

# School Desegregation Reading Circles Facilitators Guide

*Prepared by Fran Smith and Bethany Allen*

## Title

School Desegregation North and South: Educational Equity and Excellence for All Public School Children. Is it attainable?

## Room Set Up

Circle of chairs

## Materials

Sign-in sheet

Mass Humanities Harvest Reading Circle booklet

Name tags

## Agenda

Each circle will must be at least 90 minutes, but could be longer. A general agenda is presented below, but it should be adjusted as needed.

- |                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. <b>Communal Reading</b>       | 10 minutes |
| 2. <b>Introductions</b>          | 15 minutes |
| 3. <b>Review “Ways of Being”</b> | 5 minutes  |
| 4. <b>Discussion</b>             | 55 minutes |
| 5. <b>Closing</b>                | 5 minutes  |

## Facilitator Notes

### 1. Communal Reading of Quest for Educational Equality Timeline

Facilitator explains the timeline was created by the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, a Boston-based volunteer advocacy group committed to equity and excellence for Boston Public School students, in 2010. Since many people know little about the long history of Black Bostonians’ quest for educational equity, we begin with this timeline to better understand the 1974 School Desegregation order in historical context. Either have numbered index cards and hand them out as folks come in or ask for 10 volunteers. Ask volunteers to read paragraphs 1 through 10 of the text (corresponding with the number on the index card, if using them), and read the final paragraph aloud together.

1) In **1787** Prince Hall petitions the Massachusetts Legislature for African American access to the public school system. Petition Denied. In **1798** eleven years later, after petitions by black parents for separate schools were also denied, black parents organized a community school in 'the home of Primus Hall, son of Prince Hall on Beacon Hill. In **1808** the grammar school was moved to the first floor of the African Meeting House. It was not until the 1920s that the city government established two primary schools for black children.

2) In **1829** William Cooper Nell is awarded the prestigious Franklin Medal (as an outstanding scholar), but must act as a waiter's assistant in order to attend the ceremony he was excluded from on the basis of his color. He was a brilliant abolitionist, journalist, publisher, author, and civil servant, who worked for integration of schools and public facilities across the state.

3) The Abiel Smith School was named for a wealthy white businessman who left an endowment of \$2000 to the city of Boston for the education of black children. Constructed in **1834** and dedicated in **1835**, this school replaced the African Meeting House to relieve overcrowding and poor classroom conditions.

4) **1839 thru 1855** Boston became embroiled in controversy over school desegregation. William Nell spear headed a movement for the day when color of skin would be no barrier to equal school rights.' Nell's Equal School Association boycotted the all black Smith School.

5) In **1848** Benjamin Roberts attempted to enroll his daughter Sarah in each of the five public schools that stood between their home and the Smith School. Roberts sued the city when Sarah was denied entrance to all of them. In April of **1850**, the MA Supreme Court ruled that the City of Boston has the right to establish segregated schools and they do not violate the rights of black people. The cause was subsequently taken to the State House.

6) In **1851** a bill to end segregation in public schools failed but a similar measure was passed by state legislature in 1855. This bill outlawed segregation in Massachusetts public schools. In the fall of **1855**, black children were finally allowed to attend the public school closest to their home. The Smith School closed. In **1896**, Plessy vs. Ferguson decision justified the "separate but equal" doctrine. (Railroad passenger cars with separate facilities did not violate the constitution)

7) In **1954** Brown vs. Board of Education overturns Plessy, and says "separate but equal" violates the 14th Amendment of equal protection. In **1955**, the Brown II decision says to proceed with "all deliberate speed". In **1963**, Ruth Batson heads the Boston Branch of the NAACP Education Committee. In **1964**, thousands of Black students and hundreds of White students boycott school for one day to protest inequities. "Stay Out for Freedom" captures the attention of state education officials. The Kiernan Commission issues report *Because It Is Right Educationally*, concluding that racial imbalance was harmful to both Black and White students. Forty-five Boston schools found to be predominantly Black. Recommendations of the Commission were denounced by the Boston School Committee.

8) In **1964**, the Civil Rights Act becomes federal law and prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion & national origin. In **1965**, Boston parents begin Operation Exodus, that later

becomes METCO. The Elementary & Secondary Act initiates programs for Title I and bilingual education at the federal level. The METCO program buses black students to suburban schools. Parents and community groups open community schools. The Massachusetts Legislature passes the Racial Imbalance Act prohibiting “racially imbalanced” schools. The Boston School Committee fights new law and seeks repeal. Boston opens a new school with state funds, the students predominately black.

10) In **1971**, despite the passage of the Racial Imbalance Act, the racial imbalance of Boston schools increases from 46 schools to 65 schools. In **1972**, The Boston NAACP files a class-action suit *Morgan v. Hennigan* in federal court on behalf parents alleging Boston School Committee policies are de jure segregation. In **1973**, The Massachusetts Board of Education orders Boston to implement a racial balance plan.

**Everyone together:** In **1974**, Judge W. Arthur Garrity, US District Court, rules that racial discrimination exists in BPS. He issues a comprehensive remedy of approximately 400 orders, spanning over two decades, that included facilities, parent and community engagement, student discipline, safety, bilingual education, vocational education, exam school admissions, university and college partnerships, transportation, students assignment, capital improvements, and allocation of resources and staffing.

## 2. Introductions

Ask everyone to say their name and share one- or two-word reactions to the timeline text.

## 3. Ways of Being

Explain the ground rules for the discussion section to circle members. Say something like, “Before we start this discussion I want to share the Ways of Being that we have agreed upon at Mass Humanities, and would like you to agree to as well.” Review them aloud and then ask if there are any clarifying questions or anything anyone wants to add. Then ask can we all agree to be this way during the circle.

- Speak from your own experience, using “I” statements
- Listen to one another fully, no interruptions, no judgments
- Inquire before assuming
- Step up, step back
- Agree to disagree
- Assume good intentions

#### 4. The Harvest – Article Summaries and Discussion Questions

Since we will not know which readings participants will have read, this section is to help you keep the discussion focused on the readings. It begins with general questions, followed by summaries of each of the readings and related discussion questions. Depending on the size of the circle you may want to ask folks to share their response in pairs, then share out with the large group. Whenever a facilitator or circle member states the name of the article you can either read the summary or refer people to read it themselves from the guide. Please note, each facilitator must choose two readings and be prepared to lead the discussion on them. When circle members refer to a reading, choose one or two question based on what the circle members are focused on or to spark discussion on an area not focused on.

##### General Discussion Questions

- Prior to these readings, what were your thoughts about school desegregation?
- What did you know about the legacy of black parents trying to access free public education for their children since the 1700s?
- Throughout Boston’s history, the white political leadership was either silent or openly hostile regarding equal educational access for Black students. In what ways could White leadership have responded to support racial justice? What could they have said or done, especially in white communities?
- Which article, or points made in any of the articles, resonate with you and why?
- Which articles did you most agree with and why?
- Were there any articles you disagreed with or that challenged your thinking?
- In the opening Stockman article, she writes, “We overwhelmingly support the idea of integration. Yet, 75 percent of white people don’t have a single black friend, and 66 percent of black people don’t have a white one.” Is that statement true for you? If so, what can you do to change that?
- Describe one or more areas of your identity where you experience dominant group privilege. How does that impact your leadership, what you see, how others see you, etc.? How might your privilege be impacted by any target group identities you also experience?
- What public policy recommendations do you have for the Boston Public Schools today?
- What questions do you have today about community control?
- Why didn’t public school desegregation work, why are black children still lacking quality education and underfunded schools?
- What role should government play today in trying to achieve education and racial equity?

##### Article Summaries with Discussion Questions

###### **Boston After Busing by Farah Stockman**

###### *Naming our era of racial contradictions*

The first in Farah Stockman’s Pulitzer Prize-winning series examining the impacts of the desegregation era of Boston on race and education, this piece searches for a definition of our

current era relative to its understanding of racial power and privilege as demonstrated through a string of contradictions. Stockman notes that government programs and policies aimed at leveling the playing field have helped some black Americans move out of poverty, but disparities remain – despite white Americans believing that “anti-white bias” is now a bigger problem than racism (if they believe it exists at all). Specifically, public school desegregation, which Stockman calls “the most ambitious and far-reaching government effort to bring us together,” did not achieve its goal in Boston, with many black residents still lacking quality schools amid lingering white resentment.

**Discussion questions:**

- What do you think about the study Stockman references that found “white Americans believ[e] that ‘anti-white bias’ is now a bigger problem than racism”?
- The author speaks about how desegregation efforts in Boston fell short. What do you think the goals of desegregation were? How can we define “success” for a project so polarized, broad, and personal?
- Do you think it’s a goal of public education to be fully inclusive? What evidence do you have in support of this view?

*Did busing slow the city’s desegregation?*

This piece recounts the lasting trauma of a generation of young people, including Robert Lewis Jr., a black civic leader in Boston, who fled their communities in the mid-1970s amidst violence over bussing. While local folklore holds that Boston public housing did not desegregate until the late 1980s, housing projects like Orient Heights and Maverick (where Lewis lived) in East Boston, two developments in Charlestown, and Old Colony and Mary Ellen McCormack in South Boston all had black tenants by 1970. However, after a federal judge ordered a “sweeping” desegregation plan using bussing students across the city, many white residents in those communities lashed out against their black neighbors. Groups of angry white teenagers gathered outside black families’ apartments armed with bats, stones, and Molotov cocktails, and increasingly violent fights broke out.

As tension over bussing rose, loyalties between black and white young people – who up until that time had played on the same sports teams, been friendly with each other’s families, and lived in relative harmony – were tested. Forty years later, there remains an ongoing sense of betrayal among black people displaced as youth amid the violence – as well as deeply segregated communities. Coming of age during bussing had a different, but nonetheless lasting impact on white youth, some perhaps pressured into choosing sides in a battle they had not asked for (but many who used public opposition to bussing as a pretext for violent and criminal tendencies).

### Discussion questions:

- Describe a time you witnessed, participated in, or were the target of discrimination/bias/insensitive behavior (based on race, culture, class, sex, sexual orientation, etc.). How did you respond? Were you satisfied with your response?
- Why would school desegregation/busing test multiracial relationships?
- Robert Lewis shares his pain and trauma about white kids who had been his friends for years turning on him and watching his mother get arrested. If you were in his shoes, how might you have felt and reacted?
- Author Joel D. Anderson and others have said, “America is really fortunate that black people only want equality and not revenge.” Do you think Junior’s response to his former friend at the end of the article is a response to his trauma?
- What role should city officials have in addressing the trauma and loss suffered by both whites and people of color from this period of our city’s history?

### *Boston schools get a do-over*

During school desegregation in Boston, most white middle-class and some black families moved to the suburbs. Today, as white middle class families are moving back to the city, the disparities that integration was supposed to erase are recurring: schools in well-off neighborhoods are filling with white students, while schools in poorer communities are up to 90% black or Latinx. Engaged affluent white parents are successfully fundraising for their schools and getting their concerns heard by the Mayor, while parents in black and Latinx communities face structural and cultural challenges to engagement and raising much needed money for struggling schools with strapped budgets. As the possibility of entrenched inequity becomes an increasingly slippery slope, this article asks what lessons we might take from the school desegregation reform effort. What can we do differently this time around?

One component of the desegregation order issued by Judge Arthur Garrity in 1974 was the Citywide Parent Council; with a mandated diverse set of co-chairs (one white, one black, one Latinx, and one Asian), this city-funded body was meant to give parents a voice. The council was eventually defunded by the BPS. In 2014 a multiracial group of parent volunteers frustrated by budget cuts revived with hopes of uniting more BPS parents to work together across racial, class, and neighborhood lines – and realizing a dream 40 years deferred.

### Discussion questions:

- What do you think government, the court, community, and school districts “can do differently this time around” to achieve equity?
- Do you agree with Stockman’s assessment that today’s racially segregated schools are “due to economic forces beyond our control”? What systemic forces might contribute, and who has “control” in those systems? How can you impact these systems?
- Stockman notes schools in communities like Jamaica Plain and Dorchester have become majority white since the year 2000 and that “the better a school does, the more well-off families will apply to send their children there.” What impact does gentrification have on school equity?

- Stockman describes white middle class parents as having more political power in decisions made by the school system. Does having a diverse Citywide Parent Council address this power imbalance adequately?
- What role can you play in making quality education happen for all public school students?

### *In schools, can separate be equal?*

The focus of this article is on the role of the Supreme Court in the desegregation of schools, the myth of white intellectual superiority, and the disagreement over how to ensure integration in public schools. It examines a high-performing Brooke Mattapan Charter School, which has a student body of 508 students; all but three are students of color. While there is nearly universal agreement with the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, agreement on how to fully achieve integration has been elusive. The model of school integration has generally been bring black students into a white learning environment, but the principal of this charter school challenges the notion that black and brown students must be surrounded by white students in order to achieve. Many charter school educators today, however, say that way of thinking is itself rooted in racism. From the article:

“There’s nothing about a school that makes it better by having more white kids,” says Kimberly Steadman, codirector of Brooke, who is white. What about “separate can’t be equal”? Is that wrong? Steadman doesn’t flinch. “Yes,” she says. “I don’t believe separate schools are inherently unequal.” And why settle for equal? Steadman has set her sights on superior. Her students routinely outperform those in predominantly white schools across the state.

### **Discussion questions:**

- Do you agree with the statement from the codirector of the Brooke school that “There’s nothing about a school that makes it better by having more white kids”?
- What if any influence do you think the myth of white intellectual superiority influenced the school desegregation policies?
- What influence does the myth of white intellectual superiority play in today’s public policy regarding education?
- How would you best describe the intention behind integration, and the rationale for how it was implemented (i.e., by sending black students to white schools)?

### *How the busing crisis changed police, for the better*

While many cities have faced rising tension between police departments and communities of color, Boston and its police department have managed to avoid large-scale racial unrest – in part thanks to having gone through its own in the 1970s. During that tumultuous decade, the city experienced 600 racially motivated incidents a year, most of which were not investigated or prosecuted. In an effort to slow pervasive racial violence, the Boston Police Department assembled the Community Disorders Unit (CDU) in 1978. After an initial high-profile setback when a black college student was intimidated into leaving her South Boston housing project – and buoyed by resources such as the department’s first computer system and unorthodox

methods, including getting to know victims – the CDU regrouped with a team of officers who were passionate about the cause. The CDU is considered a forerunner in community policing, and the article examines how changes in police culture can have a positive impact on the city they serve.

#### **Discussion questions:**

- How would you describe the culture of the Boston Police Department (BPD) today?
- Did the racial violence of the desegregation era create a more just BPD, or one that is better at containing the optics of racial violence?
- Boston has not become a hotbed of activism around police violence in communities of color like cities such as Baltimore or Ferguson, yet there have been police killings of people of color under circumstances that were questionable at best. Is the legacy of the racial unrest during desegregation and the CDU today's BPD community policing efforts, or the lengths it will go to avoid this level of unrest in the future?

#### ***The outcast effect***

This article examines the question of why, despite years of governmental intervention, some minorities continue to trail their peers in school. It looks at “outcasts” from a cross-cultural perspective, describing a study that compared the educational dilemma of black Americans to ethnic minorities in India, New Zealand, and Israel, as well as the Burakumin class of Japan (which was a caste rather than ethnic group) and “voluntary” (those who come to a country freely) vs. “involuntary” minorities. All of the involuntary minority groups continue to labor under achievement gaps, but researchers disagree on why: some argue that minorities end up in low-wage jobs because they did poorly in school, whereas the author of the aforementioned study found “children from low castes weigh the odds of success and make a (sometimes rational) decision that it’s just not worth it to aim higher.”

#### **Discussion questions:**

- When and where has a governmental intervention worked successfully? Why hasn't governmental intervention worked pertaining to the achievement gap?
- Share with a partner something about a racial, ethnic, or religious group other than your own that you respect, admire, or would like to learn more about. Try not to use food as an example.
- Discuss a stereotype that you don't believe, or don't want to believe, but that you find yourself responding to anyway – especially about students and their families. What kinds of situations or behaviors trigger this response?
- Share with a partner an early, or significant, memory of being aware of racial or color differences, and what that difference meant to you. What did you learn? How did you get that information? Focus on awareness of differences in treatment.

#### ***90% Hispanic? No hay problem***

Margarita Muniz Academy in Jamaica Plain, a bilingual high school, is one of several Boston public schools with a high percentage of Hispanic students. This is in part due to demographics but, historically, Hispanic educational activists resisted integration in favor of bilingual programs that celebrated their heritage. A landmark mandate in 1971 that public schools teach students



in their first language was momentarily threatened by the bussing order three years later, but Judge Garrity eventually sided with Hispanic activists who lobbied for dual-language instruction and more Spanish-speaking teachers. Detractors of bilingual education cited its costs, particularly as Boston's student population grew to include those who spoke Mandarin, Cape Verdean Creole, and Khmer as their first language, while others denounced it as "un-American." In 2002, voters in Massachusetts overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure that requires public schools students be taught in English, although some exceptions – like the Muniz – were allowed. As demographics – and who is in the "minority" – shift, the author suggests we will need to reconsider ideas such as integration and "mainstream" education.

#### **Discussion questions:**

- Finish this sentence: When I hear people speaking a language I don't understand, I feel...
- Are you in favor of bilingual education? Why or why not?
- When discussing critics of bilingual education, why do you think Stockman wrote "un-American" in quotes?
- Discuss a stereotype about one aspect of your identity. How you feel when you see or hear it, and how can it impact your effectiveness if people around you believe it about you? (How could you tell they believe the stereotype? What would they do? What are the cues?)

#### ***How a standoff over schools changed the country***

This article details how two mothers from markedly different backgrounds – Ruth Batson, a pro-integration black activist, and Louise Day Hicks, and Irish-American politician who flatly denied the existence of segregation – came to symbolize the extreme bitterness of Boston's desegregation era. The two women waged a decade-plus battle that saw Hicks's national political star rise as segregationists across the country rallied behind her while Batson ultimately prevailed: the NAACP, of which Batson was the chair of the education committee, filed the federal lawsuit that led to Garrity's 1974 order to desegregate. The author also examines the lasting impact of white flight – as well as Batson's legacy – on the as yet unrealized effort to improve educational opportunities for poor students from all walks of life.

#### **Discussion questions:**

- Why is Louise Day Hicks still remembered for her role in the desegregation era while Ruth Batson's legacy has been somewhat lost to history?
- Who was the bigger hero to her community, and why?
- Do you agree with Stockman's assessment that "Today Boston is a unified city"?
- Thinking of the title of this article, how did the standoff between Hicks and Batson change the country?

#### ***Donald Trump, Black Lives Matter, and the echoes of busing***

In the culminating piece in a series examining the impacts and lessons learned from Boston's busing era, the author likens the modern-day, highly polarized political climate characterized on one hand by Donald Trump and his supporters and on the other by Black Lives Matter to the opponents in the battle over desegregation. Ironically, there is a nostalgia from both the

contemporary players for the time before integration: among his supporters, Trump harkens a world before “political correctness, racial guilt, and economic anxiety” – for working class whites in Boston, that translates to “before busing” – and for some black activists, integration was about assimilation that ultimately detracted energy from building black businesses, schools, and communities. The article chronicles some of the successes and failures of busing, and posits that perhaps outcomes would have been different had desegregation been framed as a “public policy puzzle” and not a moral battle between racists and decent people.

**Discussion questions:**

- Is it possible to think of desegregation solely as a public policy issue?
- Do you agree with Daunasia Yancey’s assessment in the article that “Integration turns into assimilation”? Why or why not?
- In the article, Stockman says, “In the 1970s, plenty of whites still believed the races to be inherently unequal and social contact to be taboo. Today, almost no one would say such a thing out loud.” Do you consider this progress? Why or why not?

**Whitey Bulger, Boston Busing, and Southie’s Lost Generation by Michael Patrick MacDonald**

In this article, Michael Patrick MacDonald contends that in attempting to address racial inequality in the public school system, the architects of Boston’s desegregation plan overlooked an important factor: class. Poor white students were languishing in schools that, by some measures, were worse than schools in black communities; the author shares data showing that South Boston High was one of the worst schools in Boston based in indicators such as funding, attendance, and graduation and college acceptance rates. MacDonald, who grew up in South Boston and himself dropped out rather than attend a black Roxbury high school in the early 80s, characterizes the plan as disastrous to black and white students alike. One person the author posits *did* benefit, however, is the notorious Boston crime lord James “Whitey” Bulger.

In describing the uniform opposition to the plan in Southie, the author notes that there were actually two South Bostons: young people in the housing projects most directly impacted by busing may have fallen in line behind the us-against-them blustering of its prominent politicians, but “most of us had absolutely no connection to power.” According to the author, white students were just as much disposable pawns of these politicians – who gained popularity from their staunch opposition to desegregation while their own children attended the city’s prestigious exam school, Boston Latin, or private or parochial schools, not South Boston High – and Bulger, whose thriving drug industry absorbed a generation of young people who had dropped out of school amidst the unrest.

**Discussion questions:**

- Share with a partner what messages you have received about socioeconomic class, especially as it relates to assumptions about intellect, work ethic, and commitment to education.
- What impression do you have of white sections of the city such as South Boston? How did you arrive at this understanding?

- Was there anything you agreed with in MacDonald article? What parts, if any, did you disagree with, and why?
- MacDonald argued that the poor working class students who boycotted school desegregation and opted for white ethnic identity were pawns scapegoated for failure of systems to ensure quality education. Do you agree or disagree?
- Many white parents and students choose to boycott the desegregation law. What do you think they gained or lost from this decision?
- As you look at south Boston today, do you think that community is better off because of school and housing integration? Why or why not?
- Many poor or working class white people claim that they do not have “privilege” due to their socioeconomic status. What’s your understanding of white privilege, and how does class impact it?

### **Boston Busing/Desegregation Project Report by Union of Minority Neighborhoods**

The violence that met desegregation in Boston was a shock to the nation as it clashed with Boston’s image and identity as a “liberal” and liberty-minded city. How could a “cradle of liberty” react to racial integration with such violence? Of course there was a long and complex history that many were not aware of. This included systemic racism, class struggle, isolated ethnic communities and many hundreds of years of struggle for quality education.

Through its program Black People for Better Public Schools (BP4BPS), the Union of Minority Neighborhoods (UMN) began a Boston Busing/Desegregation Project to address trauma people experienced during the desegregation era, explore this particular period of Boston public school’s (BPS’s) history to better understand current educational dilemmas, elevate marginalized voices and “taboo topics” in the education public policy conversation, help communities better understand their history so that they may come to a shared understanding of the impacts of desegregation, and challenge Boston’s leadership to acknowledge the lingering effect the era had on communities, BPS, and the city itself.

UMN notes, “for real civic engagement and participation to occur, for the rebuilding of community, getting people into good paying jobs and careers, for families to become whole, loving and supportive, for fear to be gone, the issue of busing must be confronted, talked about, [and] placed in its proper context” and that “with proper support and encouragement...people and communities can move forward.”

### **Unfinished Business: 7 Questions/7 Lessons by Union of Minority Neighborhoods**

This report was published by UMN to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of desegregation in Boston public schools. Using a framework that compares “then” to “now,” the report presents seven common themes, posed as questions, that arose over four years of interviewing people who lived through the tumultuous desegregation era and the lessons learned. The questions include **Why Do We Need to Look Back? Why don’t people just get over it? Whose City Is It? Was it**

## about racism or was it about class? Whose Story is it? What is excellence? and Isn't Boston Different Now?

UMN notes, “The more we learn about the experience of this history for each individual and each community, the more we learn about its impact on us today. We must all keep learning about this complexity and uncover what is ours to do in the struggle for equity, access, and excellence.”

### Discussion questions:

- UMN stated it found “an underlying, repeating pattern of the use of power to benefit some communities while excluding and oppressing others.” Who were the power players during desegregation? How did they use their power to oppress the black community?
- Who are the power players in Boston today? Have People of Color gained power in any of the major sectors in Boston?
- UMN notes that was often asked, “Why do you want to dredge up this painful period again?” What is your answer to this? Should people just “get over” it?
- UMN “found value in noting **who** is being told to move on, **what** they are being told to move on from, **by whom**, and **why**. Whose and what interests are being served by “moving on,” and whose and what interests are being silenced and dismissed. Describe the who, what, by whom, and why? What are the interests for those who are being served and dismissed?
- After the Marathon bombing in 2013, Red Sox player David Ortiz famously declared, “This is our [expletive omitted!] City!” This has become a rallying cry in moments of tension, such as the recent anti-white supremacy protest in Boston. Whose city is it?
- What questions do you have today about community control?
- UMN noted that over its four-year listening project, it learned that “racism and class stratification are both part of the story of Boston’s school desegregation crisis and a part of the reality of the city today.” What is your understanding of how race and class intersect, and how has an evolving understanding of this (if you believe it has evolved) helped shape present-day Boston?
- UMN states that “coded language” that masks inequities makes us even less equipped to address these issues, because we fail to name them clearly.” What is the coded language that is used to today to mask inequity?
- How is excellence measured in our school systems today? Do you agree with the use of high stakes standardized testing?

## 5. Closing Reflection and Next Steps

Example closing statement:

*Reflecting on the readings, our current political and cultural climate, and our discussion, I want you to think about what it would look like if we were to be successful at reaching equity and*

*excellence for all public school students. Then I want you to think about what is one thing you can do to do work toward that goal.*

Giving participants a chance to reflect, ask them to share with a partner before calling the group back together. Ask for a few examples of actions that were discussed. Remind them of the November 1 film screening and panel event, and give information about [registering online](#). Thank everyone and refer them to the website for other additional resources about the history of Boston school desegregation and organizations to get engaged in educational activity or other social justice issues.

- Community Change Inc. [www.communitychangeinc.org](http://www.communitychangeinc.org)
- Citywide Parent Council [www.citywideparentcouncil.org](http://www.citywideparentcouncil.org)
- Phenomenal Moms <https://www.facebook.com/phenomenalmomsboston>
- Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts <http://www.beaminfo.org>
- Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO)  
<http://www.metcoinc.org>
- Boston Education Justice Alliance <http://www.bostonedjustice.org>