



Virginia Board of Education

PROCLAMATION

to Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the
Brown v. Board of Education Decision

WHEREAS, in May 2014, sixty years have passed since the United States Supreme Court declared that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483 (1954); and

WHEREAS, in addition to Kansas, the Court examined educational conditions of segregated schools in South Carolina, Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Prince Edward County, Virginia and determined that "... the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place..."; and

WHEREAS, in 1958 white schools were closed in three Virginia school divisions, subsequently adversely affecting access to public school attendance and depriving students of an education not only in those divisions but also throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, in January of 1959 Virginia's massive resistance, or "closing laws" were struck down by the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court pronouncement in *Brown v. Board of Education* validated the struggle and remarkable actions of countless Americans who challenged the destructive effects of segregation in our society through peaceful, lawful means; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge and salute the young Virginia students, led by Barbara Rose Johns, who went on strike for equal education at Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia. Ultimately, the strike resulted in seventy-five percent of the Brown decision plaintiffs coming from Virginia. The bold and courageous efforts of the students expanded citizens' understanding, inspired citizens' support and helped change public opinion about educational reform and equality; and

WHEREAS, the Brown decision ignited the challenge against the Jim Crow era and was the impetus for the civil rights movement, which culminated with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill and the 1965 Voting Rights Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Virginia Board of Education recognizes the 60th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the contributions of civil rights leaders and volunteers, parents, and students for it is only through their courage, conviction and sacrifices that *Brown v. Board of Education* became a reality;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our public schools are encouraged to mark the anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* with activities to foster personal commitment to democracy;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this May 2014 proclamation be placed in the official minutes of the Virginia Board of Education as a perpetual record of the recognition of the historic decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and its lasting and positive impact upon generations of young people in this Commonwealth.

Adopted in Richmond, Virginia, This Twenty-second Day of May in the Year 2014.


Christian N. Braunlich
President, Virginia Board of Education


Steven R. Staples, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction