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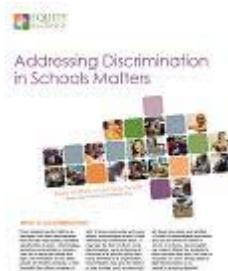
Civil Rights

In This Issue
Online Special Feature
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**Equity Alliance at ASU
 Online Special Feature:**
[Addressing Discrimination in
 School Matters](#)



Every student has the right to an education free from discrimination that provides high-quality, equitable opportunities to learn. In schools, discrimination can make it difficult for students to learn because they don't feel safe or accepted. As such, finding ways to fight discrimination is essential to ensuring students' educational opportunity.

Upcoming Events

- [The Equity Alliance at ASU's Equity Forum -- Beyond the Sidelines: Let's](#)

The moment we choose love we begin to move towards freedom...

- bell hooks

Civil rights in U.S. schools are about much more than *Brown v. the Board of Education*, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Black History Month. 'Civil rights' refers to the equal protection and treatment provided in the U.S. Constitution and the Civil Rights Act. Civil rights laws protect and ensure "the liberties and rights guaranteed by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Nineteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, especially the exercise of voting rights and the prohibition of discrimination in employment, education, and public accommodations on the basis of age, color, race, religion, or sex" ([Webster's New World Law Dictionary](#), 2010).

The characterization of civil rights as 'a black thing' in popular discourse serves to minimize the importance of these rights for *all* people. Nearly every group of people in the U.S. has struggled to achieve equal rights at one point or another in our history, from Quakers to Irish, Polish and Italian immigrants, African-Americans, women, migrant workers, people with disabilities, and homosexuals. Distilling 'civil rights' down to one brief social studies unit on Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ignores the myriad of struggles, both historic and present-day, to live up to our nation's promise of equality for all citizens.

As noted by President Obama in the 2011 State of the Union Address, "Our troops come from every corner of this country - they're black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American. They are Christian and Hindu, Jewish and Muslim. And, yes, we know that some of them are gay. Starting this year, no American will be forbidden from serving the country they love because of who they love."

In this month's *Equity Matters*, we highlight resources and information about efforts to protect students, teachers, and families from discrimination in schools. Civil rights work is a never-ending process of increasing awareness and addressing problems, and access to information is a vital piece of supporting this work. We hope that our readers will continue to engage in ongoing learning about civil rights efforts and share information and resources with all of your networks.

References

- Obama, B. (2011). [Presidential State of the Union Address, Washington, D.C.](#)
 Webster's New World Law Dictionary (2010).

[Get to Work Feb. 28 & March 1, 2011](#)

- [PEAK Parent Center's 2011 Conference on Inclusive Education Feb. 10-12, 2011](#)
- [National Association for Bilingual Education's 40th Annual Conference February 16-18, 2011](#)
- [Learning Disabilities Association's 48th Annual International Conference February 23-26, 2011](#)

Online Tools

- [Office For Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#)
- [The United States Department of Justice](#)
- [SoJust: Primary Source History of Social Justice](#)

*Come see the founder of *SoJust*, Paul Gorski, speak at The Equity Alliance at ASU's *Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum*.

BEYOND THE SIDELINES
LET'S GET TO WORK!

Online Publications

- [Building Collaboration Between Schools and Parents of English Language Learners: Transcending Barriers, Creating Opportunities](#)
- [The Common Causes of Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education](#)
- [Closing The Achievement Gap: We Must Be As Diligent About Closing The Achievement Gap As We Were About Creating It](#)

Equity in Action

[White House Initiative on Educational Excellence For Hispanic Americans](#)



Juan Sepúlveda was appointed by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in May 2009, to the position of director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. In this capacity, he is responsible for directing the efforts of the White House Initiative in engaging Hispanic students, parents, families, organizations, and anyone working in or with the education system in communities nationwide as active participants in improving the academic achievement of Hispanic Americans. Juan Sepúlveda will be speaking this spring at the [Equity Alliance at ASU's Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum](#) February 28th and March 1st in Phoenix, AZ.

The commission was tasked with examining the underlying causes of the existing education achievement gap between Hispanic American students and their peers. During the past 18 months, the White House Initiative visited more than 90 communities in 20 states to engage citizens concerned with improving the lives of Latinos. To mark the next step in connecting communities nationwide with information, resources and people to improve the academic achievement and lives of Hispanics, the White House Initiative convened key Education Department and Administration officials, and national Hispanic education, community and business leaders for a *National Education Summit and Call to Action* in October 2010. In addition, in an effort to include individuals and groups who are unable to attend the summit in person, the White House Initiative encouraged communities to form local Watch Parties. These local events included cultural and education-related activities in addition to the broadcasting of the summit to watch party participants.

In today's global economy, educating every American student to graduate from high school prepared for college and for a career is a national imperative. To achieve this goal will require both hard work and new ideas to support continuous and sustained improvement. Closing this college attainment gap is critical to restoring America's standing as a global leader in education.

For more on the work of Juan Sepúlveda and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans register [here](#) for the *Equity and Excellence Forum*:



Tools You Can Use

Things to Read

The racial gap in academic performance between whites and Asians,

- [Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools](#)

*If you would like to hear from these authors in person they will be presenting at the Equity Alliance's *Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum*.



Educational Equity Corner: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

1. [What are Civil Rights?](#)
2. [How do civil rights relate specifically to equity in U.S. Education?](#)
3. [What is Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?](#)
4. [How does the work of the Equity Alliance at ASU relate to Civil Rights?](#)

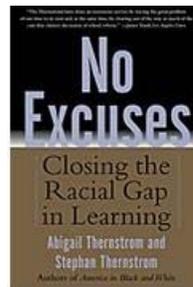
Our Featured Equity Friend

[The Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#)

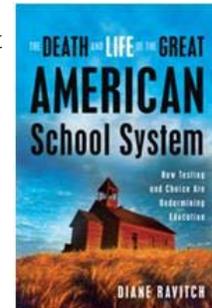
As the Department's civil rights and health privacy rights law enforcement agency, OCR investigates complaints, enforces rights, and promulgates regulations, develops policy and provides technical assistance and public education to ensure understanding of and compliance with non-discrimination and health information privacy laws.

Through investigations, voluntary dispute resolution, enforcement, technical assistance, policy development and information services, OCR will protect the civil

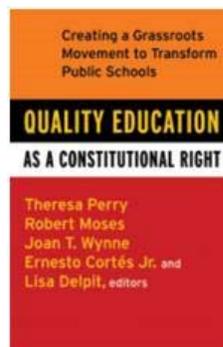
on the one hand, and Latinos and blacks, on the other hand, is America's most urgent educational problem. It is also the central civil rights issue of our time, say Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, authors of [No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning](#). Unequal skills and knowledge are the main sources of ongoing racial inequality, and racial inequality is America's great unfinished business. A wide and tragic gap in learning is evident in affluent suburbs as well as inner cities. But great schools are scattered across the country, as described in inspiring detail by the Thernstroms. Fundamental educational reform is needed. Carefully researched, accessibly written, and powerfully persuasive, this book offers both a close analysis of the current landscape and a blueprint for essential and overdue change.



A passionate plea to preserve and renew public education, [The Death and Life of the Great American School System](#) is a radical change of heart from one of America's best-known education experts. Diane Ravitch examines her career in education reform and repudiates positions that she once staunchly advocated. She shows conclusively why the business model is not an appropriate way to improve schools. Ravitch includes clear prescriptions for improving America's schools: leave decisions about schools to educators, not politicians or businessmen; devise a truly national curriculum that sets out what children in every grade should be *learning*; expect charter schools to educate the kids who need help the most, not to compete with public schools; pay teachers a fair wage for their work, not "merit pay" based on deeply flawed and unreliable test scores; encourage family involvement in education from an early age. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* is a must-read for any stakeholder in the future of American schooling.



In 2005, famed civil rights leader and education activist Robert Moses invited one hundred prominent African American and Latino intellectuals and activists to meet to discuss a proposal for a campaign to guarantee a quality education for all children as a constitutional right- movement that would "transform current approaches to educational inequity, all of which have failed miserably to yield results for our children." The response was passionate, and the meeting launched a movement. [Quality Education as a Constitutional Right](#)-emerging directly from that effort-reports on what has happened since and calls for a new scale of organizing, legal initiatives, and public definitions of what a quality education is.



Things to Watch

rights of all individuals who are subject to discrimination in health and human services programs and protect the health information privacy rights of consumers.



SAVEETHNICSTUDIES.ORG was created to provide information regarding the unique and powerful Ethnic Studies education courses in Arizona. They are a group of educators, students and community members who are organized to support educational programs, policies, and legislation that cultivate and nourish cultural awareness and diversity.



Sampling Martin Luther King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech, Will.I.Am and Chicago MC, Common collaborate on a record that is featured on Common's album, *Finding Forever*, and also the *Freedom Writers* Soundtrack.



A drama based on the true story of Melvin B. Tolson, a professor at Wiley College Texas. In 1935, he inspired students to form the school's first debate team, which went on to challenge Harvard in the national championship. This scene features one of the students, Samantha, arguing for the necessity for immediate justice in the U.S.

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