



In Brown's Wake: Legacies of America's Educational Landmark (Law and Current Events Masters)

Martha Minow

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What is the legacy of *Brown vs. Board of Education*? While it is well known for establishing racial equality as a central commitment of American schools, the case also inspired social movements for equality in education across all lines of difference, including language, gender, disability, immigration status, socio-economic status, religion, and sexual orientation. Yet more than a half century after *Brown*, American schools are more racially separated than before, and educators, parents and policy makers still debate whether the ruling requires all-inclusive classrooms in terms of race, gender, disability, and other differences.

In Brown's Wake examines the reverberations of *Brown* in American schools, including efforts to promote equal opportunities for all kinds of students. School choice, once a strategy for avoiding *Brown*, has emerged as a tool to promote integration and opportunities, even as charter schools and private school voucher programs enable new forms of self-separation by language, gender, disability, and ethnicity.

Martha Minow, Dean of Harvard Law School, argues that the criteria placed on such initiatives carry serious consequences for both the character of American education and civil society itself. Although the original promise of *Brown* remains more symbolic than effective, Minow demonstrates the power of its vision in the struggles for equal education regardless of students' social identity, not only in the United States but also in many countries around the world. Further, she urges renewed commitment to the project of social integration even while acknowledging the complex obstacles that must be overcome. An elegant and concise overview of *Brown* and its aftermath, *In Brown's Wake* explores the broad-ranging and often surprising impact of one of the century's most important Supreme Court decisions.



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