1647 The General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony decrees that every town of fifty families should have an elementary school and that every town of 100 families should have a Latin school. The goal is to ensure that Puritan children learn to read the Bible and receive basic information about their Calvinist religion.
1779 Thomas Jefferson proposes a two-track educational system, with different tracks in his words for “the laboring and the learned.” Scholarship would allow a very few of the laboring class to advance, Jefferson says, by “raking a few geniuses from the rubbish.”
1785 The Continental Congress (before the U.S. Constitution was ratified) passes a law calling for a survey of the “Northwest Territory” which included what was to become the state of Ohio. The law created “townships,” reserving a portion of each township for a local school.

From these “land grants” eventually came the U.S. system of “land grant universities,” the state public universities that exist today. Of course in order to create these townships, the Continental Congress assumes it has the right to give away or sell land that is already occupied by Native people.
1787 The Northwest Ordinance is passed. It creates a system of government and specifies how this territory would become states. It assumes that the United States has the right to occupy, give away or sell land that is already occupied by Native peoples.
1830s Most southern states have laws forbidding teaching people in slavery to read. Even so, around 5 percent become literate at great personal risk.
1820-1860 The percentage of people working in agriculture plummets as family farms are gobbled up by larger agricultural businesses and people are forced to look for work in towns and cities. At the same time, cities grow tremendously, fueled by new manufacturing industries, the influx of people from rural areas and many immigrants from Europe. During the 10 years from 1846 to 1856, 3.1 million immigrants arrive, a number equal to one eighth of the entire U.S. population. Owners of industry needed a docile, obedient workforce and look to public schools to provide it.
1848 The war against Mexico ends with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which gives the United States almost half of what was then Mexico. This includes all of what is now the U.S. Southwest, plus parts of Utah, Nevada and Wyoming and most of California.

The treaty guarantees citizenship rights to everyone living in these areas mostly Mexicans and Native people. It also guarantees the continued use of the Spanish language, including in education. One hundred fifty years later, in 1998, California breaks that treaty, by passing Proposition 227, which would make it illegal for teachers to speak Spanish in public schools.
1864 Congress makes it illegal for Native Americans to be taught in their native languages. Native children as young as four years old are taken from their parents and sent to Bureau of Indian Affairs off-reservation boarding schools, whose goal, as one BIA official put it, is to “kill the Indian to save the man.”
1865-1877 African Americans mobilize to bring public education to the South for the first time. After the Civil War, and with the legal end of slavery, African Americans in the South make alliances with white Republicans to push for many political changes, including for the first time rewriting state constitutions to guarantee free public education. In practice, white children benefit more than Black children.
By 1870 California had devised a formula of ten. When African Americans, Asian Americans, or American Indians numbered ten students, a school district was empowered to create separate schools for whites and non-white children.
1872 Harriet Ward attempted to enroll her daughter Mary Frances in an all-white school in San Francisco. When the principal refused to admit her, Ward filed suit. Ward v. Flood (1873) was California’s first case challenging educational segregation. However, the California Supreme Court, in its ruling, foreshadowed the logic of the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896); in using the principle of “separate but equal.”
1877-1900  Reconstruction ends in 1877 when federal troops, which had occupied the South since the end of the Civil War, are withdrawn.

Whites regain political control of the South and lay the foundations of legal segregation.
1881 California legislators passed Political Code 1662. After the phrase noting “infectious diseases,” came the passage “and also to establish separate schools for children of Mongolian or Chinese descent. When such separate schools are established Chinese or Mongolian children must not be admitted into any other schools.”
The case of Tape v. Hurley would force local and state officials to address public education for Chinese youth. In 1884, Joseph and Mary Tape, both immigrants from China, attempted to enroll their U.S. born daughter Mamie into the neighborhood public school. Principal Jennie Hurley refused admittance and the Tapes filed suit. The state Superior Court confirmed the right of Mamie Tape to attend the neighborhood school.
1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision. The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the state of Louisiana has the right to require “separate but equal” railroad cars for Blacks and whites. This decision means that the federal government officially recognizes segregation as legal. One result is that southern states pass laws requiring racial segregation in public schools.
1905 The U.S. Supreme Court requires California to extend public education to the children of Chinese immigrants.
1921 The California school law (Political Code 1662) was amended to read as follows:

“The governing body of a school district shall have power to exclude children of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases, and also to establish separate schools for Indian children and for children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage. When such schools are established, Indian children or children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage must not be admitted into any other school.”
1924 An act of Congress makes Native Americans U.S. citizens for the first time.
1930s The Lemon Grove, CA school board decided to build a separate school for children of Mexican heritage without giving notice to their parents. Principal Jerome Green turned away students at the schoolhouse door, directing them to the new school, known within the local Mexican American community as *la caballeriza* - “the stable”. Parents boycotted the new school.

The landmark lawsuit *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* became the first successful school desegregation court decision in the history of the United States.
1930-1950 The NAACP brings a series of suits over unequal teachers’ pay for Blacks and whites in southern states. At the same time, southern states realize they are losing African American labor to the northern cities. These two sources of pressure resulted in some increase of spending on Black schools in the South.
1932 A survey of 150 school districts reveals that three quarters of them are using so-called intelligence testing to place students in different academic tracks.
Early 1940’s The NAACP began shaping a legal strategy to challenge the constitutionality of segregation per se, NAACP lawyers began experimenting with sociological arguments to demonstrate the inherent inequality of racial segregation.
1945 At the end of World War 2, the G.I. Bill of Rights gives thousands of working class men college scholarships for the first time in U.S. history.
1948 Educational Testing Service is formed, merging the College Entrance Examination Board, the Cooperative Test Service, the Graduate Records Office, the National Committee on Teachers Examinations and others, with huge grants from the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations.

These testing services continued the work of eugenicists like Carl Brigham (originator of the SAT) who did research “proving” that immigrants were feeble-minded.
1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. The Supreme Court unanimously agrees that segregated schools are “inherently unequal” and must be abolished. Almost 45 years later in 1998, schools, especially in the north, are as segregated as ever.
1957  A federal court orders integration of Little Rock, Arkansas public schools. Governor Orval Faubus sends his National Guard to physically prevent nine African American students from enrolling at all-white Central High School. Reluctantly, President Eisenhower sends federal troops to enforce the court order not because he supports desegregation, but because he can’t let a state governor use military power to defy the U.S. federal government.
1968 African American parents and white teachers clash in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville area of New York City, over the issue of community control of the schools. Teachers go on strike, and the community organizes freedom schools while the public schools are closed.
1974 Milliken v. Bradley. A Supreme Court made up of Richard Nixon’s appointees rules that schools may not be desegregated across school districts. This effectively legally segregates students of color in inner-city districts from white students in wealthier white suburban districts.
1998 Multi-millionaire Ron Unz manages to put a measure on the June 1998 ballot outlawing bilingual education in California. In 2000, he sponsors similar legislation in Arizona. California’s proposition 227 passes with 61% of the vote, 63% of Arizona’s voters passed their Proposition 203.
2010 The Texas School Board adopts revisions to the Texas social studies curriculum. The revised curriculum plays down the role of Thomas Jefferson among the founding fathers, questions the separation of church and state, and claims the U.S. government was infiltrated by Communists during the Cold War.
2011

The Arizona state-legislature passes bill (HB 2281) that effectively bans the Ethnic Studies program in Tucson’s largest school district. The new law prohibits any curricula that:

1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government.
2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

Under this law, the state can withhold up to 10% of a district’s funding for a violation, about $15 million per year in the case of the Tucson’s schools.
1940s and 1950s The U.S. invades the Marshall Islands during World War II and goes on to use the islands for nuclear testing. Tests resulting in contamination and evacuations of parts of the islands. In 1986 The Marshall Islands entered into a “Compact of Free Association” with the United States. This agreement means that Marshall Islanders are able to travel, live, work and attend school in the U.S. indefinitely and without visas. Islanders began to settle in the greater Seattle area.
1926 A ruling in Corrigan v. Buckley states that while states are barred from creating race-based legislation, private deeds and developer plat maps are not similarly affected by the Fourteenth Amendment, thus allowing the formation of racial covenants. Many property deeds across Seattle contained neighborhood-wide restrictive covenants barring the sale or rental of homes to non-Whites and people of Jewish descent.
1968 The Black Panther Party establishes its Seattle chapter. This is the first chapter to be created outside of California.
1969 The Chicano/a movement in Washington emerges in two locales: in the Yakima Valley, which is home to most of the state’s Latinos, and in Seattle at the University of Washington. Reflecting split geography, the movement linked together campaigns to organize and support farmworkers with projects that served urban communities and educational agendas.
1970 Urban Indians occupy Discovery Park (Fort Lawton) in Seattle, WA. The action gains international media attention and forces the city to negotiate with the United Indians of All Tribes, resulting in a 99-year lease for a 20-acre site within the park.
1920’s KKK flourishes in Oregon. By the mid 1920’s its membership is estimated between 14,000 – 20,000 with numerous sympathizers who are not official members. Oregon’s Governor from 1922 – 26, Walter M. Pierce, though not a member, overtly supported by the Klan, while promoting the Klan’s agenda.
1935 Oregon law officially segregates Mexican students on the basis of being of Indian descent. It made clear to exempt “White Mexicans” those fair-skinned descendants of the Spaniards who do not have “Indian blood”.
1942 After the attack on Pearl Harbor, all persons of Japanese heritage living in the western portion of Oregon (and all western states) are forced to move to camps by the Wartime Civil Control Administration. More than 4,500 Japanese Americans from western Oregon are sent to internment camps: 2/3 are American citizens.
1951 Oregon repeals its law prohibiting interracial marriages.
1954 Operation Wetback begins to round up and deport 1 million Mexicans who are not able to provide legal immigration documents. In some cases, these “illegal immigrants” are deported along with their children who are U.S. citizens born in the United States. “Mexican-looking” people are often stopped and asked for official identification.
1990 Oregon voters pass Measure 5, property tax limitations, that cap spending for public schools. The shift is designed to help equalize support of public education throughout the state. However, the change from local school funding causes Oregon’s schools to suffer budget reductions despite economic prosperity in the state. No new revenue sources are identified or created to fund schools.
2010 The Oregon League of Minority Voters implement a new civil rights tactic. Offering scholarships to white students to take classes in race relations to encourage white college students in Oregon to pursue studies in race relations. “We lack white participation in the racial conversation in this state, so we are trying to do something about it,” says Promise King, executive director of the Oregon group.
1844 On June 25, the Legislative Committee of the Provisional Government of Oregon enacts the first of a series of black exclusion laws designed to ban African American settlement in the territory.
1844 During summer, George Bush, a free African American, travels with a party of Missouri emigrants on the Oregon Trail. When Bush reaches Oregon City in November, he decides to move to the sparsely populated area north of the Columbia to avoid the exclusion law. His decision encourages other settlers to follow. Eventually they petition Congress to create Washington Territory.
1857 Oregon Territory voters overwhelmingly support a constitution that bans both slavery and the settlement of African Americans in the new state.
1978 In September, Seattle becomes the largest city in the United States to institute a program of mandatory busing to desegregate its public schools without a court order. Nearly 25 percent of the district's students are bused as part of the Seattle Plan to promote school desegregation. The school district ends the mandatory busing program in October 1997.
2003 Significant population shifts and reduced resistance to residential integration result in more African Americans living in the suburbs of Los Angeles and Seattle than in their city limits.
1942  Beginning on October 5 and continuing through the 15th, more than 500 Mexican nationals arrive in the Yakima Valley under the Emergency Farm Labor Supply program to alleviate the farm-labor shortage during World War II. The Emergency Farm Labor Supply program, nationally known as the Bracero program, lasted in the Pacific Northwest from 1942-1947.
1853-1864 Territorial laws pass that ban Chinese in Washington State from voting, from testifying in court cases involving whites, and enacting poll taxes for Chinese in Washington State.
1886 Washington State passes the Alien Land Law barring Asians from owning land. Residents of Seattle, Tacoma, and other towns and cities in the West expel the Chinese.
1964 The Survival of the American Indian Association (SAIA) organizes “fish-ins” in southern Puget Sound to protest the violation of treaty rights and the assimilation of Native American culture. Aboriginal fishers and their allies refuse to obtain licenses or obey fish and game restrictions on certain fisheries and court arrest by Washington State police for asserting their treaty rights.