

# POLICY TIMELINE: POLICIES AFFECTING BLACK STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

Over the last 165 years, federal and state laws have played an enormous role in shaping the educational opportunities and school conditions faced by Black children.



The Education Trust-West

**1852** – As part of California’s **fugitive slave law**, the state bans Black children from California public schools — even though California is a free state.



**1974** – In **Milliken v. Bradley**, the U.S. Supreme Court prohibits desegregation across school district lines, causing resegregation as white students flee to affluent suburban districts.



**1999** – California passes the **Public Schools Accountability Act** to hold each California school accountable for the academic achievement of all students, including ethnic subgroups. Two years later, the federal **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** also requires that states report data for each subgroup and requires action if schools aren’t making progress toward targets.



**2011** – The California State Assembly creates the **Select Committee on Boys and Men of Color**, releasing its 2012 Action Plan with 67 recommendations related to health, education, employment, violence prevention, and youth development.

**1964** – **Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act** prohibits any programs receiving federal funds, including public schools, from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex.



**1978** – In **Regents of the University of California v. Bakke**, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds affirmative action when it rules that universities can consider race and ethnicity in admissions decisions. However, it prohibits schools from using specific quotas.

**2008** – California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell convenes the California Pre-kindergarten through Higher Education Council, directing the Council to release a report with recommendations for **Closing the Achievement Gap**.



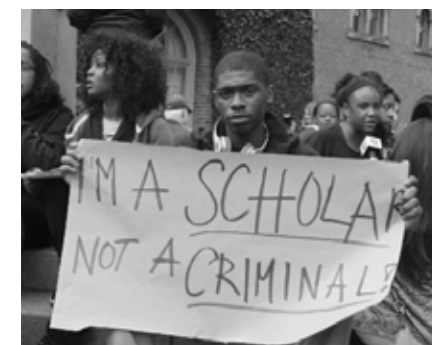
1852 1872 1930 1947 1964 1974 1978 1995 1999 2008 2009 2011 2015

**1872** – Preceding *Plessy v. Ferguson* by 6 years, the California Supreme Court, in **Ward v. Flood**, upholds segregation as “separate, but equal” and supports a public school’s refusal to admit a Black student.

**1930-1950** – With the second wave of the **Great Migration**, the Black population explodes in California, increasing by 500%.



**1995** – The University of California Board of Regents voted to eliminate the use of race in decisions about admissions. The next year, California voters approve **Proposition 209**, ending affirmative action in all of California’s public institutions. As a result, between 1995 and 1998, the number of African American, Latino, and Native American students drops by 58 percent at the University of California, Berkeley and 53 percent at University of California, Los Angeles.



**2015** – The California State Assembly creates the **Select Committee on the Status of Girls and Women of Color**.



**1947** – After a public school refuses to admit a Mexican American student, **Mendez v. Westminster School District** strikes down school segregation in California. This case prompts the California Legislature to repeal school segregation laws and paves the way for **Brown v. Board of Education** in 1954. Nevertheless, school segregation persists due to the lack of systemic desegregation efforts and continuous discriminatory housing practices.



**2009** – The California State Board of Education creates an **African American Advisory Committee** to “help better understand the issues concerning the achievement gap that exists between Black students and their counterparts.”

