

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD ACTION**

**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF THE
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

BACKGROUND

The American Association of Community College Trustees together with other higher education associations contacted public higher education institutions and systems in an effort to gain support and affirmation of the landmark case *Brown vs. Board of Education* that celebrates its 50th Anniversary in the year 2004. That Supreme Court Decision dated May 17, 1954 overturned earlier court decisions and found that separate but equal public schools was a violation of the United States Constitution. The American Association of Community College Trustees passed a resolution dated November 7, 2003 affirming the *Brown* decision and calling all community colleges to action by personal and professional commitment and civic engagement.

The Supreme Court noted then, and, the general principle is re-stated here:

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

Brown vs. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

As one of the largest education systems in the country and the primary provider of public post-secondary opportunity in the State of Minnesota, the Board of Trustees for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is able to add its collective voice to the celebration and affirmation of principles of achieving education equity in our K-12 schools and in our colleges and universities. System institutions are uniquely positioned through their education programs, communities and partnership relationships with K-12 schools to impact and effect lasting change in working to achieve equal opportunity in education.

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION:

The Educational Policy Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion:

RECOMMENDED MOTION

The Board of Trustees adopts the resolution on the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Board Resolution

Whereas, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System comprises 32 colleges and universities that provide the preferred pathway to education opportunities throughout the State of Minnesota; and

Whereas, the year 2004 marks the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision – a landmark for equity in public education; and

Whereas, the *Brown* decision forever changed the long-standing separate-but-equal practices of many public education institutions, including post-secondary colleges and universities; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees recognizes that many states struggle with removing the vestiges of segregation in education, including reducing and removing the continuing gap in learning achievement for racial and ethnic minority children in K-12 education; and

Whereas, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System's mission is to provide the diverse citizens of Minnesota the benefits of high-quality, accessible, future-oriented higher education; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees recognizes that the character of public education at all levels is one based upon principles of equity, quality and shared responsibility of citizens to work to ensure equal opportunity and access for all;

Therefore, be it resolved on the 50th Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, that we, the Board of Trustees for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, are pleased to join with the Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges to add our combined and unwavering commitment to providing equal access to higher education; and

Be it further resolved, that we call to action all colleges and universities to ensure learning equity for all students through institutional, political, personal, and civic engagement.

Date of Adoption: *January 22, 2004*

Date of Implementation: *January 22, 2004*

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