

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
 2 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
 3 CENTRAL DIVISION
 4

5 GONZALO MENDEZ and SYLVIA, GONZALO
 6 and GERONIMO MENDEZ, by their father
 7 and next of friend GONZALO MENDEZ;
 8 WILLIAM GUZMAN, and BILLY GUZMAN,
 9 by his father and next of friend,
 10 WILLIAM GUZMAN; FRANK PALOMINO, and
 11 ARTHUR and SALLY PALOMINO, by their
 12 father and next of friend, FRANK
 13 PALOMINO; THOMAS ESTRADA and CLARA,
 14 ROBERTO, FRANCISCO, SYRIA, DANIEL
 15 and EVELINA ESTRADA, by their father
 16 and next of friend, THOMAS ESTRADA;
 17 LORENZO RAMIREZ and IGNACIO, SILVERIO
 18 and JOSE RAMIREZ, by their father
 19 and next of friend LORENZO RAMIREZ,

20 Petitioners,

21 vs.

22 WESTMINISTER SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ORANGE
 23 COUNTY, and J. A. HOULIHAN, LEWIS
 24 CONRADY, RAY SCHMITT, as Trustees, and
 25 J. HARRIS, Superintendent of said
 26 SCHOOL DISTRICT;

27 ~~ORANGE GROVE~~ GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT
 28 OF ORANGE COUNTY, and WILLIAM C. NOBLE,
 29 ROBERT B. SMITH and PAUL APPLEBURY as
 30 Trustees, and JAMES L. KENT, Superinten-
 31 dent of said School District;

32 SANTA ANA CITY SCHOOLS, and GEORGE R.
 WELLS, HIRAM M. CURREY, JAMES K. GIVENS,
 DANIEL W. STOVER and GEORGE J. BUSDIEKER,
 its Board of Education, and FRANK A.
 HENDERSON and HAROLD YOST, its Super-
 intendent and Secretary;

EL MODENO SCHOOL DISTRICT and HENRY
 CAMPBELL, THEODORE HOWER, CLARENCE JOHNSON,
 as Trustees, and HAROLD HAMMARSTEN,
 Superintendent of said School District,

Respondents.

) No. 4292-M. Civil.
)
) CONCLUSIONS OF
)
) THE COURT.
)

FILED

FEB 18 1946

EDMUND L. SMITH, Clerk
 By *W. Hansen*
 Deputy Clerk

27
 28 Gonzalo Mendez, William Guzman, Frank Palomino,
 29 Thomas Estrada and Lorenzo Ramirez, as citizens of the
 30 United States, and on behalf of their minor children, and
 31 as they allege in the petition, on behalf of "some 5000"
 32 persons similarly affected, all of Mexican or Latin descent,

1 have filed a class suit pursuant to Rule 23 of Federal Rules
2 of Civil Procedure, against the Westminister, Garden Grove
3 and El Modeno School Districts, and the Santa Ana City
4 Schools, all of Orange County, California, and the respective
5 trustees and superintendents of said school districts.

6 The complaint, grounded upon the Fourteenth Amend-
7 ment to the Constitution of the United States¹ and Subdivis-
8 ion 14 of Section 24 of the Judicial Code, (Title 28, Sec-
9 tion 41, subdivision 14, U.S.C.A.,² alleges a concerted
10 policy and design of class discrimination against "persons
11 of Mexican or Latin descent or extraction" of elementary
12 school age by the defendant school agencies in the conduct
13 and operation of public schools of said districts, result-
14 ing in the denial of the equal protection of the laws to
15 such class of persons among which are the petitioning school
16 children.

17
18
19 ¹"Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the
20 United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof,
21 are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein
22 they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law
23 which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of
24 citizens of the United States; nor shall any State de-
25 prive any person of life, liberty, or property, without
26 due process of law; nor deny to any person within its
27 jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

28
29 ²"The district courts shall have original jurisdiction
30 as follows: * * *

31 Sec. 41, subd. (14) Suits to redress deprivation of
32 civil rights. Fourteenth. Of all suits at law or in
equity authorized by law to be brought by any person to
redress the deprivation, under color of any law, statute,
ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State,
of any right, privilege, or immunity, secured by the
Constitution of the United States, or of any right
secured by any laws of the United States providing for
equal rights of citizens of the United States, or of all
persons within the jurisdiction of the United States."

1 Specifically, plaintiffs allege:

2 "That for several years last past respondents have
3 and do now in furtherance and in execution of their common
4 plan, design and purpose within their respective Systems
5 and Districts, have by their regulation, custom and usage
6 and in execution thereof adopted and declared: That all
7 children or persons of Mexican or Latin descent or extrac-
8 tion, though Citizens of the United States of America, shall
9 be, have been and are now excluded from attending, using,
10 enjoying and receiving the benefits of the education, health
11 and recreation facilities of certain schools within their
12 respective Districts and Systems but that said children are
13 now and have been segregated and required to and must attend
14 and use certain schools in said Districts and Systems re-
15 served for and attended solely and exclusively by children
16 and persons of Mexican and Latin descent, while such other
17 schools are maintained, attended and used exclusively by
18 and for persons and children purportedly known as White or
19 Anglo-Saxon children.

20 That in execution of said rules and regulations,
21 each, every and all the foregoing children are compelled
22 and required to and must attend and use the schools in said
23 respective Districts reserved for and attended solely and
24 exclusively by children of Mexican and Latin descent and
25 are forbidden, barred and excluded from attending any other
26 school in said District or System solely for the reason
27 that said children or child are of Mexican or Latin de-
28 scent."

29 The petitioners demand that the alleged rules, regu-
30 lations, customs and usages be adjudged void and unconstitu-
31 tional and that an injunction issue restraining further
32 application by defendant school authorities of such

1 rules, regulations, customs and usages.

2 It is conceded by all parties that there is no ques-
3 tion of race discrimination in this action. It is, however,
4 admitted that segregation per se is practiced in the above-
5 mentioned school districts as the Spanish-speaking children
6 enter school life and as they advance through the grades
7 in the respective school districts. It is also admitted
8 by the defendants that the petitioning children are quali-
9 fied to attend the public schools in the respective dis-
10 tricts of their residences.

11 In the Westminster, Garden Grove and El Modeno
12 school districts the respective boards of trustees had taken
13 official action, declaring that there be no segregation of
14 pupils on a racial basis but that non-English-speaking
15 children (which group, excepting as to a small number of
16 pupils, was made up entirely of children of Mexican ancestry
17 or descent), be required to attend schools designated by
18 the boards separate and apart from English-speaking pupils;
19 that such group should attend such schools until they had
20 acquired some proficiency in the English language.

21 The petitioners contend that such official action
22 evinces a covert attempt by the school authorities in such
23 school districts to produce an arbitrary discrimination
24 against school children of Mexican extraction or descent
25 and that such illegal result has been established in such
26 school districts respectively. The school authorities of
27 the City of Santa Ana have not memorialized any such offi-
28 cial action, but petitioners assert that the same custom
29 and usage exists in the schools of the City of Santa Ana
30 under the authority of appropriate school agencies of such
31 city.

32 The concrete acts complained of are those of the

1 various school district officials in directing which schools
2 the petitioning children and others of the same class or
3 group must attend. The segregation exists in the elemen-
4 tary schools to and including the sixth grade in two of the
5 defendant districts, and in the two other defendant dis-
6 tricts through the eighth grade. The record before us
7 shows without conflict that the technical facilities and
8 physical conveniences offered in the schools housing en-
9 tirely the segregated pupils, the efficiency of the teachers
10 therein and the curricula are identical and in some re-
11 spects superior to those in the other schools in the respec-
12 tive districts.

13 The ultimate question for decision may be thus
14 stated: Does such official action of defendant district
15 school agencies and the usages and practices pursued by the
16 respective school authorities as shown by the evidence
17 operate to deny or deprive the so-called non-English-
18 speaking school children of Mexican ancestry or descent
19 within such school districts of the equal protection of the
20 laws?

21 The defendants at the outset challenge the jurisdic-
22 tion of this court under the record as it exists at this
23 time. We have already denied the defendants' motion to dis-
24 miss the action upon the "face" of the complaint. No reason
25 has been shown which warrants reconsideration of such de-
26 cision.

27 While education is a State matter, it is not so
28 absolutely or exclusively. Cumming v. Richmond County
29 Board of Education, 175 U.S. 528. In the Cumming decision
30 the Supreme Court said: "The education of the people in
31 schools maintained by State taxation is a matter belonging
32 to the respective States and any interference on the part
of Federal authority with the management of such schools

1 can not be justified except in the case of a clear and un-
2 mistakable disregard of rights secured by the supreme law
3 of the land." (Emphasis supplied). See, also, Gong Lum
4 v. Rice, 275 U.S. 78; Wong Him v. Callahan, 119 Fed. 381;
5 Ward v. Flood, 48 Cal.38; Piper et al. v. Big Pine School
6 District, (Calif.), 226 Pac. 926.

7 Obviously, then, a violation by a State of a personal
8 right or privilege protected by the Fourteenth Amendment
9 in the exercise of the State's duty to provide for the
10 education of its citizens and inhabitants would justify the
11 Federal Court to intervene. Missouri ex rel Gaines v.
12 Canada, 305 U.S. 337. The complaint before us in this
13 action, having alleged an invasion by the common school
14 authorities of the defendant districts of the equal oppor-
15 tunity of pupils to acquire knowledge, confers jurisdiction
16 on this court if the actions complained of are deemed those
17 of the State. Hamilton v. Regents of the University of
18 California, 293 U.S. 245; cf. Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S.
19 390.

20 Are the actions of public school authorities of a
21 rural or city school in the State of California, as alleged
22 and established in this case, to be considered actions of
23 the State within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment so
24 as to confer jurisdiction on this court to hear and decide
25 this case under the authority of Section 24, Subdivision
26 14 of the Judicial Code? (supra). We think they are.

27 In the public school system of the State of California
28 the various local school districts enjoy a considerable
29 degree of autonomy. Fundamentally, however, the people of
30 the State have made the public school system a matter of
31 State supervision. Such system is not committed to the
32 exclusive control of local governments. Article IX,

1 Constitution of California. Butterworth v. Boyd, 12 C.2d
2 140. It is a matter of general concern, and not a municipal
3 affair. Esberg v. Badaracco, 202 Cal.110; Becker v. Council
4 of the City of Albany, 47 C.A.2d 702.

5 The Education Code of California provides for the re-
6 quirements of teachers' qualifications, the admission and
7 exclusion of pupils, the courses of study and the enforce-
8 ment of them, the duties of superintendents of schools and
9 of the school trustees of elementary schools in the State of
10 California. The appropriate agencies of the State of Cali-
11 fornia allocate to counties all the State school money ex-
12 clusively for the payment of teachers' salaries in the pub-
13 lic schools and such funds are apportioned to the respective
14 school districts within the counties. While, as previously
15 observed, local school boards and trustees are vested by
16 State legislation with considerable latitude in the adminis-
17 tration of their districts, nevertheless, despite the de-
18 centralization of the educational system in California, the
19 rules of the local school district are required to follow
20 the general pattern laid down by the legislature, and their
21 practices must be consistent with law and with the rules
22 prescribed by the State Board of Education. See Section
23 2204, Education Code of California.

24 When the basis and composition of the public school
25 system is considered, there can be no doubt of the oneness
26 of the system in the State of California, or of the re-
27 stricted powers of the elementary school authorities in the
28 political subdivisions of the State. See Kennedy v. Miller,
29 97 Cal. 429; Bruch v. Calombet, 104 Cal. 347; Ward v. San
30 Diego School District, 203 Cal. 712.

31 In Hamilton v. Regents of the University of California,
32 supra, and West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette,
7-1404 319 U.S.624, the acts of university regents and

1 of a board of education were held acts of the State. In
2 the recent Barnette decision the court stated: "The Four-
3 teenth Amendment, as now applied to the States, protects
4 the citizen against the State itself and all of its crea-
5 tures--Boards of Education not excepted." Although these
6 cases dealt with State rather than local Boards, both are
7 agencies and parts of the State educational system, as is
8 indicated by the Supreme Court in the Barnette case, wherein
9 it stated: "Such Boards are numerous and their territorial
10 jurisdiction often small. But small and local authority
11 may feel less sense of responsibility to the Constitution,
12 and agencies of publicity may be less vigilant in calling
13 it to account." Upon an appraisal of the factual situation
14 before this court as illumined by the laws of the State of
15 California relating to the public school system, it is clear
16 that the respondents should be classified as representatives
17 of the State to such an extent and in such a sense that the
18 great restraints of the Constitution set limits to their
19 action. Screws v. United States, 325 U.S. 91; Smith v.
20 Allwright, 321 U.S. 649; Hague v. Committee for Industrial
21 Organization, 307 U.S. 496; Home Tel. & Tel. Co. v. Los
22 Angeles, 227 U.S. 278.

23 We therefore turn to consider whether under the
24 record before us the school boards and administrative
25 authorities in the respective defendant districts have ~~by~~
26 their segregation policies and practices transgressed appli-
27 cable law and Constitutional safeguards and limitations and
28 thus have invaded the personal right which every public
29 school pupil has to the equal protection provision of the
30 Fourteenth Amendment to obtain the means of education

31 We think the pattern of public education promulgated
32 in the Constitution of California and effectuated by

1 provisions of the Education Code of the State prohibits
2 segregation of the pupils of Mexican ancestry in the ele-
3 mentary schools from the rest of the school children.

4 Section 1 of Article IX of the Constitution of
5 California directs the legislature to "encourage by a
6 suitable means the promotion of intellectual, scientific,
7 moral and agricultural improvement" of the people. Pur-
8 suant to this basic directive by the people of the State
9 many laws stem authorizing special instruction in the public
10 schools for handicapped children. See Division 8 of the
11 Education Code. Such legislation, however, is general in
12 its aspects. It includes all those who fall within the
13 described classification requiring the special considera-
14 tion provided by the statutes regardless of their ancestry
15 or extraction. The common segregation attitudes and prac-
16 tices of the school authorities in the defendant school
17 districts in Orange County pertain solely to children of
18 Mexican ancestry and parentage. They are singled out as
19 a class for segregation. Not only is such method of public
20 school administration contrary to the general requirements
21 of the school laws of the State, but we think it indicates
22 an official school policy that is antagonistic in principle
23 to Sections 16004 and 16005 of the Education Code of the
24 State.³

25
26 ³"Sec.16004. Any person, otherwise eligible for admission
27 to any class or school of a school district of this State,
28 whose parents are or are not citizens of the United States
29 and whose actual and legal residence is in a foreign coun-
try adjacent to this State may be admitted to the class or
school of the district by the governing board of the dis-
trict."

30 "Sec.16005. The governing board of the district may, as
31 a condition precedent to the admission of any person under
32 Section 16004 require the parent or guardian of such person
to pay to the district an amount not more than sufficient
to reimburse the district for the total cost, exclusive of

1 capital outlays, of educating the person and providing him
2 with transportation to and from school. The cost of trans-
3 portation shall not exceed ten dollars (\$10) per month.
4 Tuition payments shall be made in advance for each month or
5 semester during the period of attendance. If the amount
6 paid is more or less than the total cost of education and
7 transportation, adjustment shall be made for the following
8 semester or school year. The attendance of the pupils shall
9 not be included in computing the average daily attendance of
10 the class or school for the purpose of obtaining apportion-
11 ment of State funds."

8 Obviously, the children referred to in these laws are those
9 of Mexican ancestry. And it is noteworthy that the educa-
10 tional advantages of their commingling with other pupils is
11 regarded as being so important to the school system of the
12 State that it is provided for even regardless of the citi-
13 zenship of the parents. We perceive in the laws relating
14 to the public educational system in the State of California
15 a clear purpose to avoid and forbid distinctions among
16 pupils based upon race or ancestry⁴ except in specific
17 situations⁵ not pertinent to this action. Distinctions of
18

20 ⁴ Sec.8501, Education Code."Children between six and
21 21 years of age. The day elementary school of each school
22 district shall be open for the admission of all children
23 between six and 21 years of age residing within the boun-
24 daries of the district."

23 Sec.8002."Maintenance of elementary day schools and
24 day high schools with equal rights and privileges. The
25 governing board of any school district shall maintain all
26 of the elementary day schools established by it, and all
27 of the day high schools established by it with equal rights
28 and privileges as far as possible."

27 ⁵Sec. 8003."Schools for Indian children, and children
28 of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage: Establishment.
29 The governing board of any school district may establish
30 separate schools for Indian children, excepting children
31 of Indians who are wards of the United States Government
32 and children of all other Indians who are descendants of
33 the original American Indians of the United States, and for
34 children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage."

31 Sec.8004. Same: Admission of children into other schools.
32 When separate schools are established for Indian children or
33 children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage, the Indian
34 children or children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian par-
35 entage shall not be admitted into any other school."

1 that kind have recently been declared by the highest judi-
2 cial authority of the United States "by their very nature
3 odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon
4 the doctrine of equality." They are said to be "utterly
5 inconsistent with American traditions and ideals."

6 Hirabayashi v. United States, 320 U.S. 81.

7 Our conclusions in this action, however, do not rest
8 solely upon what we conceive to be the utter irreconcilabil-
9 ity of the segregation practices in the defendant school
10 districts with the public educational system authorized and
11 sanctioned by the laws of the State of California. We think
12 such practices clearly and unmistakably disregard rights
13 secured by the supreme law of the land. Cumming v. Richmond
14 County Board of Education, supra.

15 "The equal protection of the laws" pertaining to the
16 public school system in California is not provided by fur-
17 nishing in separate schools the same technical facilities,
18 text books and courses of instruction to children of Mexican
19 ancestry that are available to the other public school chil-
20 dren regardless of their ancestry. A paramount requisite
21 in the American system of public education is social equality.
22 It must be open to all children by unified school association
23 regardless of lineage.

24 We think that under the record before us the only
25 tenable ground upon which segregation practices in the de-
26 fendant school districts can be defended lies in the English
27 language deficiencies of some of the children of Mexican
28 ancestry as they enter elementary public school life as
29 beginners. But even such situations do not justify the
30 general and continuous segregation in separate schools of
31 the children of Mexican ancestry from the rest of the ele-
32 mentary school population as has been shown to be the practice

1 in the defendant school districts - in all of them to the
2 sixth grade, and in two of them through the eighth grade.

3 The evidence clearly shows that Spanish-speaking
4 children are retarded in learning English by lack of ex-
5 posure to its use because of segregation, and that comming-
6 ling of the entire student body instills and develops a
7 common cultural attitude among the school children which
8 is imperative for the perpetuation of American institutions
9 and ideals.⁶ It is also established by the record that the
10 methods of segregation prevalent in the defendant school
11 districts foster antagonisms in the children and suggest
12 inferiority among them where none exists. One of the
13 flagrant examples of the discriminatory results of segre-
14 gation in two of the schools involved in this case is shown
15 by the record. In the district under consideration there
16 are two schools, the Lincoln and the Roosevelt, located
17 approximately 120 yards apart on the same school grounds,
18 hours of opening and closing, as well as recess periods,
19 are not uniform. No credible language test is given to
20 the children of Mexican ancestry upon entering the first
21 grade in Lincoln School. This school has an enrollment of
22 249 so-called Spanish-speaking pupils, and no so-called
23 English-speaking pupils; while the Roosevelt, (the other)
24 school, has 83 so-called English-speaking pupils and 25
25 so-called Spanish-speaking pupils. Standardized tests as
26 to mental ability are given to the respective classes in
27 the two schools and the same curricula are pursued in both
28 schools and, of course, in the English language as required
29 by State law. Section 8251, Education Code. In the last
30

31 ⁶The study of American institutions and ideals in all
32 schools located within the State of California is required
by Section 10051, Education Code.

1 school year the students in the seventh grade of the Lincoln
2 were superior scholarly to the same grade in the Roosevelt
3 School and to any group in the seventh grade in either of
4 the schools in the past. It further appears that not only
5 did the class as a group have such mental superiority but
6 that certain pupils in the group were also outstanding in
7 the class itself. Notwithstanding this showing, the pupils
8 of such excellence were kept in the Lincoln School. It is
9 true that there is no evidence in the record before us that
10 shows that any of the members of this exemplary class re-
11 quested transfer to the other so-called intermingled school,
12 but the record does show without contradiction that another
13 class had protested against the segregation policies and
14 practices in the schools of this El Modeno district without
15 avail.

16 While the pattern or ideal of segregating the school
17 children of Mexican ancestry from the rest of the school
18 attendance permeates and is practiced in all of the four
19 defendant districts, there are procedural deviations among
20 the school administrative agencies in effectuating the
21 general plan.

22 In Garden Grove Elementary School District the
23 segregation extends only through the fifth grade. Beyond,
24 all pupils in such district, regardless of their ancestry
25 or linguistic proficiency, are housed, instructed and
26 associate in the same school facility.

27 This arrangement conclusively refutes the reason-
28 ableness or advisability of any segregation of children of
29 Mexican ancestry beyond the fifth grade in any of the de-
30 fendant school districts in view of the standardized and
31 uniform curricular requirements in the elementary schools
32 of Orange County.

1 But the admitted practice and long established cus-
2 tom in this school district whereby all elementary public
3 school children of Mexican descent are required to attend
4 one specified school (the Hoover) until they attain the
5 sixth grade, while all other pupils of the same grade are
6 permitted to and do attend two other elementary schools of
7 this district, notwithstanding that some of such pupils
8 live within the Hoover School division of the district,
9 clearly establishes an unfair and arbitrary class distinction
10 in the system of public education operative in the Garden
11 Grove Elementary School District.

12 The long-standing discriminatory custom prevalent
13 in this district is aggravated by the fact shown by the
14 record that although there are approximately 25 children
15 of Mexican descent living in the vicinity of the Lincoln
16 School, none of them attend that school, but all are per-
17 emptorily assigned by the school authorities to the Hoover
18 School, although the evidence shows that there are no
19 school zones territorially established in the district.

20 The record before us shows a paradoxical situation
21 concerning the segregation attitude of the school authori-
22 ties in the Westminister School District. There are two
23 elementary schools in this undivided area. Instruction is
24 given pupils in each school from kindergarten to the eighth
25 grade, inclusive. Westminister School has 642 pupils, of
26 which 628 are so-called English-speaking children, and 14
27 so-called Spanish-speaking pupils. The Hoover School is
28 attended solely by 152 children of Mexican descent. Segre-
29 gation of these from the rest of the school population pre-
30 cipitated such vigorous protests by residents of the dis-
31 trict that the school board in January, 1944, recognizing
32 the discriminatory results of segregation, resolved to

1 unite the two schools and thus abolish the objectionable
2 practices which had been operative in the schools of the
3 district for a considerable period. A bond issue was sub-
4 mitted to the electors to raise funds to defray the cost
5 of contemplated expenditures in the school consolidation.
6 The bonds were not voted and the record before us in this
7 action reflects no execution or carrying out of the offi-
8 cial action of the board of trustees taken on or about the
9 16th of January, 1944. It thus appears that there has been
10 no abolishment of the traditional segregation practices in
11 this district pertaining to pupils of Mexican ancestry
12 through the gamut of elementary school life. We have ad-
13 verted to the unfair consequences of such practices in the
14 similarly situated El Modeno School District.

15 Before considering the specific factual situation
16 in the Santa Ana City Schools it should be noted that the
17 omnibus segregation of children of Mexican ancestry from
18 the rest of the student body in the elementary grades
19 in the schools involved in this case because of language
20 handicaps is not warranted by the record before us. The
21 tests applied to the beginners are shown to have been
22 generally hasty, superficial and not reliable. In some
23 instances separate classification was determined largely
24 by the Latinized or Mexican name of the child. Such methods
25 of evaluating language knowledge are illusory and are not
26 conducive to the inculcation and enjoyment of civil rights
27 which are of primary importance in the public school sys-
28 tem of education in the United States.

29 It has been held that public school authorities
30 may differentiate in the exercise of their reasonable
31 discretion as to the pedagogical methods of instruction
32

1 to be pursued with different pupils.⁷ And foreign lan-
2 guage handicaps may be to such a degree in the pupils in
3 elementary schools as to require special treatment in
4 separate classrooms. Such separate allocations, however,
5 can be lawfully made only after credible examination by the
6 appropriate school authority of each child whose capacity
7 to learn is under consideration and the determination of
8 such segregation must be based wholly upon indiscriminate
9 foreign language impediments in the individual child, re-
10 gardless of his ethnic traits or ancestry.

11 The defendant Santa Ana School District maintains
12 fourteen elementary schools which furnish instruction
13 from kindergarten to the sixth grade, inclusive.

14 About the year 1920 the Board of Education, for
15 the purpose of allocating pupils to the several schools
16 of the district in proportion to the facilities available
17 at such schools, divided the district into fourteen zones
18 and assigned to the school established in each zone all
19 pupils residing within such zone.


20 There is no evidence that any discriminatory or
21 other objectionable motive or purpose actuated the School
22 Board in locating or defining such zones.

23 Subsequently the influx of people of Mexican
24 ancestry in large numbers and their voluntary settlement
25 in certain of the fourteen zones resulted in three of the
26 zones becoming occupied almost entirely by such group of
27 people.

31 ⁷See Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537.

1 Two zones, that in which the Fremont School is lo-
2 cated, and another contiguous area in which the Franklin
3 School is situated, present the only flagrant discriminatory
4 situations shown by the evidence in this case in the Santa
5 Ana City Schools. The Fremont School has 325 so-called
6 Spanish-speaking pupils and no so-called English-speaking
7 pupils. The Franklin School has 237 pupils of which 161
8 are so-called English-speaking children, and 76 so-called
9 Spanish-speaking children.

10 The evidence shows that approximately 26 pupils of
11 Mexican descent who reside within the Fremont zone are per-
12 mitted by the School Board to attend the Franklin School
13 because their families had always gone there. It also
14 appears that there are approximately 35 other pupils not
15 of Mexican descent who live within the Fremont zone who
16 are not required to attend the Fremont School but who are
17 also permitted by the Board of Education to attend the
18 Franklin School.

19 Sometime in the fall of the year 1945 there arose 
20 dissatisfaction by the parents of some of the so-called
21 Spanish-speaking pupils in the Fremont School zone who were
22 not granted the privilege that approximately 26 children also
23 of Mexican descent, enjoyed in attending the Franklin School.
24 Protest was made en masse by such dissatisfied group of
25 parents, which resulted in the Board of Education directing
26 its secretary to send a letter to the parents of all of the
27 so-called Spanish-speaking pupils living in the Fremont
28 zone and attending the Franklin School that beginning
29 September, 1945, the permit to attend Franklin School would
30 be withdrawn and the children would be required to attend
31 the school of the zone in which they were living, viz.,
32 the Fremont School.

1 There could have been no arbitrary discrimination
2 claimed by plaintiffs by the action of the school authori-
3 ties if the same official course had been applied to the
4 35 other so-called English-speaking pupils exactly situated
5 as were the approximate 26 children of Mexican lineage, but
6 the record is clear that the requirement of the Board of
7 Education was intended for and directly exclusively to the
8 specified pupils of Mexican ancestry and if carried out
9 becomes operative solely against such group of children.

10 It should be stated in fairness to the Superintendent
11 of the Santa Ana City Schools that he testified he would
12 recommend to the Board of Education that the children of
13 those who protested the action requiring transfer from the
14 Franklin School be allowed to remain there because of long
15 attendance and family tradition. However, there was no
16 official recantation shown of the action of the Board of
17 Education reflected by the letters of the Secretary and
18 sent only to the parents of the children of Mexican ancestry.

19 The natural operation and effect of the Board's
20 official action manifests a clear purpose to arbitrarily
21 discriminate against the pupils of Mexican ancestry and to
22 deny to them the equal protection of the laws.

23 The court may not exercise legislative or administra-
24 tive functions in this case to save such discriminatory act
25 from inoperativeness. cf. Yu Cong Eng. v. Trinidad, 271 U.S.
26 500.

27 There are other discriminatory customs, shown by the
28 evidence, existing in the defendant school districts as to
29 pupils of Mexican descent and extraction, but we deem it
30 unnecessary to discuss them in this memorandum.


31 We conclude by holding that the allegations of the
32 complaint (petition) have been established sufficiently to

1 justify injunctive relief against all defendants, restrain-
2 ing further discriminatory practices against the pupils of
3 Mexican descent in the public schools of defendant school
4 districts. See Morris v. Williams, (C.C.A.8), 149 F.2d 703.

5 Findings of fact, conclusions of law, and decree of
6 injunction are accordingly ordered pursuant to Rule 52 FRCP.

7 Attorney for plaintiffs will within ten days from
8 date hereof prepare and present same under local Rule 7 of
9 this court.

10 Dated February 18th, 1946.

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12 United States District Judge.
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No. 4292-M. Civil

U. S. District Court,
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.
CENTRAL DIVISION

GONZALO MENDEZ, et al.,
Petitioners

vs.

WESTMINISTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF ORANGE COUNTY, et al.,
Respondents.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COURT