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Where Do We Go From Here?

Albemarle-Charlottesville NAACP

Response to the ProPublica/New York Times Article

by [Annie Waldman](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.propublica.org%2Fpeople%2Fannie-waldman&data=02%7C01%7C%7C85468d6bab88442c530908d638d46788%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636758882245465108&sdata=WpyvCbw%2FUDuIj6fxuKkcL6l%2BToqifV0vs3Hsv7gT398%3D&reserved=0), ProPublica, and Erica Green, [The New York Times](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7C85468d6bab88442c530908d638d46788%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C636758882245465108&sdata=iVlBguwhYmRuuRaXc8j9ATtFhR6fWsJoggoYIulk1K0%3D&reserved=0)

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We all have been aware of the issue of disparity in education since before the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision back in 1954. While many localities did not agree with the Brown decision, Charlottesville took the extra step of refusing to implement the decision, by closing its public schools. In addition, Charlottesville issued pay vouchers to white parents, allowing them to send their children to private schools. Based on this most recent history, if anyone is surprised by the information and data referenced in this article, they have not been paying attention! These issues and this data are not new on a local, state or national level.

The question is - “Where Do We Go From Here?”

One possible path to begin to answer that question, as a community and especially as a Black community, is to first answer two questions –

 What has been lost or changed? and,

 What has stayed the same since the Brown decision?

What has changed for the Black community in Charlottesville since the time of the Brown decision?

→ General gentrification of African American communities.

→ Vinegar Hill African American community destroyed along with

 associated supportive social, educational and economical structures.

→ The current and past gentrification of the 10th and Page African

 American community, also along with the supportive social,

 educational and economical structures.

→ The loss of African American educators more closely tied to the

 African American community.

→ The lowering of expectation of intelligence, success and overall

 well- being of African American children.

→ The loss of African American communities has negatively impacted

 the communities sense of self; and, diminished its ability to demand

 and fight for its place in the broader Charlottesville community. This

 includes demanding and supporting quality education for its children,

 along with other issues like quality health care, affordable housing,

 jobs and the creation and retention of wealth.

What has stayed the same?

→ The need for African American children to be protected, educated,

 and to excel.

Where do we go from here?

We, as a community, especially the African American community, need to be more engaged on any and all levels in our children’s education. If our children do not receive the education they deserve, require or need, then parents, teachers, school administrators, superintendents, school board members, and the community at-large should be held accountable. The best way for us to recognize that our children are not being properly educated is to be constantly and consistently engaged. As we all know, by the time the story hits ProPublica or the New York Times, the damage to our children has already been done.

We all must be a part of the change to help create and foster success of African American children. We, as a broader community, must understand that by denying and preventing an individual to rise to his or her full potential, the entire community suffers.

In the 1896 case of Plessey vs. Ferguson the principle of “separate but equal.” was upheld. In 1954 the Brown vs. Board of Education case, in essence, overruled the Plessey decision. While the African American community in Charlottesville and Albemarle County at large, may no longer be “separate” we are most definitely, not equal. We have not gained equality in education, health care, jobs, job creation, business creation, or wealth creation and retention. The only way to gain that equality and more is to demand it!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ALBEMARLE-CHARLOTTESVILLE

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