

Unspoken But Not Unheard:

Mendez v. Westminster

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Junior Division

Group Website

1200 student composed words on the website

493 student composed words on the process paper

Media Count: 2:55

We selected our topic because we felt it deserved recognition that it did not previously have. Everyone has heard of the groundbreaking *Brown vs. Board of Education*, but the prior *Mendez vs. Westminster* is almost unheard of. Mendez marked a turning point and significant moment in history, which was the very beginning of desegregation. Through the duration of Mendez, and even carried into modern times, many people have been ignorant and close-minded to a whole community of people and Americans. Our goal is to bring this under-spoken debate to light, and reveal to people that the word segregation does not specify any one certain race.

We took a very gradual approach to our research. We personally found that spreading out our research created the most effective way to really learn our topic inside and out. Collectively, we read three information-filled books that gave us new perspectives on the case. We also put together a diverse *NoodleTools* platform that incorporates many unique primary and secondary sources. As a consequence of choosing a very underground topic, we learned that Mendez has few primary sources attached to it. In addition, we contacted some directly involved organizations and individuals, including Sylvia Mendez. She did reply, but she was not able to speak with us further. However, she did like our website when we shared our final product with her.

When creating our website, we first typed in all of the text and put the images we were going to utilize into a doc. Next, we tried getting a feel for the NHD website builder as it is something we weren't used to using. The builder didn't have many options for fonts and or designs, so we went with creating on *Canva* which was helpful. With all of the content we had accumulated and created for our website altogether and complete, we began to put it into the builder and started organizing it. This part was slightly difficult and hard to format but we got the

hang of it. Finally, we looked it over to make sure there weren't any mistakes, miscounted words, and that it all looked clean and professional.

Although underpublicized, the 1947 *Mendez v. Westminster* case was crucial in advancing the debate over segregation in public schools. The decision successfully integrated children of color into the Westminster school district and set an essential precedent for the monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* case five years after.

This case is significant in history because of how it affected the progression of school desegregation. Two months after the Mendez case was ruled in their favor and outlawed segregation in just the Westminster district, the Governor of California disbanded school segregation throughout California. This case also influenced the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, because it set a lasting precedent in the federal courts that instituting segregating minority children in education is not acceptable. Thus, segregation had put not only them at a disadvantage, but everyone in California.