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In the case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* on May 17 1954, the Supreme Court decided that the Constitution of the United States must guarantee equal education for all American citizens.

In this landmark case, schools were desegregated across the South and the breath and width of the United States. Fifty-five years later, however, we find American education is still sporadically separate and unquestionably unequal.

The number of government and private sector studies confirms that the achievement gap between African Americans and Whites is astounding and almost identical to the gap in 1955.

The struggle of this issue was addressed at our recent National Action Network convention, among educators, clergy, elected officials, civil rights leaders and activists, by Vice President Joseph Biden, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, and Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

We struggled with the fact that even with a well-educated African American President and First Lady living in the White House seeking a similar education for their two beautiful daughters, only 55 percent of African Americans earned a high school diploma nationally.

Given the technological advancements in the world and the weak economy, to allow this gap to continue unchallenged is to render African Americans dysfunctional and permanently captive to an underclass.

We must challenge for equal funding for all public schools.

We must challenge accountability of teachers and administrators. We must inspire more parental and community involvement in the education of our children. And we must give incentives for good productive teachers to go into troubled areas and confront this crisis on the ground.

To ignore this problem is to plant the seeds of economic and social despair to African Americans for generations to come. This is no more of a compelling issue in our community and a greater threat to our future than not completing the task started by the *Brown vs. Board* decision pushed for equal education for all.

That is why on May 16, thousands will join NAN at the White House Ellipse in Washington D.C. to commemorate the anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education* and recommit to finishing the journey that the case started.

It was a long journey from the Outhouse to the White House. Now we must democratize the school house.

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