

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE *CRUZ-GUZMAN V. STATE OF MINNESOTA* EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY CASE

Where and when was the case filed?

Cruz-Guzman v. State of Minnesota was filed November 5, 2015 in Hennepin County District Court.

Who are the plaintiffs?

The lawsuit seeks class action status on behalf of all school children in Saint Paul and Minneapolis public schools. Seven families and one community-based organization have joined the lawsuit as named plaintiffs.

Who are the defendants?

The State of Minnesota and various bodies and officials of the State are the defendants. All have some responsibility for providing schoolchildren in Minnesota with an adequate education. The Minneapolis, Saint Paul and suburban school districts are not named as defendants because under the Minnesota State Constitution, the State bears the obligation to provide all children in the state with an adequate education.

Who are the lawyers representing the plaintiffs?

Dan Shulman of the Gray Planty Mooty Mooty & Bennett (GPM) law firm is the lead attorney representing the plaintiffs along with John Shulman and Jeanne-Marie Almonor. These three attorneys represented the plaintiffs in the *NAACP v. State of Minnesota* and *Xiong v. State of Minnesota* educational adequacy litigation in the 1990s. The head of GPM's pro bono committee, Joy Reopelle Anderson, and GPM attorney Kathryn Hauff are also representing the plaintiffs. Also representing the plaintiffs is Mel C. Orchard, III, a Board Certified Trial Lawyer from The Spence Law Firm of Jackson, Wyoming. Mr. Orchard carries on the tradition of the firm's founder, Gerry Spence, in representing victims of oppression and injustice in cases throughout the United States.

What is the case about and why was it filed now?

It has been 15 years since the settlement of the previous educational adequacy litigation, which resulted in "The Choice is Yours" program that provided enhanced access for Minneapolis low income families to higher performing suburban schools. The settlement of the previous litigation demonstrated the popularity and effectiveness of allowing thousands of families opportunities to attend less segregated, higher performing schools. Notwithstanding this success, over the past decade, the State and Twin Cities school districts have continued to pursue policies of racial and socioeconomic segregation across the entire metropolitan area. These policies have resulted in deepening segregation of schools and resulting educational

failure that continue to deprive tens of thousands of children of their fundamental Constitutional right to an adequate education. The lawsuit was filed now because the unconstitutional system of segregated education in the Twin Cities must be stopped before it does more damage to more children.

What remedy is the lawsuit hoping to achieve?

The lawsuit is committed to a remedy that includes metropolitan-wide desegregation. The time for half-measures and misguided school “reform” efforts purporting to try to make segregated schools “work” is long gone. Too many children have suffered and too many promising futures have been sacrificed for us to accept anything short of metro-wide desegregation, which is the only solution proven to improve academic and life outcomes for all children. With a foundation of metropolitan-wide school desegregation, all children in the Twin Cities metro area can have equal access to a high-quality, desegregated education. Nothing less will do.

For more information about the importance of advocating for school desegregation today, go to the following web link: <http://www.vox.com/2015/8/3/9092299/this-american-life-explains-why-school-segregation-still-exists-and>

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