Brown v. Board of Education

By interpreting its powers broadly, the Supreme Court can reshape American society.
What was the significance of Brown v. Board of Education, and what roles did Thurgood Marshall and Oliver Hill play in the demise of segregated schools?
**Brown v. Board of Education: 1954**

- Supreme Court decision that segregated schools are unequal and must desegregate
- Court ruled that schools must integrate with all “reasonable speed”
- By nature, **SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL**
- Included Virginia case
Key people

• Thurgood Marshall — NAACP
  Legal Defense Team – Argued the case for Linda Brown that the Topeka School Board was violating her rights.

• Later, Marshall was appointed to the Supreme Court by Lyndon Johnson, becoming the first African-American to sit on that bench!
Key people

- **Oliver Hill** — NAACP Legal Defense Team in Virginia - Hill heard that the students at R.R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, had walked out of their run down school. The lawsuit, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* became one of the five cases decided under *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954).
Role of the NAACP:

• The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People provided the legal teams to challenge these laws—which it had been doing for 45 years.

• Dozens of lawyers across the country worked to end laws that allowed for discrimination in public schools.
How did Virginia respond to the Brown decision?
Virginia Response

- **Massive Resistance** — Closing some schools - several schools even shut down for an entire year!
- Establishment of private academies which did not fall under the *Brown* ruling.
- **White flight** from urban school systems - many white families left the cities and moved into white communities in the suburbs.

Virginia’s efforts to stop integration slowed the process - it was not until the 1970’s that Virginia schools were fully integrated!