county districts are found liable for the segregation that existed in the city schools.

1983 – In February, an agreement on a voluntary plan in the St. Louis case is announced and endorsed by officials in twenty of the 23 county districts. By March 30, a final settlement plan, approved by all 23 districts, is given to Judge Hungate, who approves the plan after two months of fairness hearings.

By September, the St. Louis plan is fully underway, with almost 2,500 city transfer students enrolled, implemented by the Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council (VICC).

The State of Missouri, which had been found to be the “primary constitutional wrong-doer,” was ordered to pay the costs of the voluntary interdistrict plan and also pay one-half of the cost of improvements in the city schools. The State appealed the settlement, saying it could not bear the burden of paying for the plan.

1984 – The Court of Appeals upheld Judge Hungate’s decision in the St. Louis school desegregation case.

By fall, more than 5,500 St. Louis area students were participating in the voluntary St. Louis Student Transfer program, crossing school boundaries to attend the school of their choice. The U. S. Supreme Court refused to hear the state’s appeal.

1993 – The State of Missouri renewed its request for unitary status of the school case and final settlement of the entire lawsuit.

1996 – A three-week hearing in Federal District Court in St. Louis is held on the State of Missouri's request for unitary status. Following the hearing Federal Judge George F. Gunn appointed retired Washington University Chancellor William H. Danforth to negotiate a settlement among the major parties to the lawsuit.

1999 – All parties to the Liddell lawsuit announce that an agreement has been reached which would provide for continuation of the most successful components of the 1983 Settlement Agreement – specifically, the voluntary transfer program and the St. Louis Magnet Schools. New students would be allowed to enroll through the 2008-2009 school year.

With approval of a 2/3rds of a cent sales tax increase by St. Louis city voters on February 2, and court approval of the 1999 Settlement Agreement on March 15, the Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council (VICC) became a non-profit corporation, re-named the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC), responsible for running all aspect of the voluntary student transfer program. No longer funded by incremental court-ordered state payments, the voluntary transfer program continues, now governed by superintendents of the participating school districts and funded through the same state funding mechanisms as all other public schools in Missouri.

Along with the organizational changes, the major programmatic change was the establishment of attendance areas in the city inked with specific suburban school districts.

2007 – With a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC), the window for accepting new students in the program was extended five years, to

2013-2014. The majority of participating districts indicated that they would continue to accept new transfer students.

2012 – A second unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) extends the window for accepting new students in the program an additional five years to 2018/19. The participating districts indicated they would continue to accept new transfer students.

**Growth of Minority Representation in
Currently Participating Suburban Districts Since 1982**

School District	First Year in Transfer Program	Student Population Percent Black 1982-83	Transfer Student Enrollment 6/30/06	Total Black Enrollment 6/30/06	Student Population Percent Black 6/30/06	Total Student Enrollment 6/30/06	Black Student Population without the Transfer Program
Affton	1982	1.60%	173	272	11.10%	2,450	4.35%
Bayless	1983	0.10%	150	181	11.05%	1,539	2.23%
Brentwood	1982	23.90%	149	204	25.03%	815	8.26%
Clayton Hancock Place	1981	6.00%	443	535	21.75%	2,460	4.56%
Kirkwood	1982	3.00%	280	351	20.77%	1,690	5.04%
Ladue	1981	19.30%	525	1,073	21.73%	4,939	12.42%
Lindbergh	1982	15.60%	59	574	17.04%	3,369	15.56%
Mehlville	1982	1.60%	433	534	9.87%	5,412	2.03%
Parkway	1983	0.03%	997	1,261	11.36%	11,102	2.61%
Pattonville	1982	2.50%	1,965	3,017	16.32%	18,482	6.37%
Rockwood	1981	5.30%	189	1,475	25.90%	5,696	23.35%
Valley Park	1983	0.90%	1,830	2,269	10.44%	21,741	2.20%
Webster Groves	1983	0.40%	167	234	25.49%	918	8.92%
Total/Average		7.70%	7,692	12,995	15.35%	84,685	6.89%