



## **Boston Busing Crisis**



Chair: Griffin Mozinski

Co-Chair: Christopher Affonso

Boston College High School Model UN



# Boston Busing Desegregation Committee

## Message from the Chair and Co-Chair

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the committee on the Boston Bussing crisis for BCHigh MUN 31. I am very excited to dive into this complex topic and am interested to see how you approach it. Since this topic is based on past events and to avoid confusion, everything discussed in committee will be happening on June 28, 1974. I started Model UN my Freshman year and have enjoyed attending conferences and even had the opportunity to go to NAIMUN last year. It has been a great experience for me because it pushes me out of my comfort zone and helps with public speaking. This is my first time chairing a high school committee. Last year, I chaired the middle school committee.. Some of my other high school activities include rowing, skiing, business club, investment club, choir, puzzle club, and Peretti Scholars.

See you all in March,

Griffin Mozinski '24

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Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to be the Co-Chair of today's committee where we will delve into the Boston Busing Crisis for the BC High MUN 31. I am looking forward to debating this topic, especially as it pertains to our own city and our shared history. I am most excited to see how you all can navigate this committee to come up with creative and effective answers to our questions today. This process is the core of Model UN—the ability to form a community in an effort to seek answers to difficult questions. This is my first time serving as co-chair of a committee. I am looking forward to this experience. Some other activities that I have participated in here at BC High are Chamber Orchestra, Peretti Scholars, Political Discussion Club, and Puzzle Club.

Sincerely,

Christopher Affonso '24

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## Introduction to the Committee

In 1972 the Boston Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class action lawsuit on the behalf of a number of parents and students. The lawsuit said that school budget resources allocated by the Boston School Committee favored people from white neighborhood schools. Simultaneously, the lawsuit accused the Boston School Committee of reducing the amount of budget resources for people from black neighborhood schools. Essentially, two school systems of separate and unequal quality existed in the City of Boston.

After two years the Federal Court order issued by Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. Judge Garrity ordered a plan to desegregate the schools using two basic methods: redistricting the busing system and replacing the old school feeder system of junior and middle schools with a single unified one. This plan caused anger and, in some cases violent protests from parents in South Boston, because children were bused across the City of Boston away from their local neighborhood schools.

Our focus today will be the first of the two methods: the redistricting of school buses in Boston.



## Questions to consider

1. What are the demographics and socioeconomic figures for each part of Boston?
2. How will you change, or not change, the ways in which students are distributed among school systems?
3. How should the city respond to parents pulling their children out of school, moving out of Boston, and anti-busing sentiments



## Historical Context

School desegregation became a significant issue in Boston following the United States Supreme Court's decision in the 1954 case of *Oliver Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.* (347 U.S. 483), which asserted that separate educational facilities for black and white students were inherently unequal, and school districts must integrate their public schools. Despite the *Brown* decision and the enactment of the Racial Balance Act of 1965 in the state of Massachusetts, by the 1970s Boston Public Schools remained largely segregated.

In response to the inaction, a group of black parents filed suit against the Boston School Committee, then led by James W. Hennigan, in the case of *Tallulah Morgan et al. v. James Hennigan et al.* (379 F. Supp. 410) on March 15, 1972. The suit claimed that the Boston Public Schools were deliberately segregated. In a meeting on September 21st 1971, the Boston School Committee had voted 3 to 2 against using busing to racially balance the new Lee School;<sup>1</sup> a vote in violation of the Racial Imbalance Act of 1965. On June 21st 1974, Judge Arthur W. Garrity ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, stating: "The court concludes that the defendants have knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all of the city's students, teachers and school facilities and have intentionally brought about and maintained a dual school system. Therefore the entire school system of Boston is unconstitutionally segregated. Accordingly, the court will contemporaneously with this opinion file a partial judgment permanently enjoining the city defendants from discriminating upon the basis of race in the operation of the Boston public schools and ordering that they begin forthwith the formulation and implementation of plans to secure for the plaintiffs their constitutional rights."



## A Quick Overview

For all those who have allegedly waited to the last minute here are a few key background details:

- ❖ Civil Rights Movement rushing through the US especially in the South
- ❖ Dr. Martin Luther King rises to the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement
- ❖ Southern Cities' courts begin to order means to desegregation
- ❖ Dr. Martin Luther King assassinated on April 4, 1968
- ❖ March 14, 1972 Boston chapter of NAACP files class action lawsuit
- ❖ Continued racial tensions Irish, White, Black people
- ❖ “white flight” in the inner city
- ❖ Proponents and for and against become vocal
- ❖ 1974 Garrity rules in favor of plaintiff
- ❖ Preparations to set up the new system



## Positions

The positions below are each a specific person related to the busing crisis in some way and will participate in the town meeting that will answer vital questions about the verdict of the Morgan v. Hennigan case which was decided one week prior. Information used to craft a position paper can be applicable as long as it occurred prior to June 28, 1974.

1. **Rachel Twymon** was a black mother originally from Roxbury whose children will be busing in the newly proposed system.
2. **Louise Day Hicks**, Boston City Council, was born in Boston to an Irish immigrant family. Her father, William Day, grew up poor but eventually became one of the richest men in South Boston. Throughout her career as a politician, she was a member and chair of the Boston School Committee in which she staunchly opposed desegregation. At the time her committee refused to recognize the *de facto*<sup>1</sup> segregation in the public school system.
3. **Ted Kennedy**, US Senator (D-MA) originally opposed the desegregation of public schools, though was not one of his primary concerns of platforms on which he ran for office in local and State elections. As civil rights came to the forefront of American media in the 1970s, Kennedy came to support the movement.
4. **Alice McGoff** was a mother in Charlestown during the question of desegregation and did not support the movement to desegregate. Alice had always supported Martin Luther King's movement for equality "but became skeptical when it came to the North."<sup>2</sup> She was a supporter of the ROAR<sup>3</sup> organization and a member.

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<sup>1</sup> *de facto*- by default

<sup>2</sup> [Source](#): Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families - Chapters 3-4 Summary & Analysis

<sup>3</sup> ROAR: Restore Our Alienated Rights



5. **Tip O'Neil**<sup>4</sup> was a Charlestown congressman for many years. During the Civil rights era he and others such as Sen. Kennedy supported desegregation. As the issue arrived in Boston they continued to support the cause.
6. **Humberto Cardinal Medeiros** was a Portuguese- American clergyman of the Catholic church; he served as Cardinal Archbishop for the Archdiocese of Boston. He strongly supported integration in the US but not directly through busing. He never strongly, or publicly spoke out against racism in South Boston (he would later, and apologize for it quickly afterwards).
7. **Kevin White**, Mayor, became mayor of Boston in 1968 with a particularly diverse staff. He supported racial equality and planned to protect those who may experience backlash in response to the novel busing court order.
8. **William M. Bulger**, State Senator, was a Boston politician who served as a member of the Massachusetts Senate from 1971 to 1996. He had connections to the Winter Hill Gang through his brother. During this time he opposed desegregation through busing. He is also a BC High graduate.
9. **Jonathan Kozol** was born in Boston and eventually became a writer. After being fired for teaching Langston Hughes poetry, he became increasingly involved in the Civil rights movement and was a believer in true equality, especially in education.
10. **Elvira Palladino** was born in East Boston and during her political activity was known for her opposition to busing desegregation. She was an open member of ROAR.
11. **Fran Johnene** a mother in Boston who opposed desegregation through busing. She was a member of ROAR and shared their values and concerns. She hoped to maintain the school system without great disruption from federal power.

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<sup>4</sup> [Source](#): The Atlantic: Race, Class, and the City



12. **Colin Diver** moved to South Boston hoping to be a change against white flight in the early seventies. Very quickly he and his family incurred challenges living in the area due in part to racial tensions.
13. **William J. Leary** was born in Dorchester, Boston, Massachusetts as an Irish-American. He received his doctorate from Harvard University and Boston University. While working on the Boston Public School board as a three year superintendent, he strongly supported the actions to desegregate the busing system. He would later (after the case's verdict) support Garity's decision.
14. **John J. Kerrigan** was a member of the Boston School Committee and an opponent of integration within the city. He made his arguments on the basis that long rides across the city would not improve the quality of education.
15. **Kathleen Sullivan Alioto** taught in Boston public schools for six years before getting elected to the Boston School Committee. Sullivan was the most liberal within the committee and opposed Kerrigan's position.
16. **Ruth Batson** Was born in Roxbury to Jamaican immigrants. During her career in the NAACP, schools with majority black enrollment often had deficiencies not experienced by majority white schools.
17. **Thomas Irving Atkins** was born in 1939; he worked as an attorney and a member of the Boston City Council. Atkins became interim president of the NAACP branch in Boston. As an activist he supported all efforts to integrate the Boston school system.
18. **Robert Joseph di Grazia** was the Commissioner of the Boston Police Department from 1972 to 1976. He oversaw the police actions required to maintain the newly ordered



busing plan. For the purpose of this committee, he will be the one to oversee any legal enforcements and protections necessary.

**19. John J. McDonough**

**20. Paul R. Tierney**

**21. Paul J. Ellison**

**22. Lawrence DiCara**, Boston City Council,

**23. James Connolly**, President of the Boston City Council,

**24. Edward J. Winter**

**25. Joe Moakley**, US Congressman, (D-MA) from South Boston, MA

**26. W. Arthur Garrity Jr.**, Federal Court Judge,

**27. William H. Ohrenberger**

**28. Ray Lussier**

**29. Peter Bregg**

**30. Jean McGuire**

**31. Fred Langone**, Boston City Council,

**32. Albert “Dapper” O’Neil**, Boston City Council,

**33. Christopher Ionnella**, Boston City Council,

**34. Joseph Tierney**, Boston City Council,

**35. Francis Sargent**, Governor of Massachusetts.





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