Sept. 7, 1955

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Sept. 7, 1955, the day Kansas City Public Schools ended segregation.

The landmark [Brown v. Board of Education](https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=87&page=transcript) case led to desegregating public schools throughout the country. There was one line in the decision that was viewed as rather subjective: “with all deliberate speed.” This meant there was no timeframe in which to have all schools segregated.

Even though the state controlled all public schools, officials left this decision with each, individual district.

By 1957, school districts throughout the state were successful in convincing the Legislature to pass a law that kept rural districts from having to join larger school districts, which was happening in Kansas City more often than anywhere else. Even though Kansas City grew by 220 miles, in the late 50s and through the 60s, the school district didn’t.

By 1968, a state representative put together [School District Reorganization for Missouri](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED026171.pdf), a panel that spent time looking into how desegregation worked, and if it was functioning properly. The Spainhower Commission, as it was known — named for State Rep. Jim Spainhower, who later served as state treasurer — tried to convince smaller districts to merge. The efforts were unsuccessful.

On Sept. 7, 1977, Kansas City schools began busing as a way to expedite desegregation. It would be the 1980s before the final court actions and decisions were taken and made toward the final steps of desegregation.

But, it all started on Sept. 7, 1955, the date marking the first day of desegregation at Kansas City Public Schools, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: *Brown v. Board of Education*, School District Reorganization of Missouri final report of 1968)