

The Alice Piper Project

Precedent Cases

Ward v. Flood, California Supreme Court (1872)

The parents of an eleven-year-old student, Mary Frances Ward, of African descent, applied to have their daughter attend the local elementary school, Broadway Grammar School, in San Francisco. The principal, Noah F. Flood, denied her attendance because there was a separate school provided for colored students. Mary's parents, A. J. and Harriet Ward, sued various school administrators demanding that she be admitted to the school.

For this activity, all students involved in this case will be looking at the court's decision. From that decision, students will determine what arguments each side might have used to convince the court. The third group will take the role of the judges and develop a list of questions that the judges would need answered to be able to make this decision. When each group has finished, the judges will ask those questions of the plaintiff and defendants and then read their decision.

Tape v. Hurley, California Supreme Court (1885)

An eight-year-old student of Chinese descent, Mamie Tape, applied to attend Broadway Grammar School in San Francisco. The principal, Jennie Hurley, denied her attendance because the trustees of the school district prohibited Chinese students from attending local schools. Her father, Joseph Tape, filed suit to allow her to attend this school and receive an education in her neighborhood.

For this activity, all students involved in this case will be looking at the court's decision. From that decision, students will determine what arguments each side might have used to convince the court. The third group will take the role of the judges and develop a list of questions the judges would need answered to be able to make this decision. When each group has finished, the judges will ask those questions of the plaintiff and defendants and then read their decision.