

**Education for All: The PARC v.
Pennsylvania Case and the Dual Fight
for Rights and Responsibilities**

Senior Division

Individual Website

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The PARC v. Pennsylvania case was a groundbreaking moment in the fight for the rights of children with cognitive impairments to access education. Before this case, many children with disabilities were excluded from public schools, often labeled as “uneducable.” This case changed that, establishing a fundamental principle: all children, regardless of their abilities, deserve a free, appropriate public education. I chose this topic because it highlights a critical step forward in the disability rights movement, an area I initially knew little about. It’s also personal to me—my cousin has a physical disability, and my family has experienced the impact of these rights firsthand. This case not only brought hope to many families but also paved the way for future legislation, like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

My research began with the official PARC (ARC-PA) website, which provided access to key legal documents. These primary sources helped me understand the arguments and decisions made during the case. I also explored interviews, government records, and historical papers to gain a broader perspective. Legislative documents from the time revealed how the court's decision led to long-lasting changes in education policies. These sources were crucial for building a well-rounded understanding of the case.

However, the journey wasn’t without challenges. Finding original court documents and firsthand accounts was difficult, as many were not available online. To overcome this, I visited libraries and archives, which deepened my appreciation for historical research. Another challenge was weaving together information from various sources to create a cohesive story. While this required time and effort, it ultimately strengthened my research skills and understanding of the topic.

I selected my presentation category of individual website as I thought it was a wonderful way to showcase what I had learned about the subject and wanted to convey my message through words, images, and videos. I chose the format, selected a layout, separated into main categories for sequential navigation, and chose subtopics for each page. To further support my thesis and provide a comprehensive story, I included visuals, newspaper articles, multimedia, and personal interviews. I took my school and regional competition judges feedback and incorporated into my website for state competition.

This topic fits perfectly with this year’s theme, "Rights and Responsibilities." It highlights the responsibilities of both society and the government to provide equal access to education for

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every child. The PARC v. Pennsylvania case marked a turning point by affirming that children with cognitive impairments have the right to education in the least restrictive environment. This case not only transformed the lives of countless families but also laid the foundation for laws that protect the rights of students with disabilities today. By studying this case, I aim to highlight the continuing fight for disability rights and the importance of building a world that values and includes everyone.