

**Standardization, Segregation, and Professionalization in Virginia Public
Schools, 1898-1917**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on three groups of people: Virginia superintendents, leaders of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, and teachers of Virginia public schools. On their own terms, each of these groups represents a different facet of state level policies of standardization and segregation.

The annual and biennial reports published by the office of the Virginia superintendent of public instruction during the early twentieth century constitute the basis of analysis for this thesis. The first chapter of this thesis analyzes introductory letters from the superintendent of public instruction. Within these letters, the superintendent wrote often about public school facility renovations and improvements. The second chapter uncovers how leaders of black institutions of higher education represented their institutions to the superintendent by documenting the success of their graduates and the disciplinary atmosphere of their campuses. Chapter three explores standardization and professionalization measures that the superintendents recommended for Virginia teachers. This thesis adds to our understanding of education in the early twentieth century by looking at every day, bureaucratic decisions in relation to concepts of standardization and race in Virginia. In all, this thesis uncovers three standards of education that developed during the early twentieth century. Putting these three chapters together reveals a complex story about standardization and segregation, a story that, I argue, uncovers how race and power were embedded within everyday decisions and actions at the state level.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

During the early twentieth century, leaders of Virginia public education grappled with concepts of standardization and segregation. Through a close reading of annual and biennial reports published by the office of the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction, this research explores how decisions about public education were embedded in race and power.

The first chapter of this thesis analyzes introductory letters from the superintendent of public instruction. Within these letters, the superintendent wrote often about public school facility renovations and improvements. The second chapter uncovers how leaders of black institutions of higher education represented their institutions to the superintendent by documenting the success of their graduates and the disciplinary atmosphere of their campuses. Chapter three explores standardization and professionalization measures that the superintendents recommended for Virginia teachers. This thesis adds to our understanding of education in the early twentieth century by looking at every day, bureaucratic decisions in relation to concepts of standardization and race in Virginia. In all, this thesis uncovers three standards of education that developed during the early twentieth century. Putting these three chapters together reveals a complex story about standardization and segregation, a story that, I argue, uncovers how race and power were embedded within everyday decisions and actions at the state level.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements:	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter I: From Houses to Facilities: Virginia Superintendents' Building Ideals.....	19
Chapter II: Standard Expectations for Black Students at Segregated Institutions.....	45
Chapter III: Professional Standards for the Virginia Public School Teachers.....	65
Conclusion	86
Bibliography	90

Introduction

On September 25th, 1900, president of the Virginia Teachers' League, Willis A. Jenkins, wrote an open letter to *The Richmond Dispatch* about the condition of Virginia public schools. The letter, titled "Better Schools," was addressed to all the teachers of Virginia.¹ Jenkins began his letter with a passionate call to action for Virginia teachers, stating "in the United States to-day the workers in almost every activity have banded themselves together for protection and advancement."² He continued, "[b]ut we teachers have adopted a laissez faire policy that has not only been detrimental to our best interests, but has retarded the advance that would have been beneficial to the 300,000 school children of our State." Apparent from these lines of Jenkins' letter, the Virginia public education system needed reform. The "laissez faire policy" Jenkins mentions in his letter refers to provisions set forth by the Virginia Constitution of 1868.³ According to Jenkins, these provisions no longer provided the necessary parameters, resources, and guidelines for the Virginia public school system.

Writing 32 years after the Virginia Constitution of 1868 was drafted, Jenkins believed the public school system had "outgrown the provisions then made" and furthermore, "the results in the full-grown system" produced "errors that could not have been foreseen."⁴ In short, Jenkins

¹ William A. Jenkins, "Better Schools: An Open Letter from President of Virginia Teachers' League," *The Richmond Dispatch*, 25 September 1900, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, <<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038614/1900-09-25/ed-1/seq-3/>>.

² Jenkins, "Better Schools: An Open Letter from President of Virginia Teachers' League," *The Richmond Dispatch*.

³ The Virginia Constitution of 1868 was ratified in 1869. The Constitution of 1868 outlined the basic provisions for Virginia public schools, but most of the details for the public school system was in the enabling legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1870, known as the Act to Establish and Maintain a Uniform System of Public Free Schools. This act legalized racial segregation within Virginia public schools.

⁴ Jenkins, "Better Schools: An Open Letter from President of Virginia Teachers' League," *The Richmond Dispatch*.

believed the Virginia public school system needed restructuring and new government-supported provisions. Jenkins described how “every State Superintendent of Public Instruction, when submitting his report, has made recommendations for the betterment of the system,” but very few of these recommendations ever came to fruition. Jenkins continued,

Local superintendents and the State Superintendent have failed in their efforts, because of fundamental provisions. A stone structure cannot be built on a wooden foundation, nor is it possible that the schools of Virginia accomplish what is expected of them today under constitutional provisions made twenty years ago.⁵

Jenkins’ letter identified old constitutional provisions as creating negative consequences for Virginia public education at the turn of the century.

In this thesis, I analyze the annual and biennial reports produced by the superintendent of public instruction. In all, these reports include many different layers and many different points of view. By analyzing the various points of view within these documents, I demonstrate how decisions about educational policies were negotiated between different leaders of Virginia education. At first glance, these reports may seem to only include the acting superintendent’s point of view. But, a close reading of these documents proves otherwise. Many different parties, individuals, counties, cities, government entities, and school leaders are all represented within these comprehensive reports. For example, each report contains an introductory letter from the acting superintendent, reports from the Virginia institutions of higher education, and reports from district superintendents. These different layers and points of view reveal how educational decisions in Virginia during the early twentieth century were embedded in race and power.

Studying these reports reveals how large historical concepts—like race and standardization—are entrenched in small, compact, historical documents. An examination of these bureaucratic, long, statistical documents reveals how Virginia leaders developed ideas

⁵ Jenkins, “Better Schools,” *The Richmond Dispatch*.

about standardization and segregation throughout the early twentieth century. My argument demonstrates how leaders of Virginia education developed structures of racism—that is the focus on white school facilities, the intricate relationship between leaders of black institutions and the State, and the disproportionate teacher salaries and standards throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These gradual changes complicate the historical narrative about education during the Jim Crow era by revealing how changes within the system of public education were embedded in everyday actions and decisions at the state level. This thesis adds to the historical literature by uncovering the everyday, bureaucratic decisions behind state-level measures.

This thesis focuses on three groups of people: superintendents, leaders of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, and teachers of Virginia public schools. On their own terms, each of these groups represents a different facet of state level policies of standardization and segregation. The superintendent, given his position of power, reflects holistically on Virginia public education. On the other hand, the leaders of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute negotiate the status of black public schools within the larger system of Virginia public education. Teachers add to this story by revealing the emerging professional standards. The larger conversation surrounding the professionalization and standardization of teaching represents one area where the Virginia Board of Education issued different standards based on the teacher's race. Altogether, the depth of each of these three perspectives introduces the intricate decisions behind early twentieth century policies about public education. Putting these three different perspectives together reveals a complex story about standardization and segregation, a story that,

I argue, uncovers how race and power become embedded within everyday decisions and actions at the state level.

I have organized this thesis based on the degree of power each perspective represents. The first chapter of this thesis analyzes introductory letters from the superintendent of public instruction. Throughout each of these letters, the acting superintendent outlines statistics, explains legal changes, reflects on the conditions of schools throughout the state, and provides recommendations for the Board of Education. In many ways, these letters are representative of the condition of public education in Virginia for each respective school session. Throughout the introductory writings of these reports, there is one recurring theme: recommendations and concerns about public school facilities. At the turn of the century, the superintendent in power believed the condition of public school facilities throughout Virginia did not represent the standard of education they intended on upholding. Therefore, within his introductory letter, the superintendent reflected on the status of public school facilities in order to provide standards for these buildings. More specifically, the standardization of public school facilities interacted with ideals held at the time about modernization, uniformity, aesthetics, public health, and consolidation.

During a time of legal segregation, those in the position of power often did not delineate between recommendations and policies for white public school and black public schools. As I discuss throughout chapter one, the superintendent often wrote about public school facility renovations and improvements as beneficial for the entire Virginia school population. In doing so, the writings of these superintendents inevitably ignored the needs of the black school facilities throughout Virginia. As demonstrated throughout the chapter, the superintendents acknowledged the needs of white school facilities without any acknowledgement of the condition

of black school facilities. Noticing the subtle designations to the white school facilities is only possible through a close reading of these primary documents. Through a close reading of these annual and biennial reports, I uncover how the superintendents suggested recommendations based only on evidence from white public school facilities. This is all to say that while these superintendents wrote about public school facility standardization as mutually beneficial for both the black and white school population, inevitably these writings represent areas of inequality during this time of legal segregation. The three main ideas of this chapter—concern about and focus on facilities, the standardization of facilities, and the segregation of facilities—come together to show how ideas of race and standardization were embedded in everyday decisions and policies.

Chapter two is not a direct comparison to chapter one. Instead, chapter two consults a different point of view: the writings of leaders from Virginia's black institutions of higher education. Specifically, I focus on two state supported institutions of higher education—Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. The leaders of these institutions wrote official letters to the office of the superintendent. Their letters displayed the successful careers of graduates, the types of education offered to students, the financial health of the school, the moral and disciplinary atmosphere of the campus, and possible areas where state support could facilitate improvement on their campus. Through a close reading of these letters, I uncover another standard of education in the early twentieth century—the standard expectation for black students at these institutions. In many ways, this chapter is about conflict and tension between the leaders of these black institutions and the Virginia superintendent. While the leaders of these black institutions put their schools on public display in their letters, they also outlined their own standards for black education in Virginia. I break this chapter up

into two sections, one about representations of graduates, and one about the discipline and moral standard for students attending these schools. These two sections depict the “standard” student produced by these black institutions. According to their letters, the standard black student displayed valuable morals and discipline while attending school. After graduation, this student was expected to use their training, moral standards, and discipline to benefit the larger black community. On a larger scale, these two sections uncover how these leaders negotiated and created their own educational standards, often unrelated to the topics the superintendents’ focused on in their introductory letters (like the superintendents’ focus on school facilities).

Chapter two is valuable to the larger thread of this project because it provides a perspective different than that of the superintendents’. It would have been easy to only write about the perspective of the superintendent of public instruction, but by doing so, I would have excluded the voice of those concerned about and invested in black public education. This chapter focuses on black institutions of higher education because at large, district superintendents do not include much about black public education at a primary level and as I have discussed, the superintendents do not include much about black primary education in their own writing either. While this chapter may seem like an outlier, it provides immense value to this project by exploring the ways leaders of black institutions promoted educational standards.

Finally, chapter three uncovers the standardization and professionalization of teachers in Virginia. In this chapter, I discuss how the superintendents recommended and eventually enforced distinct standards for Virginia teachers. I start off by unpacking the governing structure of Virginia teachers at the time, known as Virginia Board of Examiners and Inspectors. This department, a branch off the Board of Education, was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1904. The Virginia Board of Examiners and Inspectors is important to discuss

regarding the larger conversation about the increasing standardization of public education during this time period. As an official governmental entity, the Virginia Board of Examiners and Inspectors held power and authority in regard to certifying professional teachers. In its simplest form, the Examiners and Inspectors developed standards of teaching and ultimately, decided if aspiring teachers met these state standards. By issuing uniform exams, the Examiners and Inspectors enforced the state mandated professionalization requirements for teachers. These exams determined if a teacher, whether white or black, would be hired by a State institution of public education. Another important part of this chapter includes teacher compensation. The superintendents dedicated a lot of page space within their annual and biennial reports to develop an argument for a standard compensation for teachers. The larger conversation surrounding teaching standards and compensation represents one of the only topics within the annual and biennial reports where the superintendents openly outline different standards for black teachers and white teachers. The superintendents developed different compensation standards for white teachers and black teachers and published these charts within each annual or biennial report. These compensation standards were also divided into different levels of pay for white men, white women, black men, and black women, indicating different pay based on race and also gender.

At large, this thesis interacts with the following questions: How are significant historical concepts— like racism and standardization— fixed in smaller, everyday decisions? How does the writing within annual and biennial reports from the office of the superintendent of public instruction open a window onto the relationship between standardization and race? How does understanding intricate state level decisions about public education add to our historical understanding of the early twentieth century?

These small, seemingly bureaucratic decisions about standardization serve as the basis for my overall argument. In this thesis, I argue that standardizing education in Virginia during the early twentieth century embodied specific racial undertones that were not always explicitly stated within official, government documents. Within the annual and biennial reports, I argue ideas about race are strategically layered throughout the text. While not always obvious, these racial undertones whisper subdued beliefs about race and segregation. When superintendents focused their efforts on school facility modernization and improvement, they often did so in an ambiguous manner that only provided benefits for white public schools. Although not explicitly stating their efforts and measures were only for the benefit of white school facilities, they rarely mentioned any reference to improvement of black school facilities. The point of view of leaders from black institutions of higher education reveals how these institutions often appealed to the white superintendent's position of power, doing so in a way that targeted the superintendents' beliefs and convictions about black education, while also promoting their own concerns and visions for black education. Furthermore, superintendents' attempt to standardize the Virginia teaching profession often discussed these efforts as beneficial for all teachers, but then published different certification tests and compensation scales for white and black teachers.

Historical Context

Two years after Jenkins' open letter to Virginia Teachers, a new Constitution, passed on July 10, 1902. This Constitution addressed the growing concerns about the public education system and outlined new constitutional provisions for public schools. Specifically, the new Constitution outlined administration requirements for the Board of Education, described the duties of the superintendent, defined school district boundaries, characterized the state funded

provisions for the schools, and clearly stated "white and colored" children were prohibited from attending the same physical school building.⁶ The responsibility for establishing and maintaining these public schools rested in the duties of the General Assembly— but more specifically rested within the office of the superintendent of public instruction.⁷

Considered a significant document for understanding public education in Virginia during the turn of the century, the Constitution of 1902 also provides a snapshot of the larger historical context of Virginia during Jim Crow. Legally, the Constitution of 1902 not only segregated schools, but also disenfranchised the majority of black men and working-class white men in Virginia. Historically speaking, the Constitution of 1902 legally enforced Jim Crow measures in Virginia and legalized an all-white government rule. During this time black and white individuals legally were not permitted to attend the same school, ride the same public transportation, dine in the same restaurants, attend churches together and much more. Jim Crow measures in Virginia enforced white supremacy and legalized discrimination against the black population.

The Constitution of 1902 passed during a time period in which many historians designate as the Progressive Era (1890-1917). In Virginia, the Progressive movement aligned broadly with national trends of progressivism. At large, Progressives sought reform in areas such as temperance, women's rights, and public schools. Many Progressive Era leaders were white businessmen, church leaders, politicians, educators, and their wives and children. While committed to ideas of social, economic, and political reform, progressive leaders often ignored racial injustices of the Era. Progressive reformers fiercely supported the Constitution of 1902 as a means of enforcing a racial order and therefore, white supremacy. Yet still, prominent African

⁶ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xli–xlili.

⁷ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xli.

American leaders emerge during this time period. Figures such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Nannie Helen Burroughs ultimately believed Progressive Era focus on social injustices would inevitably lead to racial reform as well.

The Virginia Constitution of 1902 specifically outlined legal guidelines for the composition of public schools and therefore, the office of the superintendent of public instruction. Acting as president of the State Board of Education, the superintendent was required by law to be an "experienced educator."⁸ Per the Virginia Constitution of 1902, individuals running for this position were elected by the qualified voters of Virginia during the same time as the election for the governor of Virginia.⁹ Both the superintendent and governor served a four year term of office.¹⁰ Since 1870, when the office of the superintendent of public instruction began its formal existence, superintendents submitted annual and biennial reports to the General Assembly of Virginia. Transitioning into the early twentieth century, Article IX of the 1902 Constitution clearly stated that each superintendent submitted a report that should document the "condition and progress of the public schools and the State institutions for higher and technical education."¹¹

After the ongoing compilation and synthesis of school statistics, the superintendent submitted this report for printing. The reports traveled to the office of the superintendent of public printing in Richmond, Virginia. Here, the reports were bound and pressed into a book-like structure. Each report encompassed anywhere between 350 to 600 pages that included charts,

⁸ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xli.

⁹ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xli.

¹⁰ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xli.

¹¹ This language is reflected in all of the Superintendent annual reports, but the quote is taken from: biennial report of the Superintendent of public instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1901–1902 and 1902–1903), cover page, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

statistics, summaries, and financial information about Virginia public schools. Next, these printed and pressed reports were sent to all major institutions of higher education, the Virginia General Assembly, the trustees of the state, State school officials, division superintendents and the governor of Virginia.¹² The length and extent of the reports intended to convey the exact condition of public education in Virginia. More specifically, a biennial report from 1907-1909 stated:

The book is voluminous in its detailed information. It is designed to show a State supervisor or examiner the exact situation in each district of his circuit, to place before the division superintendent in a usable way all the facts pertaining to his county, and to give each trustee the whole truth concerning his district with abundant means of comparing his surroundings with like conditions in other districts.¹³

Printed and circulated, these reports transmitted an official narrative of the status of education around the state. Furthermore, these printed documents enforced the authority of the office of the superintendent of public instruction in Virginia.

As a main task of each annual/biennial report of instruction, statistics portrayed the overall health of Virginia public schools. While these reports include statistics about all schools in Virginia, the superintendent separated the information into "white" and "colored" sections. Separating the official statistics of white public schools and black public schools enforced a vision of education that treated white schools and black schools on their own terms. Instead of reporting about the overall status of public education in Virginia, the superintendents created different expectations for white and black schools.

¹² Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1907–1909), 39, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

¹³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1907–1909, 39.

Part of the reason Virginia school officials invested into the strength of their segregated public school institutions rested within the monetary commitment of Virginia taxpayers to these schools. A report from the 1902-1903 school year outlines the total monetary investment of the Virginia public school system. Due to local taxation as a source of revenue for the public schools, Superintendent Joseph W. Southall estimated that 48 million dollars had been raised in the past 32 years for public education from local taxation.¹⁴ Of these 48 million tax dollars, an estimated amount of 16 to 17 million dollars went toward black education in Virginia.¹⁵ Meaning an estimated 34% of total tax revenue ended up aiding black schools in Virginia, while the other 66% was funneled to institutions of white education.

Superintendents also formed and circulated different prescriptions about what public education in Virginia should embody. For example, superintendents suggested what types of courses should be offered to students, proposed various physical characteristics for school buildings, and how these schools should be managed. These suggestions ultimately enforced official visions of education throughout Virginia. Due to the bureaucratic governing structure of the Virginia Board of Education, official prescriptions provoked ideas about how public education in Virginia should be structured and managed.

Historiography

Scholarship about United States education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generally refers to this time period as "progressive." Since the 1960s, scholarship about the history of progressive education focuses on the foundations and legacies of this movement.

¹⁴ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxv.

¹⁵ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxv.

Historians of progressive education argue that at the beginning of the twentieth century, education became more focused on the child, in part because of larger progressive era reforms in America. Lawrence A. Cremin, in *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*, provides fundamental scholarship for understanding the origins and legacy of progressive education. Published in 1961, *The Transformation of the School* outlines progressive educational thought and progressive educational reform in order to suggest that progressive education policies were tied to equity.¹⁶

While Cremin's work is considered a foundational text within the field of the history of education and specifically the history of progressive education, other scholars of this field point to gaps within *The Transformation of the School*. Beginning in the late 1960s, revisionist historians argue the progressive reforms that Cremin portrayed as equal were instead tied to larger twentieth century ideas of administration, bureaucracy and standardization.¹⁷ In *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century*, authors Clarence Karier, Paul Violas and Joel Spring argue that education reform was used as a means of social control.¹⁸ Another

¹⁶ See Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964). See also Patricia A. Graham, *Progressive Education from Already to Academe: A History of the Progressive Education Association, 1919-1955* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967); Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *A Generation of Women: Education in the Lives of Progressive Reformers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1880-1990* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993); Jeffrey Mirel, "Old Educational Ideas, New American Schools: Progressivism and the Rhetoric of Educational Revolution," *Paedagogica Historica* 39, no. 4 (August 2003): 447-97; Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (March 2001): 1-24.

¹⁷ For an essay about the historiographic significance of Lawrence A. Cremin's *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*, see John L. Rury, "Transformation of Perspective: Lawrence Cremin's Transformation of the School," *History of Education Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 66-76.

¹⁸ Clarence Karier, Paul Violas, and Joel Spring, *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973).

revisionist scholar, Michael B. Katz, in *Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-nineteenth Century Massachusetts*, argues that school reform has been historically motivated by individuals in positions of power, “each for their own reasons,” not for “democracy, rationalism, and humanitarianism” or equity.¹⁹ These scholars challenge the argument set forth by Cremin and expand our understanding of how education policies were often motivated by various social, political and cultural factors.

More recently, historian Tracy L. Steffes, in her article, “Solving the ‘Rural School Problem’: New State Aid, Standards, and Supervision of Local Schools, 1900-1933,” adds to our understanding of educational policies in the early twentieth century by exploring rural school policies and reform. In this article, Steffes argues that historians of education have largely focused on “the transformation of decentralized ward-based schools into single, highly centralized hierarchical bureaucracies” led by progressive individuals “involved in a project of professionalization.”²⁰ According to Steffes, the historical narrative about education acknowledges “the expansion of state authority and growth of state bureaucracy,” but vaguely explains “the timing, nature, and process by which this expansion occurred.”²¹ Furthermore, Steffes argues that “schools are legally state institutions,” yet scholars neglect “the role of state law, actors, and institutions.”²²

¹⁹ Michael Katz, *Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 152.

²⁰ Tracy L. Steffes, “Solving the ‘Rural School Problem’: New State Aid, Standards, and Supervision of Local Schools, 1900–1933,” *History of Education Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 182. See also David B. Tyack, *The One Best System The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); Julia Wrigley, *Class Politics and Public Schools: Chicago 1900–1950* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982); Joseph M. Cronin, *The Control of Urban Schools: A Perspective on the Power of Educational Reformers* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

²¹ Steffes, “Solving the ‘Rural School Problem’: New State Aid, Standards, and Supervision of Local Schools, 1900–1933,” 183.

²² Steffes, “Solving the ‘Rural School Problem,’” 183.

The vague exploration of the role of the state within early twentieth century education reform, and therefore, gap in the historical literature, inspired Steffes to uncover this historical narrative. Published in 2012, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890-1940* places the state at the center of analysis about education. In *School, Society, and State*, Steffes demonstrates the “important role of state government and law in the educational transformations” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³ Furthermore, Steffes argues that reform, shaped by standardization, “sanctioned particular norms, models, and goals.”²⁴

While many scholars refer to these educational reforms as "progressive" and "new," they interact broadly with national ideas of reform during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Considered part of the South, scholars discuss Virginia history during this time period in several different ways. Some southern historians classify this time period as "Jim Crow."²⁵ Other southern historians refer to this time period as the rise of the "New South."²⁶ Yet still,

²³ Tracy L. Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 196.

²⁴ Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890–1940*, 198.

²⁵ For scholarship about the "Jim Crow" Era, see also C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Charles E. Wynes, *Race Relations in Virginia, 1870–1902* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1961); John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Fitzhugh W. Brundage, "Introduction," in *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South*, eds. Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring, 1–16 (Arlington: Texas A&M Press for the University of Texas at Arlington); Peter Wallenstein, "Identity, Marriage, and Schools: Life Along the Color Line/s in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson," in *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South*, eds. Stephanie Cole and Natalie J. Ring, 17–53 (Arlington: Texas A&M Press for the University of Texas at Arlington); Blair L. M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Jennifer Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Douglas J. Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

²⁶ For scholarship about the "New South," see also C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Harold D. Woodman, "The Political Economy of the New South: Retrospects and Prospects," *Journal of Southern History* 63, 1: 3–22. For scholarship about black agency in the New South, see also Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black*

some southern historians broadly talk about the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the South as "progressive."²⁷

This thesis builds upon the foundational scholarship of education by exploring the specific origins of progressive education policies in Virginia. This thesis differs from Cremin's suggestion that equity provided the foundation for progressive education policies. In this thesis, I argue that standardization implies uniformity and actions that are portrayed as good for all, but the ideas about education and segregation during this time period represent areas of inequality. I also add to our understanding of education in the early twentieth century by looking at every day, bureaucratic decisions in relation to concepts of standardization and race in Virginia. This thesis interacts with the philosophies of Progressive education, but also uncovers the ways in which individuals in administrator roles interacted with ideas about race and standardization.

By focusing on state issued documents, this thesis adds to our historical understanding of public education in the early twentieth century by revealing the process surrounding the expansion of state-wide public schooling. This thesis builds upon Seffes description about how standardization played a key part in modern education reform. At large, concepts of standardization interact with notions of modernization during the late nineteenth and early

Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 2003); Sharon Ann Holt, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865–1900* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003); Mark Roman Schultz, *The Rural Face of White Supremacy: Beyond Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁷ For scholarship about Southern Progressivism, see also William Link, "The Social Context of Southern Progressivism, 1880–1930," in *The Wilson Era: Essays in Honor of Arthur S. Link*, eds. John Milton Cooper, Jr. and Charles Neu, 55–82 (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1991); William Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

twentieth centuries.²⁸ As governments attempted to assert more control during this time period, their systems of governing became more bureaucratic and progressive in nature. Many historians argue that this time period marks a significant era in American history—one in which society longed for order and structure.²⁹ In this thesis, I build upon notions of standardization and modernization by analyzing how the Virginia government, but more specifically, how the Virginia Board of Education, developed, implemented, and discussed public education policies by asserting their authority over public schools. This thesis builds upon the notions of state standardization of public schools set forth by Seffes in *School, Society and State*. By exploring the official writings, policies, and relationships of Virginia educational leaders, I place the role of state laws, state actors, and state institutions at the center of this analysis. A historical study of this nature reveals the gradual process behind expanding Virginia public schools and adds to our understanding of how standardization drove reform policies during this time period.

In this thesis, I interact primarily with historical ideas about progressivism and Jim Crow. I also add to the literature of progressive education by focusing on daily decisions and smaller, but still potent, actions of racism as represented within these reports. As other scholars argue, ideas about progressivism and modernization during the early twentieth century inherently created a culture of white normativity.³⁰ By looking at a specific set of primary sources— annual

²⁸ For scholarship that explores standardization by linking secondary education to higher education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); Mark A. VanOverbeke, *The Standardization of American Schooling: Linking Secondary and Higher Education, 1870–1910* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

²⁹ See Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009); Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889–1902* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885–1914* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Robert Weibe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1980); Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877–1919* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987).

³⁰ See Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon, 1988). For foundational scholarship about the Progressive Era ideology and the

and biennial reports of public education from the early twentieth century Virginia— I uncover how historical concepts of race and standardization can be uncovered in compact historical documents.

search for order, see also Robert Weibe, *The Search for Order 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Tammy Ingram, *Dixie Highway: Road Building and the Making of the Modern South, 1900–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Chapter I:

From Houses to Facilities: Virginia Superintendents' Building Ideals

Within the 1905-1907 biennial report from the superintendent of public instruction of Virginia, Joseph D. Eggleston, Jr. narrated what he believed as the "greatest feature of the present growth of school sentiment in Virginia."³¹ In his passionate prose, Eggleston indicated that the "great feature" of Virginia education rested upon the "definite and high ideal assuming shape in public mind."³² He continued:

The people are seeing visions today about schools for the children. And because of these visions the school officials must formulate definite and proper ideals toward which the schools should grow in the coming years. Only that school fulfills its mission which reaches out and touches intelligently, sympathetically, constantly, and consciously every social and economic interest that concerns its community.³³

As indicated by Eggleston, he believed visions of education, held by the Virginia public, authorized the development of formal educational ideals within the Virginia Department of Education. Entrusted by the community to undertake a massive social project, Eggleston's formal role as superintendent of public instruction allowed him to engage in the burgeoning of the Virginia public school system. One of the "definite and proper ideals" Eggleston attempted to officially develop rests within creating a standard school facility for schools throughout the State. Eggleston, along with the other superintendents during the early twentieth century, focused much of their reform and legislation on the physicality of school facilities.

³¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1905–1907), 39.

³² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 38.

³³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 38–39.

In this chapter, I focus on how each superintendent, during the early twentieth century, wrote about public school facilities. Throughout each annual and biennial report, ideas about modernizing facilities, consolidating facilities, the aesthetic appeal of facilities, and the public health of facilities interact with larger goals of public school standardization. In this chapter, I argue that the standardization of public school facilities display goals for white school facilities, while ignoring the needs of black school facilities. When superintendents focused their efforts on school facility modernization and improvement, they often did so in an ambiguous manner that only provided benefits for white public schools. Although not explicitly stating their efforts and measures were only for the benefit of white school facilities, they never mentioned any reference of improvement for black school facilities.

It is important to keep in mind that progressive visions of authority and power rested upon measures of neutral good, making these modern visions of education seem indispensable and indisputably good for *all*. These “neutral goods,” in the context of building standardization, ultimately indicated good for the white community. During the heart of Jim Crow measures within the State, the vision of public education improvement as an indisputable good simply does not hold true. The “definite and high ideal assuming shape in public mind” most certainly emphasized the ideals of Virginia's white population.³⁴ As a white man, in an office of power and authority, each of the four superintendents likely executed public education ideals with mostly the white population in mind. While governing over all schools in Virginia, white and black, these superintendents often did not delineate which communities they executed their vested power for.

³⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 38.

In their attempt to execute modern visions of authority, the superintendents also relied on the developing bureaucratic nature of the Virginia public education system. Recommendations about school facilities reveal one area where Virginia superintendents of public instruction acted in accordance to their sanctioned power and created standardized educational ideals. This attempt to materialize educational ideals through the reform and renovation of public school facilities opens a window onto understanding the increasing authority underlying the bureaucratic structure of governance within the Virginia Board of Education. By concentrating on a really ordinary thing— public school facilities— Virginia superintendents combined their vested public power with the increasing authority of bureaucracy and implemented public school facility reform.

While this chapter is centered around the standardization of school facilities, it is important to acknowledge other areas were focal points of standardization efforts, as well. Throughout the annual and biennial reports, the superintendents also discussed the idea of uniform textbooks. In 1904, the State Board of Education passed legislation that outlined the parameters for selecting textbooks.³⁵ Essentially, each school district chose from an approved list of four textbooks for each subject matter.³⁶ In 1908, Virginia passed a measure of compulsory attendance for students ages eight through twelve. Previously, no compulsory attendance requirements existed throughout the State. I focus on the standardization of school facilities due to the consistency of conversations about school facilities within the reports. Some matters, such as textbooks, only come up occasionally throughout the reports. School facilities represent one topic that each superintendent between 1898 and 1917 reflected upon during his time in office.

³⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1903–1905), xxxii–xxxviii.

³⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xxxii–xxxviii.

Generally, scholarship about education in the early twentieth century United States refers to this time period as "new education" or "progressive education." Since the 1960s, scholarship about the history of progressive education has focused on the foundations and legacies of this educational movement. Historians of progressive education argue that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, education became more focused on the child, in part, because of larger reforms in America.³⁷ These larger educational reforms stemmed from nineteenth century notions of the "common school," an institution that embodied more traditional educational values and embraced religious values.³⁸ Therefore, as scholars argue, progressive education challenged these traditional notions of schooling and promoted educational reform as centered around the academic and social needs of children. An analysis of the writings and reports of Virginia superintendents of public instruction adds to the understanding of progressive education by opening a window onto how these educational ideals transpired on a state and local level.

This chapter explores the modernization of school facilities and consolidation of school buildings as discussed by Superintendents of Public Instruction Joseph W. Southall (1898-1906), Joseph D. Eggleston (1906-1912), R. C. Stearns (1912-1918) and Harris Hart (1918-1931) from 1899-1918. Collectively, the way these four superintendents developed educational ideals informs our understanding about how the Virginia Department of Education created and circulated visions about the purpose of public education. These four Virginia superintendents of

³⁷ See Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964); Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for American Curriculum, 1893–1958* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

³⁸ For scholarship on common school education, see Ruth Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964); Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Michael Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger, 1971); Michael Katz, *Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

public instruction created and circulated educational standards regarding the physical spaces utilized for public schooling purposes and did so under the banner of indisputable good for all students and schools.

Modernization, Aesthetics, & Public Health

Superintendent Joseph W. Southall, in the 1901 to 1903 biennial report, set the stage for how succeeding superintendents discussed public school facilities. Southall believed the "school-house" should be the "most attractive house in the community," for it was the "home of the children in the neighborhood."³⁹ Southall described the ideal school building as "not only being sightly on the outside, but also comfortable and attractive on the inside."⁴⁰ Depicted as a house, the school facility resembled a familiar space to its students. Students, who entered the space of a schoolhouse, learned in an intimate setting. This welcoming, warm, familiar, house-like intimate space provided an atmosphere that fostered relationships with peers, with teachers, and with the community at large.

In his early reports, Southall often referred to school facilities as "homes for children." The specific language used by Southall, reveals the ways Virginia officials grappled with the social, as well as academic needs of children attending public schools. Southall advocated for making the "school-house the most attractive house in the community," for the schoolhouse served as the "home, for the time being of the children of the neighborhood."⁴¹ As a temporary home for children, Southall believed the schoolhouse needed to "be the center of the social life of

³⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1901–1903), xxxi, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

⁴⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁴¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

the people whose children attend it."⁴² In order to serve as a social center for its surrounding community, the school facility needed to be aesthetically pleasing on the inside and outside.⁴³ According to Southall, a modern, early twentieth century school facility embodied specific aesthetic goals for students attending the school, as well as the larger surrounding community. These domesticated goals served as a way to attract children into attending public schools and these aesthetic ideals served to promote greater social order within the community at large.

Yet, Southall also wanted a decidedly modern school facilities that strayed away from this idea of the school as a home. While schoolhouses held a valuable place within the structure of Virginia public schools, they no longer promoted the type of educational environment Southall intended to create. In an attempt to standardize the improvement and renovation of school facilities, Southall recommended appointing a committee within the Board of Education responsible for overseeing the construction and repair of Virginia public schools. Within the 1901-1903 biennial report, Southall "urgently" suggested that the Department of Public Instruction appoint a commission "to prepare a book of plans for the guidance of school trustees in the erection of school buildings, especially in the rural districts."⁴⁴ In his recommendation, Southall suggested the new commission include "at least one good architect, and several practical school officials."⁴⁵ The new committee, book of plans, architect, and school officials represent the formal transformation from constructing public school *houses* to constructing public school *facilities*.

Until this commission for guidance on the physical structures of school buildings was formed, a set of guidelines published by the Official Department of the Virginia School Journal,

⁴² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁴³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁴⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

⁴⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

was temporarily used to promote physical standards for school structures.⁴⁶ Intending to create and enforce healthier environments for school age children, the State Board of Education mandated certain physical requirements for public school facilities that if unmet, warranted legal punishment. According to the guidelines published by the Official Department of the Virginia School Journal, any school building constructed not in accordance with the guidelines for construction and renovation also would be deemed as unlawful.⁴⁷ The committee, book of plans, architect, school officials, and legal ramifications, all aimed to uphold public school facility ideals. These formal guidelines laid the foundation for public school facility renovation and construction and established formal enforcement measures for the physical standards of school facilities.

A closer look at the preliminary guidelines published by the Official Department of the Virginia School Journal reveals the specific standards Southall intended to enforce throughout the State. These guidelines for physical school spaces outline values about lighting, heating, ventilation, and dimensionality. Lighting, in all buildings constructed or remodeled for school purposes, embodied very specific requirements.⁴⁸ Each building required lighting from windows in "one rear or side wall of each class and study room."⁴⁹ All of the desks and seats were required to be arranged so that the windows were placed on the left or in the rear of the classroom in an attempt to promote adequate lighting for school pupils.⁵⁰ Next, the school building had to be ventilated in a specific manner in order to promote public health and sanitation. All school buildings with more than three rooms were required to provide a heating and ventilation system

⁴⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

⁴⁷ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

⁴⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

⁴⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

⁵⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

that promoted the "introduction of warm air into each class or study room."⁵¹ The ventilation equipment within each class or study room was required to be "no less than eight feet above the floor line, with provision for the exit of impure air at the floorline."⁵² The whole ventilation system had to be arranged in order to maintain a temperature of seventy-two degrees throughout each room, even during the winter season.⁵³ Furthermore, all closets and restroom spaces required a design that promoted the airflow of foul odors.⁵⁴

As scholar William A. Link argues, the modernization of public health and public education social reform movements in the South, during the Progressive Era, represent two movements deeply connected to one another.⁵⁵ According to Link, "progressive methods of bureaucratic and interventionist social policy" led to health related "progressive public-school innovation that required changes to the environment of public education."⁵⁶ Moreover, as described by Link, during an "age where tuberculosis was pervasive and ever present, public health officials stressed the importance of fresh air and ventilation."⁵⁷ Working alongside public health officials, Virginia public school officials sought to create physical environments, especially in rural districts, that promoted a healthy learning atmosphere.

As demonstrated in the *Virginia School Journal* guidelines, proper ventilation resonated as a key component of facility renovations, most likely as a measure in decreasing public school students' change of contracting diseases like tuberculosis. Historian Nancy Tomes, in *The Gospel*

⁵¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx–xxxii.

⁵² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁵³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁵⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁵⁵ William A. Link, "Privies, Progressivism, and Public Schools: Health Reform and Education in the Rural South, 1909–1920," *The Journal of Southern History* 54, no. 4, (November, 1998), 623.

⁵⁶ Link, "Privies, Progressivism, and Public Schools: Health Reform and Education in the Rural South, 1909–1920," 623, 633.

⁵⁷ Link, "Privies, Progressivism, and Public Schools," 633.

of *Germ: Men, Women and the Microbe in American Life*, uncovers “how Americans came to believe in the existence of germs, and how that understanding changed their lives.”⁵⁸ A large part of Tomes’ book investigates Americans’ understanding of tuberculosis.⁵⁹ During the progressive Era, Tomes argues that “reformers sought to bring hygienic enlightenment to all Americans, in order to emancipate the whole society from the fear of infectious diseases.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, Tomes indicates that an “array of Progressive-era institutions, including municipal and state health departments,” took up reform measures in order to better educate and inform individuals about the transfer of germs.⁶¹ As the Virginia Board of Education developed facility standards, they did so with public health measures in mind. Demonstrated through the legal parameters for school facilities and the involvement of public health officials, leaders of the institution of public education intended on creating healthier environments for Virginia students. These reform measures show how Virginia officials worked to better educate and inform the public on the transfer of germs and disease, while also focusing on reform for children.⁶²

The last requirement included in the guidelines published by the Official Department of the *Virginia School Journal* focused on modern dimensions of the school buildings. Per the guidelines, no less than fifteen square feet of floor space had to be provided for each pupil in a classroom or a study room.⁶³ If any school building did not follow these guidelines upon

⁵⁸ Nancy Homes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 2.

⁵⁹ Homes, *The Gospel of Germs*, chapters 4–6.

⁶⁰ Homes, *The Gospel of Germs*, 9.

⁶¹ Homes, *The Gospel of Germs*, 9.

⁶² See Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880–1920* (Philadelphia, 1981); David I. Macleod, *The Age of the Child: Children in America, 1890–1920* (New York, 1998); David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York, 1981), and Susan Tiffin, *In Whose Best Interest? Child Welfare Reform in the Progressive Era* (Westport, CT, 1982).

⁶³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxx.

construction or renovation, the building contract would be considered void.⁶⁴ Furthermore, if an employed school official or employed contractor approved a contract found in violation of these guidelines, they would be charged with a misdemeanor and fined a monetary amount between 200 dollars and 2,000 dollars.⁶⁵ As outlined in the above example, Southall promoted modernization, public health, and aesthetic ideals for public school facilities.

Southall believed physical improvement of school facilities promoted the success of Virginia public education in comparison to other states. In the concluding remarks of the 1901-1903 biennial report, Southall reflected that the "sentiment in favor of improving educational facilities of the Commonwealth is a healthy and auspicious omen."⁶⁶ This sentiment and auspicious omen appealed to broader public service ideals during this time period.⁶⁷ In Southall's opinion, widespread ideals, pertaining to the modernization of school facilities, demonstrated that Virginia represented the "most progressive and influential States of the American Union."⁶⁸

During an era categorized as progressive reform, it comes as no surprise that Southall described educational ideals in Virginia as some of the most "progressive and influential" throughout the United States. But, writing about these public school facility ideals did not carve them into existence. In order to uphold these school facility ideals, the State Board of Education in Virginia needed to conduct a continuous analysis and discussion about the improvement and

⁶⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁶⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁶⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxxi.

⁶⁷ For broad trends about Progressive Era public service ideals, see Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans in the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998); Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s–1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003); Shelton Stromquist, *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, The Class Problem, and the Origins of Modern Liberalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

⁶⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xlix.

challenges of physical renovations and collective goals. These notions of progressive and modern schoolhouses, with proper aesthetics and sanitation, continued as a point of reflection for succeeding superintendents of public instruction in Virginia.

The next consecutive superintendent, Joseph D. Eggleston, maintained emphasis on modern and progressive ideals for public school facilities. In his first biennial report as superintendent for public instruction, Eggleston described the 1905-1906 session as a "building year."⁶⁹ During the 1905-1906 public school session, 236 school facilities were built with a total cost of 507,769.04 dollars.⁷⁰ This figure represents 2.5 percent of state schools. According to Eggleston, these figures indicated "very clearly the superior types of buildings and the better arrangements for heating, lighting, and ventilation which have the year the real beginning of a new era in school architecture."⁷¹ While constructing 236 new school buildings that followed the building regulations and standards set by the Virginia Board of Education, old public-school houses still existed throughout the Commonwealth that did not meet the proper building requirements.

Even though 236 new educational facilities in Virginia had been constructed in the 1905-1906 school session, Eggleston still voiced concerns about the health standards of old public-school houses. According to reports received by the Department of Education for school sessions 1905-1906 and 1906-1907, very few school facilities in Virginia were properly ventilated or lighted.⁷² Eggleston believed that inadequate buildings were "nothing short of criminal neglect," as they allowed "children to be subjected to conditions" that forced them "to breathe poisoned air

⁶⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 16.

⁷⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 16.

⁷¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 16.

⁷² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 25.

for hours at a time."⁷³ In order to remedy these inadequate conditions, Eggleston encouraged the Virginia General Assembly to consider passing legislation requiring competent authorities to inspect school facilities and "to see that proper sanitation and lighting are provided."⁷⁴ Throughout Eggleston's writing, he utilized legal terminology to reflect facility renovation and reform. Shifting away from the *guidelines* proposed by Southall, Eggleston moved from measures of *suggestion* toward measures of legal *enforcement*, as reflected throughout his writing.

In his very next biennial report, Eggleston engaged in modern visions of authority and power by describing facility renovation and reform as continuing to move away from old visions of school buildings as school houses. Eggleston wrote:

The diminishing number of houses, the increasing number of rooms and the increased cost of construction tells of the progress made during the past two years... in better sanitary arrangements, better ventilation, better lighting and more comfortable, attractive and commodious quarters.⁷⁵

Yet, old school facilities that had not undergone any type of physical renovations continued to threaten the success of the Virginia Department of Education. In another legal attempt to improve old school facilities, Eggleston stated:

The present law which requires good ventilation, good lighting and proper sanitation when a new school house is erected, is a good one and has been fruitful of immeasurable benefits; but there is no penalty for its violation and this defect should be remedied. The laws in regard to health in school buildings and healthy surroundings for children need to be strengthened. The time for argument has passed. If we are to educate children at the expense of their bodily health, and at the expense of their morals, we had better burn up our schoolhouses and stop taxing people for education.⁷⁶

⁷³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 25.

⁷⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 25.

⁷⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1907–1909), 24.

⁷⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1907–1909, 24.

When constructing new school facilities, concrete measures of ventilation, lighting and sanitation were in place. According to Eggleston, these measures for new school facilities needed more concrete legal ramifications, legal punishments should apply to old school facilities not in accordance with the present law. Moreover, Eggleston advocated for strict laws as a means of enforcing health in school buildings and healthy surroundings for children. In this proposed legal measure, Eggleston's passionate writing displays the larger goals of public school facility reform. While renovations that provided more comfortable, attractive, and modern facilities ultimately benefited students, Eggleston believed these reform measures should rest upon bettering the health of school buildings and school surroundings.

During Eggleston's term as superintendent, the Virginia Department of Health published a health bulletin dedicated to school hygiene. An article within this bulletin, titled "Sanitary School Buildings and Grounds," reiterated the reform and renovation goals surrounding school facilities during the early twentieth century.⁷⁷ The article, composed by Charles G. Maphis, President of the State Board of Examiners, echoed Superintendent Eggleston's concerns about school facility environments. According to Maphis, a proper school environment required a proper location, proper and sufficient light, heat and pure air for children in attendance.⁷⁸ In a serious tone, Maphis continued, stating if a child must be denied something, it should be "less arithmetic and more light; less physiology and hygiene and more fresh air; less geography and a more sanitary location."⁷⁹ Maphis' writing indicates that even though proper academics were necessary for school success, the children at these schools would have no chance for academic

⁷⁷ "Sanitary School Buildings and Grounds," *Virginia Health Bulletin*, Virginia Department of Health 1, no. 8, 243.

⁷⁸ "Sanitary School Buildings and Grounds," 243.

⁷⁹ "Sanitary School Buildings and Grounds," 243.

success without safe and proper environmental conditions. Instead of focusing solely on academic measures, Maphis emphasized that school officials needed to also focus reform centered around children's health and wellness by promoting proper sanitation, fresh air and light. With two bureaucratic institutions (the State Department of Education and the State Department of Health) advertising school facility reform and renovation as an indisputable good, Virginia public schools resembled a site of public health reform, as well as academic reform.

While Eggleston emphasized ideals of old versus new, modern, aesthetically pleasing, and sanitary school buildings, his next two successors shifted the conversation towards the differences between city facilities and rural facilities. Superintendent R. C. Stearns succeeded Eggleston and took over Virginia superintendent duties from 1911 to 1917. During Stearns' term in office, he developed building ideals in relationship to rural versus city schools. Stearns described a modern school building as "one of the best evidences of progress and prosperity in any rural or urban community."⁸⁰ Instead of discussing modern school facilities for the whole state of Virginia, Stearns began separating different ideals for facilities in rural settings and facilities in urban settings. As illustrated in the picture below, many rural school facilities needed major renovations and improvements, as they did not adhere to the modern perceptions of what a proper public school facility should embody. The building pictured, described by Stearns as a school facility for students in one of the "poorer mountain counties of Virginia," clearly does not adhere to the aesthetic goals and ideals of the preceding superintendents. More interestingly, the caption of the picture reads: "a silent plea for help. This schoolhouse is still used by white children in one of the poorer mountain counties of Virginia."⁸¹ White children attended this old,

⁸⁰ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1913–1914), 16, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

⁸¹ Annual report from the Superintendent, 1913–1914, 16.

worn-down school house. Very few windows provided light. The environment around the building does not appear functional for outside activities. The wood architecture of the building seems warped and old. These physical characteristics of the schoolhouse represent the antithesis of the reforms and renovations Superintendents Southall, Eggleston, and Stearns promoted during their time in office. More importantly, as the caption alludes, having white children attend a school in such a decrepit state was considered unacceptable.



A silent appeal for help. This schoolhouse is still used by white children in one of the poorer mountain counties of Virginia

Figure 1.1. *A silent appeal for help. This schoolhouse is still used by white children in one of the poorer mountain counties of Virginia.* Photograph in Annual report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1913-1914, Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing.

Even though many rural communities throughout the State underwent improvements for modern sanitation and aesthetics, some rural school facilities were still unfit for the new, modern standards. As described by Stearns, the ideal rural public-school facility needed to be "well-equipped and attractive" with "good black boards, good desks, neatly tinted walls, maps, and window shades."⁸² According to Stearns, modern standards also included the technology and

⁸² Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1915–1916), 33.

furniture inside each classroom. While practical measures regarding aspects like ventilation and heating were vital to the success of rural school facilities, these facilities also needed items like blackboards, desks, and maps. Proceeding Superintendents Southall and Eggleston standardized the construction and architecture of school facilities and classrooms. Here, Stearns' writing reveals the Virginia Board of Education's attempt to also standardize the educational equipment that went inside each classroom throughout the State.

Stearns believed the main aspects that should be considered for determining the public health benchmarks of a rural school facility included "a pure water supply, satisfactory lighting, heating, ventilation" and proper outbuildings.⁸³ Stearns acknowledged that some urban and rural communities provided "sanitary school facilities for their children" and adhered to the facility benchmarks described above.⁸⁴ And therefore, the Virginia Board of Education was "justified in looking forward to the early fruition of our hopes to provide every community in the State with a modern school building that shall be both attractive and sanitary."⁸⁵ But even though some rural schools met these facility requirements, many rural schools still required major improvements before being considered a "modern" school facility.

In 1913, *The Big Stone Gap Post* from Wise County, Virginia reported that the "most extensive medical inspection of rural schools ever made in America" was underway in Orange County, Virginia.⁸⁶ In Orange County, officers from the State Board of Education, the State Board of Health, and physicians from the University of Virginia examined the medical conditions of children within the public schools.⁸⁷ According to the article, all of the authorities

⁸³ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1915–1916, 33.

⁸⁴ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1915–1916, 16.

⁸⁵ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1915–1916, 16

⁸⁶ "Examine Pupils of Whole County: Medical Inspection of Orange County Public Schools, Now In Progress, Most Extensive on Record," *The Big Stone Gap Post*, February 19, 1913.

⁸⁷ "Examine Pupils of Whole County," *The Big Stone Gap Post*.

conducting the school inspection "felt that in many parts of the country the bad sanitation and poor construction of some of our schools was a genuine menace to the health of the children."⁸⁸

The officials continued, stating:

But here in Virginia, we have felt that we should not begin a propaganda for any definite line of reform until we are certain of our needs. We do not want to recommend any system of inspection which is not justified by actual investigation and we do not feel that we should ask for public support until we have shown the effect of existing bad conditions.⁸⁹

Virginia public health officials dedicated themselves to uncovering the true health needs of public schools. As described in the above quote, these officials would not participate in falsified information about public school facility reform. Instead, these officers were dedicated to informing the public about proper school facility conditions, in relation to the health of children. Careful thought and consideration would inform any public school facility reform. The inspection of Orange County public schools also displays the cooperation between three different bureaucratic institutions in Virginia: the Virginia Board of Education, the State Board of Health, and the University of Virginia.

The next succeeding superintendent, Harris Hart, sustained concerns for rural school facilities. As described by Hart, rural schools presented concerns for the proceeding superintendents and would continue to be a point of concern unless their physical conditions improved. Hart believed that "in order to make real and sure progress in public education in Virginia," it was "absolutely necessary" that the rural school be "immediately and fundamentally improved."⁹⁰ According to Hart, the most prominent shortcoming of rural schools in Virginia

⁸⁸ "Examine Pupils of Whole County," *The Big Stone Gap Post*.

⁸⁹ "Examine Pupils of Whole County," *The Big Stone Gap Post*.

⁹⁰ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1917–1918), 16.

during the early twentieth century pertained to their "inadequate buildings and facilities."⁹¹ In order to eliminate inadequate and unhealthy facilities in rural communities, Hart worked alongside the Virginia Department of Education to create standard types of buildings for one, two, three, and four room school facilities.⁹² While these building standards applied to the construction of school facilities throughout the different regions of Virginia, Hart indicated they would be most helpful for rural school districts.

As demonstrated throughout their official documents, Southall, Eggleston, Stearns and Hart, held very specific visions about public school facilities that reveal the intention and authority of the Virginia Board of Education. By emphasizing the construction and renovation of public school facilities, these four superintendents of public instruction interacted with progressive notions of structural change. In their attempt to reform and remodel Virginia public education, Southall, Eggleston, Stearns, and Hart foregrounded public school building ideals in notions of aesthetics, public health, and sanitation. These progressive notions of public school facilities reveal one way the Virginia Board of Education attempted to centralize public schools and place the system under its umbrella of control. These progressive notions of public school facilities also reveal underlying racial implications for facility reform and renovation. The legal segregation of black and white schools represents areas of inequality within these four superintendents' writing. In their acknowledgement of the physical needs of white schools, and therefore, absence of any acknowledgement of the physical needs of black schools, these conversations about public school facility reform and renovation represent areas of inequality during a time of legal segregation. As demonstrated in the next section, consolidation and

⁹¹ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1917–1918, 16.

⁹² Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1917–1918, 16.

centralization of public school facilities also promoted the Virginia Board of Education's larger goal of bureaucratic control over Virginia public schools.

Consolidation and Centralization

Other prominent ideals Virginia superintendents promoted, throughout the early twentieth century, stem from notions of school consolidation and centralization. As the Virginia Department of Education became more centralized and organized, the superintendents often placed emphasis on consolidating school districts. At the dawn of the public education system in Virginia, individual communities decided where to locate their school facilities. Transitioning into the early twentieth century, the increasing bureaucratic nature of the Virginia Department of Education intended to place all schools under its control. In an effort to centralize and control public education in Virginia, Southall, Eggleston, and Stearns acted within their sanctioned power by forming and circulating visions of public school consolidation, especially in rural regions. These superintendents aimed to embed all Virginia schools within the organizational scheme of the Virginia Department of Education by consolidating and centralizing school facilities.

In the 1899-1901 biennial report of public education, Southall reflected on the "deplorable state of rural school affairs."⁹³ Many rural school facilities did not meet Southall's building standards "due mainly to the wild and insane tendency to multiply small school districts" in order to "put a schoolhouse on every hilltop and in every valley."⁹⁴ This "insane" effort to create school facilities all throughout Virginia, instead, created management problems

⁹³ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1899–1901), 24.

⁹⁴ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxvii.

for the Department of Education. According to Southall, the creation of small school facilities throughout the State dissipated the Department of Education's educational resources.⁹⁵ Instead of funding small schools scattered throughout the State, Southall argued that the Department of Education's resources be allocated toward centralizing and consolidating rural school districts.⁹⁶

According to Southall, the consolidation of rural school facilities created positive possibilities for rural public education. Southall indicated that rural school consolidation would bring about longer school terms, superior teachers, and in general, more efficient schools.⁹⁷ Without consolidation efforts, Southall saw no means of substantial improvement for rural school districts.⁹⁸ In order to make strides towards better educational opportunities in Virginia, Southall idealized rural school consolidation. Without a centralized, and therefore consolidated, educational system, Southall believed the Virginia Department of Education may experience difficulties in analyzing educational standards and implementing educational policies. Unable to envision educational advancements without school consolidation, Southall began the conversation about centralization with educational officials throughout the State.⁹⁹

In the 1905-1907 biennial report, the succeeding superintendent, Joseph D. Eggleston expressed gratification in reporting that 162 school facilities were consolidated, thus eliminating 148 total school buildings.¹⁰⁰ Eggleston also included a representative picture displaying the benefits of school consolidation. As the pictures below represent, rural school consolidation often resulted in newer school facilities for students. As depicted, rural school

⁹⁵ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxvii.

⁹⁶ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxvii.

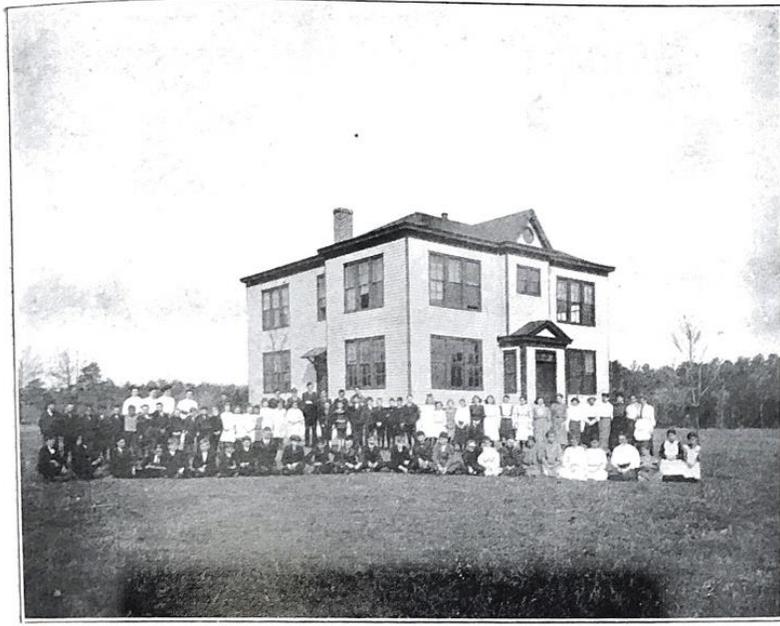
⁹⁷ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxii.

⁹⁸ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxii.

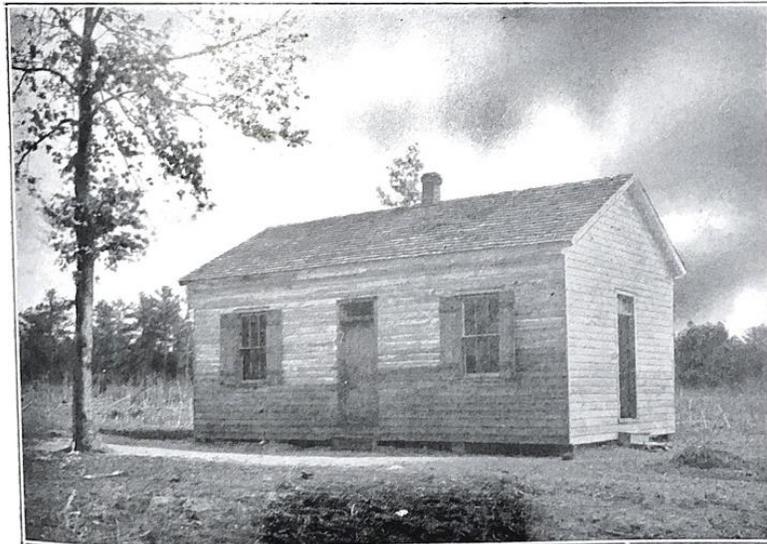
⁹⁹ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxvii.

¹⁰⁰ Biennial Report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 16.

consolidation also promoted modernized building ideals throughout Virginia. "The old" school does not embody the modern ideals of aesthetics, lighting, or public health. "The old" school displays a very ordinary and simple architectural design without many windows, while "the new"



DUMBARTON CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
"THE NEW"



"THE OLD"

Figure 1.2. *Dumbarton Consolidated School "The New," "The Old."*

school appears brighter, with more windows on the outside. "The new" school also depicts students and teachers standing outside of the school, appearing proud of their school building. Eggleston's sanctioned power promoted a vision of education that not only focused on curriculum, but also incorporated idealized physical environments and health standards.

While focusing on the consolidation and standardization of school facilities through architectural means, Virginia superintendents also began focusing on a standardized appearance within the classroom, as well. In 1906, the Virginia General Assembly passed a law that mandated the State Board of Education to select standard school furniture for all public schools.¹⁰¹ Following the approval of this new law, the State Board of Education called for furniture bids in May 1906.¹⁰² All of the furniture bids were around the same price. Therefore, the State Board of Education compiled a list of standard school furniture, sent the list to public school officials, and allowed the officials to buy any school furniture from the approved list.¹⁰³

The same process for furniture selection ensued during the 1907 State Board of Education meeting. After placing another call for bids, one bidder offered their desks at the same rate as the previous school year, while all of the other furniture bids for the school desks were 25 cents higher than the year before. Due to the price difference, the State Board of Education composed a two-year contract with the lowest bidder and the company agreed to "furnish six different styles of school desks from which the school authorities might choose."¹⁰⁴ Here again, the Virginia Board of Education provided school districts with a choice of desks, from the six approved styles. The State Board of Education closed the contract with the lowest bidder and, as outlined in the 1905-1907 biennial report, a large number of desks were furnished in the public

¹⁰¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 34.

¹⁰² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 34.

¹⁰³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 35.

schools under this contract.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, through an approved list of furniture choices, the Virginia Board of Education tried to create a standardized appearance on the inside of school facilities.

In an interesting turn of events, the City of Norfolk was the only school district that claimed the mandatory furniture law was not applicable to the city school districts in Virginia. In their resistance to the standardized list of school desks, Norfolk City tested this mandatory furniture law in Virginia courts. In its attempt to resist the superintendent of public instruction's power, Norfolk City pushed against the bureaucratic educational ideals of the State Board of Education. By centralizing the process for selecting school furniture, the Virginia Board of Education consolidated individual school efforts of enhancing and individualizing their school classrooms. Per a newspaper report from 1907, the City of Norfolk went to court against the Virginia Board of Education on the grounds that the mandatory furniture law was against the 136th section of the Virginia Constitution.¹⁰⁶ According to the newspaper article, "Assail Officials in Hot Circular: Andrews Company Issue Lengthy Statement in Desk Controversy," the 136th section of the Virginia Constitution granted the "local school authorities a free hand in the distribution and expenditure of local school funding."¹⁰⁷ In December 1907, the courts ruled in favor of Norfolk City, allowing city school boards the final decision in purchasing furniture, without any interference from the Virginia Board of Education.¹⁰⁸ Although the court case overturned the law in regards to city school districts, the standardized furniture mandate applied

¹⁰⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 35.

¹⁰⁶ "Assail Officials in Hot Circular: Andrews Company Issue Lengthy Statement in Desk Controversy," *The Times Dispatch*, September 2, 1907.

¹⁰⁷ "Assail Officials in Hot Circular," *The Times Dispatch*.

¹⁰⁸ "Setback for State Board," *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, December 24, 1907.

to rural school districts throughout the State, but the documents are unclear in regard to if this mandate was strictly enforced.

When Stearns took office for the 1911 to 1912 school session, he developed a more nuanced conceptualization of rural school consolidation. While acknowledging the value of consolidation, Stearns also warned his readers about the possible consequences of consolidation. In an effort to voice his concerns about harmful consolidation measures, Stearns wrote:

Some persons may think it [consolidation] will solve the country school problem. With this view I cannot agree. On the contrary, I am sure that consolidation in some instances may be a grave mistake. No mere fiat of administration or plan largely mechanical in its nature will ever solve great school problems.¹⁰⁹

By considering the possible drawbacks of administrative decisions in regard to rural school consolidation, Stearns revealed how centralization measures may not always benefit the Department of Education's goals. For example, rural school consolidation, at this time, might have required students to travel longer distances, took time away from other family matters, or lead to children not attending school at all. In this instance, Stearns only described the possible consequences of rural school consolidation, meaning he most likely supported consolidation measures in more urban school districts. This quote also represents another tension within the Virginia public school system. In the very last line Stearns writes: “No mere fiat of administration or plan largely mechanical in its nature will ever solve great school problems.”¹¹⁰ While discussions about school facility reform and consolidation may look beneficial on paper, these measures ultimately left gaps within the system and largely ignored the needs of black students throughout the State.

¹⁰⁹ Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1911–1912), 19.

¹¹⁰ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 19.

Even though Stearns outlined possible consequences of rural school consolidation, he also acknowledged the possible benefits of such measures. These benefits outlined "better grouping and grading, longer periods, teaching more specialized, the comforts of an assembly hall and the thought of a social center."¹¹¹ Stearns believed the benefits, in regard to rural school consolidation, should never "deprive the small community of its rights."¹¹² Ultimately, Stearns valued and placed significance on smaller school districts, urging consolidation only when the community supported such measures. Therefore, in the matters of consolidation and centralization, Stearns placed equal value on the importance of smaller school districts and larger school districts.

As the Department of Education became more centralized and bureaucratic, Superintendents Southall, Eggleston and Stearns circulated educational ideals about the consolidation of rural schools. Moreover, as the efforts of consolidation transformed over time, these three superintendents carefully considered the benefits and disadvantages of such measures. Measures of consolidation promoted modernized building ideals, as well as centralized educational goals, but the needs of black schools were still left ignored.

Conclusion

In their attempt to create and enforce more structure within the Virginia public school system, Southall, Eggleston, Stearns and Hart promoted very specific school facility ideals. Interacting with larger Progressive Era ideals of social reform, these four superintendents standardized and centralized expectations for school facilities. By framing the construction of new school facilities and renovation of old school facilities around modern ideas of public

¹¹¹ Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 20.

¹¹² Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 33.

health, aesthetics, centralization and consolidation, the Virginia Board of Education connected the success of Virginia public schools to progressive ideas of change. In doing so, Virginia superintendents idealized concepts about school facilities and portrayed facility renovation and reform as indisputably good. Within these conversations about building ideals exists a gap. This gap, representative of a large proportion of Virginia public school students, excludes conversations about segregated school facilities. In fact, and not at all a surprise, Southall, Eggleston, Stearns and Hart hardly acknowledged segregated institutions in their official writings about Virginia public education.

Chapter II:

Standard Expectations for Black Students at Segregated Institutions

In 1917, acting president of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, John M. Gandy, wrote a call of action to Superintendent Harris Hart. Gandy appealed to the State Board of Education by describing Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute as "an expression of the confidence of the State of Virginia has in the possibilities for the development of the colored youth."¹¹³ In Gandy's opinion, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute "justified its existence by sending out 1,450 graduated who are good, substantial loyal citizens."¹¹⁴ But, unfortunately, the institution's "full service to the State had never been realized— due to inadequate equipment."¹¹⁵ In an effort to draw the Virginia Department of Education's attention to the pressing needs of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, Gandy wrote:

You gentlemen, above all others, have the power. You have heard this presentation of the needs of the only institution supported by the State for the training of colored youth. You have one hand on the black population of Virginia and the other on the powers that control affairs.¹¹⁶

Gandy ended his note by simply stating: "Whatever sacrifices you make, and whatever service you will give will be held most reverently in memory by a most grateful people."¹¹⁷

Within the increasingly bureaucratic structure of the Virginia Board of Education existed segregated institutions. As discussed in the previous chapter, the growing modernization of the Virginia public school system allowed superintendents to focus on school facilities in order to

¹¹³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1916–1917), 582.

¹¹⁴ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," 582.

¹¹⁵ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," 582.

¹¹⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," 582.

¹¹⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," 582.

develop standards for the quality of public school education. What Virginia superintendents did not explicitly focus their energies on, however, were black public school institutions. Sometimes, throughout their annual and biennial reports, Superintendents Southall, Eggleston, Stearns and Hart briefly mentioned minuscule ways of improving black education within the state. For example, in the 1905-7 biennial report, Superintendent Eggleston mentioned while the white school for deaf and blind in Staunton, Virginia, was "doing good work," and he "earnestly hoped that a liberal measure" would be passed in order to give black deaf and blind students an "opportunity to overcome in some measure their handicapped condition."¹¹⁸ Few and far between, these instances of Virginia Superintendents advocating for the improvement of institutions of segregated education often did not fully represent the needs identified by leaders within segregated institutions.

This chapter uncovers how educational leaders of black institutions of higher learning described their institutions to the Virginia Board of Education by analyzing official letters to the superintendent of public instruction. In this chapter, I analyze writings from the presidents of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (now Virginia State University) and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University).¹¹⁹ These leaders' rhetoric served a specific

¹¹⁸ Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1905–1907), 31.

¹¹⁹ During this time, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute accepted both Native American and African American students and attempted to segregate those students from each other. For more information about the history of Native Americans at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, see Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877–1923* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Abraham Makofsky, "Experience of Native Americans at a Black College: Indian Students at Hampton Institute, 1878–1923," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 17, no. 3, 31–46; John Reyhner and Jean Eder, *American Indian Education: A History*, 2nd ed, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017); and Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839–1893* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999). For information about the politics of western Native American removal, see Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

purpose by putting their school on public display throughout their writings. While standards of black education were not discussed in the superintendents' own writing, they were explicitly discussed by educational leaders of black institutions. I argue the leaders of public education institutions for black students created their own set of standards for black public education. Further, these leaders of black education produced a standard surrounding their students that emphasized character building as part of their curriculum and highlighted the types of productive racial work former students were engaged in after graduation.

Specifically, this chapter uncovers how leaders of black institutions represented themselves to the superintendent and why their writings continually emphasized the moral atmosphere of the campus, as well as the success of graduates. One way of understanding why these leaders represented themselves and their institution in this morally acceptable, successful manner is through the lens of respectability politics. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, in *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church*, coined the idea of “the politics of respectability” or “respectability politics,” in her historical study of African Americans during the Progressive Era. According to Higginbotham, respectability politics “emphasized reform of individual behavior and attitudes” for two major objectives: a “goal in itself” and “a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations.”¹²⁰ Higginbotham further describes the politics of respectability as a “fluid and shifting position along a continuum of African American resistance.”¹²¹

It comes as no surprise that the leaders of black institutions of higher education in Virginia emphasized respectable qualities in their letters to the superintendent. Respectability

¹²⁰ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 187.

¹²¹ Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 187.

politics, in the realm of education, demanded that individuals improve themselves, while also improving interracial relationships during this time period. These leaders believed a highly disciplined campus that produced successful, respectable graduates would promote racial uplift and cooperation among blacks and whites. Respectability also served as a means of self-protection during a period of racial violence, such as lynching. If these campuses produced individuals with acceptable moral characteristics, these individuals would contest the racial stereotypes of blacks. Therefore, in their letters to the superintendent, the leaders of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, engaged in respectability politics rhetoric as a means of self-protection and a strategy of racial reform.

This chapter is not intended as a direct comparison to chapter one. Instead, this chapter adds another voice and another set of standards. By taking a step away from the voice of Virginia superintendents, this chapter provides valuable insight about black education in Virginia during the early twentieth century. While focusing mainly on institutions of higher learning, this chapter uncovers a story about the expectations for black students in Virginia. Inevitably, students who attended Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute also received training within segregated public schools. It is important to explore the standards set forth by the leadership of these two segregated institutions of higher education because of the absence of the exploration of standards for black schools or black students within the superintendents' own writing.

Three presidents served during this period— two at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and one at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. From 1877 to 1914, James Hugo Johnston served as president of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. Johnston was born in Richmond, Virginia, and graduated from Richmond Normal School in 1876. Johnston began his

leadership in 1877 and was appointed to the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute Board of Visitors by Virginia governor Fitzhugh Lee in 1886.¹²² While acting as president at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, Johnston also taught philosophy, moral philosophy and political economy.¹²³ In 1914, Johnston suffered physical ailments that affected his ability to perform his presidential duties. Johnston quickly passed away, and the duties and responsibilities of the president fell to John M. Gandy.

John M. Gandy grew up in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi.¹²⁴ Gandy's parents were ex-slaves and had twelve other children besides Gandy.¹²⁵ Gandy experienced many twists and turns during his path towards higher education. As a child, he was taught in a one-room schoolhouse. Due to an inadequate amount of funds, Gandy's college career ceased several times. From 1892 to 1894, Gandy attended Oberlin Academy in Ohio.¹²⁶ After being unable to secure adequate funding in order to continue his education, Gandy left Oberlin and applied to Colgate University in New York.¹²⁷ With the help of other students and fundraising efforts, Gandy finally graduated from Fisk University in 1898.¹²⁸ Gandy continued pursuing his education, eventually receiving a master of art degree in 1901 and doctor of philosophy degree in 1911.¹²⁹ In 1914, after President Johnston's unexpected death, Gandy was appointed president of Virginia Normal and Collegiate

¹²² James Hugo Johnston, Sr., 1865–1914 , Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA.

¹²³ James Hugo Johnston, Sr., 1865–1914 , Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA.

¹²⁴ Maurice B. Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall," *Our History*, Virginia State University, accessed May 19, 2020, <http://www.vsu.edu/about/history/buildings/gandy-hall.php>.

¹²⁵ Maurice B. Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall."

¹²⁶ Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall."

¹²⁷ Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall."

¹²⁸ Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall."

¹²⁹ Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy– Gandy Hall."

Institute.¹³⁰ Gandy's service as president of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute ended in 1943.

The third character in this story is Hollis Burke Frissell. Born in New York in 1851, Frissell graduated from Yale University in 1874.¹³¹ After graduation, Frissell decided to continue his education at Union Theological Seminary.¹³² Frissell's time there eventually led him to take a job at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute.¹³³ Upon the death of founding president, Samuel C. Armstrong, Frissell became president in 1893.¹³⁴ Frissell served as president of Hampton Institute for twenty-two years, until 1918.

Historical scholarship on African American education highlights black agency and group solidarity of African American individuals and communities. Many scholars working within this field have produced studies on black educational leaders, the involvement of northern philanthropy in black education, black professional education, and the role of educational institutions within black communities.¹³⁵ In conversation with historians of African American education, this thesis builds upon understandings of African American public educational institutions that operated within the Jim Crow South. Further, this thesis adds to historical

¹³⁰ Jones, "Dr. John M. Gandy— Gandy Hall."

¹³¹ L. Gardiner Tyler, "Hollis Burke Frissell, D. D.," *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1915), 1101.

¹³² Tyler, "Hollis Burke Frissell, D. D.," 1101.

¹³³ Tyler, "Hollis Burke Frissell, D. D.," 1102.

¹³⁴ Tyler, "Hollis Burke Frissell, D. D.," 1102.

¹³⁵ See James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Zoe Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race 1900–1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); James L. Leloudis, *Schooling in the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Vanessa Siddle Walker, "Organized Resistance and Black Educators' Quest for School Equality, 1878–1938," *Teachers College Record* 107 (March 2005): 335–388; William Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

scholarship on African American education by focusing on the visions of public education, expressed through official documents, within segregated communities. Another contribution of this chapter includes adding the perspective of James Hugo Johnston, John M. Gandy and H.B. Frissell to our understanding of African American educational standards in Virginia during the early twentieth century.

Significance of Graduates

In an effort to illuminate the successful work of their institutions, leaders of black institutions frequently emphasized the activities of their graduates. Often, their presentation of statistics about graduates showed the positive influence of their respective schools. The presidents of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute tied alumni activities to the betterment of Virginia, as well as the betterment of the larger United States. By showing the Virginia superintendent the positive influence and greater leadership of their alumni, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell often appealed to the Virginia Board of Education for greater recognition and support. Moreover, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell, through their writings, placed the expected standard of graduates their respective institutions produced on public display.

Principal J. H. Johnston often described the successful careers of graduates from Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute in his annual letters to the superintendent. According to Johnston, the young alumni of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute held jobs in teaching, preaching, medicine, law, industrial trades, and housekeeping.¹³⁶ The breadth of employment

¹³⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1899–1901), 43.

opportunities, for those who successfully finished their studies at Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, demonstrated the quality of education young black individuals received. Johnston further expressed that these young men and women were "doing well for themselves" and many of them acquired homes and were raising families.¹³⁷ By holding jobs in various fields of employment and establishing their families within growing communities, Johnston believed the alumni of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute positively influenced their neighbors, both black and white.¹³⁸ Throughout his writing, Johnston expressed that graduates of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute would come forth into the world as uplifting the communities they worked within. As a pillar of their educational instruction, graduates were instilled with the standard of education encompassing larger goals for their training besides employment. Rather, graduates were expected to be community influencers and change-makers for the betterment of their race.

Many graduates utilized their education in order to improve the standard of education for others by working in the teaching profession. According to a report produced by the Board of Education, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute generated more teachers than any other segregated institution in Virginia.¹³⁹ Furthermore, city and county superintendents commented on the "general efficiency and good sense in and out of the classroom" of teachers who received their training at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. According to Johnston, these teachers never stirred up "strife between the races."¹⁴⁰ Rather, teachers, who graduated from Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, were "sober and sensible in handling questions that arise in

¹³⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900," 43.

¹³⁸ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 43.

¹³⁹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1905–1907," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1905–1907), 657.

¹⁴⁰ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1905–1907," 657.

communities in which they live."¹⁴¹ Within these local communities, graduates from Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute also owned homes and raised families, modeling a respectable way of living for their neighbors.¹⁴² Reflecting on how graduates in the field of teaching impacted their surrounding communities highlighted the importance and significance of institutions, like Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute.

Within the growing community of alumni, Johnston expressed these new alumni had been "faithfully impressed with the great idea of self-help," but they had been "no less impressed with the idea that they must lift up their less fortunate fellow men wherever their lot may be cast."¹⁴³ No matter if graduates worked in the teaching profession or not, they were expected to lift up their race through their profession. In the early twentieth century, education was a high priority for the black community. Scholars Margaret Smith Crocco and Cally L. Waite argue that even though "access, opportunity, and funding were extremely limited," the larger African American community placed significant value on educational advancement.¹⁴⁴

In many instances, Johnston tied support from the Virginia Board of Education to the success of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute graduates. Within the 1904-1905 report to

¹⁴¹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1905–1907," 657.

¹⁴² "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1905–1907," 657.

¹⁴³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1900–1901," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1899–1901), 206.

¹⁴⁴ Margaret Smith Crocco and Cally L. Waite, "Education and Marginality: Race and Gender in Higher Education, 1940–1955," *History of Education Quarterly* 71, no 1 (Feb. 2007), 71. See also, James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Zoe Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race 1900–1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); James L. Leloudis, *Schooling in the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

the superintendent, Johnston summarized the Board of Education's contributions to the school.

He stated:

For 22 years the State of Virginia has supported this fine institution by annual appropriations. For the first five years the annuity was \$20,000, for the last 17 it has been \$15,000. Graduates have been sent out every year for the past 19 years, till now the number has reached 544— 248 boys and 296 girls, not including the present class of 36.¹⁴⁵

In this section of his letter, Johnston connected the monetary support of the Virginia Board of Education to the number of graduated students. By highlighting the continuous graduation rate of students from Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, Johnston revealed how monetary support from the Board influenced a standard graduation rate.

The presidents of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute also represented the impact of their graduates. According to H.B. Frissell, about sixty percent of Hampton graduates were serving in the teaching profession.¹⁴⁶ In 1905, Frissell stated "in many of the Northern and Southern cities Hampton's graduates have conquered race prejudice and are holding important positions."¹⁴⁷ Some of the "important positions" young men held included contractors, insurance agents, real estate agents, and owners of mills and stores.¹⁴⁸ According to the report, one young woman graduate managed a large farm and brickyard, while another experienced success within the poultry business.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1904–1905," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1903–1905), 256.

¹⁴⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 50–51.

¹⁴⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 50–51.

¹⁴⁸ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 50–51.

¹⁴⁹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 50–51.

In the following report, President Frissell reported that many Hampton graduates reported to "important positions connected with the agricultural and mechanical training" of youth.¹⁵⁰ Frissell continued that these graduates reported to some of the "leading denominational schools among the colored people of the South."¹⁵¹ During this time, Hampton graduates served in various capacities at Union University in Richmond, Virginia, Walden University in Nashville, Tennessee, and in many of the large segregated public schools throughout Virginia.¹⁵² According to Frissell, Hampton graduates were prominent educators throughout the cities of Virginia.¹⁵³ Hampton graduates introduced sewing, cooking, bench work and gardening into the public school curriculum in Portsmouth, Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, and the surrounding counties of these cities.¹⁵⁴ Frissell argued that "one must bear in mind this larger Hampton, with which the mother school keeps herself in close touch in order to appreciate what the institution is accomplishing."¹⁵⁵

A few years later, for the 1910-1911 school report, a record of Hampton graduates was compiled by an expert from the United States Census Bureau.¹⁵⁶ The data, according to the expert from the Census Bureau presented the occupations of Hampton graduates. In his summary of the census report, Frissell detailed that ninety percent of women, who graduated from Hampton, were "engaged in occupations bearing directly upon the improvement of the home, the

¹⁵⁰ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901–1903," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1901–1903), 55.

¹⁵¹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901–1903," 55.

¹⁵² "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901–1903," 55–56.

¹⁵³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1903–1904," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1903–1905), 116.

¹⁵⁴ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1903–1904," 116.

¹⁵⁵ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1903–1904," 116–117.

¹⁵⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1910–1911," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1909–1911), 861–862.

school, and the community in which they are living."¹⁵⁷ Frissell continued by stating the percentage of "men graduates and former students engaged in occupations bearing on the improvement of home and community life" was about sixty percent.¹⁵⁸ This percentage of men graduates did not include men who went into other professions, such as agriculture.¹⁵⁹ By placing the activities of Hampton graduates on public display, within this official report, principal Frissell outlined the value of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute to the Virginia Board of Education. Furthermore, Frissell demonstrated the value of black education to the larger Virginia community by highlighting the statistics that correlated with community improvement.

In an effort to demonstrate the standard expectation for students graduating from their respective institutions, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell leaned upon their graduates' community and professional roles. By showing the superintendent the influential race work alumni from Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institution engaged in, these three educational leaders constructed a narrative about the legitimacy of their institutions. Their writings generated fundamental facts and figures about graduates from these two institutions of black higher education. In doing so, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell utilized the work of their alumni in order to show the legitimacy of their institutions. These three educational leaders set forth their own expectations by establishing concrete standards, such acceptable character, desirable community involvement and practical professional employment for graduates.

Discipline and Morals

¹⁵⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1910–1911," 861–862.

¹⁵⁸ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1910–1911," 861–862.

¹⁵⁹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1910–1911," 861–862.

At both Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, administrative leadership framed the discipline and conduct of students at the school as an effort of "character building."¹⁶⁰ In their letters to the superintendent, presidents Johnston, Gandy, and Frissell repeatedly reserved space to write about student conduct. In order to shape their expected graduates into community leaders, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Institute continually emphasized disciplinary expectations and moral standards. Without proper character building, these three leaders believed their future alumni might not be as influential within the black community as expected. Therefore, viewed as critical to the institutions' success, leadership within these schools created concrete disciplinary standards. Through their writings, these leaders purposefully emphasized desirable student behavior and foundations of character building in order to demonstrate to the superintendent the quality of behavior presumed within their school community.

President Johnston emphasized high morals and disciplinary matters within the school. In an effort to present Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute as a highly disciplined place, Johnston's writings placed the behavior of students on public display. Throughout his term, from 1887 to 1914, Johnston appealed to the acting superintendent by presenting Virginia Normal and Industrial Institution as a highly disciplined place, where students embodied acceptable morals. For example, in 1899, Johnston reported that although "three of the young men were suspended because they persisted in violations of the rules," the faculty and staff of the institution

¹⁶⁰ Two differing views of the Hampton/Tuskegee model of education exist among scholars of African American education. James D. Anderson, in *The Education of Blacks in the South*, views leaders at institutions such as Hampton in a way that did not "foster the political and economic improvement of black workers and voters" (pp.52–53). However, scholar Stephanie J. Shaw argues that the Hampton/Tuskegee model of education promoted a distinct style of character building, as well as providing basic skills. See Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 98, 294–295.

"endeavored in enforcing the rules to teach obedience, self-control, and a respect for the rights of others."¹⁶¹ While Johnston did not outline what specific behavior warranted suspension, he did make clear to his readers that the school issued consequences for undesirable conduct. In this instance, Johnston also outlined the types of desirable student conduct— obedience, self-control, and respect for the rights of others. Throughout his reports to the superintendent, Johnston displayed Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute as a highly disciplined place that promoted admirable morals and punished unacceptable behavior.

From 1899 to 1917, each letter to the superintendent began with a positive phrase about the discipline and order of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1902, Johnston wrote "the discipline of the school has been up to the usual high standard."¹⁶² In 1904, Johnston continued, "at no time in our history have we had less trouble with the student body."¹⁶³ Johnston provided more context about the student body in 1906, but still emphasized the campus as a highly disciplined place by stating: "the attendance being much larger than heretofore necessarily more time has been taken in looking after the violations of the rules, but on the whole the more tone of the school has been high."¹⁶⁴ Johnston continued by describing the high order of the school into 1914, during the end of his term as president of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. But, the next president, John M. Gandy, persisted in writing about Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute as a highly disciplined public school site. In one of his very first letters to the superintendent, Gandy stated: "[t]he discipline of the school, such as prompt movement to bells, conduct in dormitories and classes and on the grounds, and ready obedience to authority, on a

¹⁶¹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900," 47.

¹⁶² "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1903–1904," 110–111.

¹⁶³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1904–1905," 254.

¹⁶⁴ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1906–1907," *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1905–1907), 508–509.

whole measured up to the record of previous years."¹⁶⁵ Within their annual and biennial letters to the superintendent, Johnston and Gandy placed emphasis on the moral quality and disciplinary conduct of their student body in an effort to demonstrate the character instilled in students during their time at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institution.

In an effort to promote good moral behavior, President Johnston of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute also promoted participation in various campus organizations. Active campus organizations included religious groups, sororities, and literary societies. Students were encouraged to participate in religious organizations such as Sunday School and the Christian Association and Temperance Society.¹⁶⁶ The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Young Ladies Literary Society, Kappa Gamma Chi sorority and Temperance Society all promoted religious and temperance work.¹⁶⁷ President Johnston expressed that these campus organizations "helped the discipline by keeping students busy at times when not directly under the care of teachers."¹⁶⁸ While students underwent disciplinary measures and character building efforts within a classroom setting, on-campus organizations provided out-of-the-classroom opportunities for self-improvement, as well. In 1907, Johnston wrote the leadership of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute was "indebted" to the campus organizations for their "strong influences of good."¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, Johnston described the work of these organizations as lending a "helpful influence to the moral uplift"

¹⁶⁵ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1916–1917," Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1916–1917), 579.

¹⁶⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900," 47.

¹⁶⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1900–1901," 206.

¹⁶⁸ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901–1902," 51–52.

¹⁶⁹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1907–1909," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1907–1909), 673.

within the student body.¹⁷⁰ By illuminating the work of on-campus organizations, Johnston demonstrated that students on campus also learned moral standards outside of the classroom. While not a requirement, the choice to participate in these on-campus organizations reflected students' agency in regard to bettering their character.

Johnston and Gandy very rarely provided much detail in regard to students' disorder on campus. But, in 1915, one year into John M. Gandy's presidency of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, he reported an interesting instance of disorder in his letter to the superintendent. According to Gandy, during the 1914-1915 school year, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute had one substantial need—a storeroom.¹⁷¹ The need for a store room stemmed from an attendance of 507 young women during the 1914-1915 academic term.¹⁷² Due to this large enrollment, "every bar of soap, pound of starch, toilet article, pencil, and the like had to be secured from stores on the outside" of campus.¹⁷³ According to Gandy, the lack of supplies necessitated these girls traveling off campus in order to obtain their school supplies "without being chaperoned by teachers."¹⁷⁴ Gandy continued:

We soon found this was unwise. It then fell to the lady principal to make provision for the securing of these articles from the stores. The strain, annoyance and vexation connected with this arrangement was beyond expression. A store-room would relieve this tension, aid greatly in the discipline of the school and prevent waste in time due to delay in getting many needed articles.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1911–1912," Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1911–1912), 464.

¹⁷¹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1914–1915), 616.

¹⁷² "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," 616.

¹⁷³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," 616.

¹⁷⁴ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," 616.

¹⁷⁵ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," 616.

Gandy's appeal to the school's Board of Visitors, as well as the Virginia Board of Education was simple: provide funds for a storeroom so a disciplinary standard could be restored on campus.

Gandy's plea was eventually heard. In the next letter to the superintendent, Gandy reported:

Our board of visitors has never in its history granted any other addition to the school that has meant so much to the convenience, good order and financial saving as the storeroom. Books and schoolroom material were for the most part on hand when needed; and thus the disorder and confusion of previous years caused by great crowds of girls going so frequently to the stores in the city was made impossible.¹⁷⁶

Gandy's end-driven statement of purpose placed the disciplinary needs of Virginia Normal and Industrial on display for its Board of Visitors, the superintendent, and the Virginia Board of Education. In this instance, Gandy portrayed how an inadequate storeroom created disciplinary nuisances and hindered the disciplinary standards of the institution.

At Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, President Frissell also portrayed the discipline and morals of his student body in a similar manner to that of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. Frissell described Hampton's disciplinary measures as both constructive and corrective.¹⁷⁷ In order to keep the Hampton campus highly ordered, Frissell developed a daily routine that promoted "obedience, self-control, and quick responsive physical and mental action."¹⁷⁸ Frissell hoped that a student's daily routine would make these desirable characteristics "habitual," and a "natural part of the student's life."¹⁷⁹

In 1905, the *Times Dispatch* reported about the highly ordered and disciplined students at Hampton Institute. According to the article, on May 2nd, 1905, Hampton students hosted an

¹⁷⁶ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1914–1915," 616.

¹⁷⁷ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 55.

¹⁷⁸ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 55.

¹⁷⁹ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1899–1900, 55.

event, coined as "Virginia Day."¹⁸⁰ An earlier newspaper article described "Virginia Day" as part of Hampton Institute's thirty-seventh anniversary exercises, where various prominent educators from throughout the State would be in attendance.¹⁸¹ At the event, the newspaper article described Hampton students as highly disciplined. The author stated:

No better illustration of the splendid training and discipline of this fine institution could well be given than the manner in which this lunch was cooked and served. It was a large company, but there was no sort of confusion. The service was faultless.¹⁸²

Virginia Day, as well as Hampton's larger thirty-seventh anniversary, offered Hampton leadership a unique opportunity to put their disciplinary measures on display to the public. By serving the audience lunch and interacting with individual guests, Hampton students gave those interested in the activities of the school a tangible performance of their morals and discipline. Acknowledging that the school administration most likely prepared students for the event by establishing expectations of desirable behavior and punishments for undesirable behavior, the success of Virginia Day, as reported by the newspaper article, displays the effective disciplinary standards of Hampton Institute.

President Frissell also described the disciplinary measures at Hampton with underlying moral and religious tones. Frissell characterized Hampton's "undenominational religious work" as lying at the bottom of all school activities.¹⁸³ For example, a missionary mindset was part of the characteristics Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute intended to ingrain in all of its

¹⁸⁰ "Virginia Day at Hampton Normal," *The Times Dispatch*, May 3, 1905, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress, accessed May 19, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1905-05-03/ed-1/seq-8/>.

¹⁸¹ "Program Complete," *Daily Press*, April 29, 1905, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress, Accessed May 19, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045830/1905-04-29/ed-1/seq-6/>.

¹⁸² "Virginia Day at Hampton Normal," *The Times Dispatch*.

¹⁸³ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901-1902," 66-67.

students. According to Frissell, missionary concepts intentionally reminded students that "what they gain, they are to give out to others."¹⁸⁴ The discipline and morality of Hampton intentionally taught students that they were among a select few who received the opportunity for higher education. According to Stephanie J. Shaw, in *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do*, this missionary training created specific social responsibilities for black women. Shaw argues "educational programs 'completed' the women's preparation for meeting the challenges and opportunities that existed beyond the protective environments of home and school where they came to adulthood."¹⁸⁵ With specific gendered implications, often this "missionary environment" held greater gendered expectations for young women. According to Shaw, the environment of higher education institutions during the early twentieth century created an "intense socialization process that pushed students to commit their lives to serving the black community."¹⁸⁶

Leaders Johnston, Gandy, and Frissell often appealed to the superintendent by writing about the high disciplinary and moral standards of their respective institutions. In doing so, they created a standard expectation surrounding the character of individuals produced by Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. Their emphasis on discipline, morals, character building, and missionary mindsets influenced their own standard of education. In some instances, such as Virginia Day, these institutions placed their highly disciplined students on display to the larger public. By writing about and publicly displaying the

¹⁸⁴ "Reports of the State Institutions of Higher and Technical Education for 1901–1902," 66–67.

¹⁸⁵ Shaw, *What a woman ought to be and to do*, 8. For other scholarship about gendered education expectations for black women, see also Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), chapters 1–3; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), chapter 2; and Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a woman ought to be and to do: Black professional women workers during the Jim Crow era* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), chapter 3.

¹⁸⁶ Shaw, *What a woman ought to be and to do*, 69.

conduct standards of these two institutions, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell developed their own educational standards for black students while the superintendents focused on other matters throughout the State.

Conclusion

In an ambiguous manner, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell developed and promoted their own standards of black education. While the superintendents focused on grander ideals of education, like modern and progressive buildings, these three leaders centered their efforts around pillars that their students would come forth into the world holding. The conversations surrounding the work of Virginia Normal and Industrial and Hampton Normal and Agricultural alumni portrays the successful aspects of character building and disciplinary measures for students attending these institutions. In their letters to the superintendent, the leaders of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, engaged in respectability politics rhetoric as a means of self-protection and a strategy of racial reform. Furthermore, Johnston's, Gandy's, and Frissell's writings reveal the standard type of student that each institution intended to produce during the early twentieth century. Counter to the ideals of the superintendent, the ideals discussed by these three leaders communicate tangible measures for the educational standards of black institutions. By focusing on what happened within public school facilities, Johnston, Gandy and Frissell publicized the standard student that the State could expect to be produced at Virginia Normal and Hampton Institute. These leaders believed a highly disciplined campus that produced successful, respectable graduates would promote racial uplift and cooperation among blacks and whites.

Chapter III:

Professional Standards for the Virginia Public School Teachers



3.1. *Faculty of Fredericksburg State Normal School.* Photograph in *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond, VA, January 14, 1912.

On March 16th, 1902, *The Times* newspaper, located in Richmond, received a letter from S. B. Ashby of Clifton Forge, Virginia.¹⁸⁷ The letter, titled “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS: Give Them Better Opportunities to Improve Themselves,” discussed the importance of having educated teachers within the Virginia public school system.¹⁸⁸ Ashby began the letter “delighted that a Virginia newspaper has reached that point in progressive journalism where discussions on the improvement of the public school system may reach the people.”¹⁸⁹ He continued, describing how the “foundation of a perfect system must be laid by special department work” in Virginia

¹⁸⁷ S. B. Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS: Give Them Better Opportunities to Improve Themselves,” *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond: Virginia, March 16, 1902, 16.

¹⁸⁸ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS: Give Them Better Opportunities to Improve Themselves,” 16.

¹⁸⁹ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

colleges and “chairs of pedagogy” in Virginia universities.¹⁹⁰ According to Ashby, educated teachers provided the foundation for a perfect public school system.¹⁹¹ Unfortunately, in 1902, many individuals teaching within the school system did so without proper coursework. Furthermore, these individuals could not afford to leave their job for an entire semester in college.¹⁹² Therefore, Ashby advocated for a new system of summer normal school sessions throughout Virginia. According to Ashby, these types of sessions provided an opportunity for teachers, without hindering their teaching ability within the normal school term. At the end of a six-week summer session, a certification test would be administered to the aspiring teacher.¹⁹³

Ashby ended this proposition by stating:

We would urge upon the teachers’ the importance of attending this school. It is the ultimatum of the Board of Education... Until we raise this teacher to a progressive standard, there is little hope of better work or more remunerative compensation.¹⁹⁴

This letter from Ashby represents two professional changes for educators during the early twentieth century in Virginia. First, the Virginia Board of Education established a central office in order to oversee the professional education requirements for teachers. Second, The Virginia Board of Education developed a progressive “standard” of expertise that dominated conversations about teaching in Virginia. This chapter uncovers the developing standardization and professionalization of the Virginia teachers in the early twentieth century.

As described in chapter one, the superintendents of public instruction maintained an authoritative voice about Virginia education and Virginia educational institutions. As teachers assisted the Virginia Board of Education in developing standards for Virginia students, the early

¹⁹⁰ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

¹⁹¹ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

¹⁹² Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

¹⁹³ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

¹⁹⁴ Ashby, “A PLEA FOR TEACHERS,” 16.

twentieth century marked a time when the Virginia Board of Education began developing statewide standards for the profession of teaching as well. In an effort to create a uniform curriculum for all students in Virginia public schools, the Board of Education initiated professional standards for all Virginia teachers. In the superintendents' writings, concern for the training of teachers, funding for teachers' salaries, and the gender and race of teachers maintain a continuous thread within each report. Understanding what the superintendent of public instruction thought was important about teachers, both black and white, during this time period, opens a window onto educational ideals and values for public school education.

The conversation about teaching standards fits into larger scholarly conversations about "professionalism" and "professionalization."¹⁹⁵ Many occupations experienced an intense professionalization process in the early twentieth century. Some scholars argue that as some professions became increasingly professionalized, like teaching and nursing, they also became increasingly feminized.¹⁹⁶ Examples of increasingly feminized professions include teaching, nursing, and social work. This chapter contributes to the scholarly conversation around professionalism and professionalization by analyzing how standards of teaching developed on a state administration level in Virginia. In this chapter, I argue that as Virginia superintendents

¹⁹⁵ For standard works on professionalism and professionalization, see C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Phillip Elliott, *The Sociology of the Professions* (London: MacMillan, 1972); Eliot Friedson, *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). For scholarship about professionalization on state and local levels, see also Andrew Abbott, "The Order of Professionalization," *Work and Occupation* 18 (1991): 335–89, in which Abbott investigates various professionalization as a multilevel, social process. For scholarship about the professionalization of the teaching profession, see also Kate Rousmaniere, *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997); Wayne J. Urban, *Gender, Race, and the National Education Association: Professionalism and Its Limitations* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2000); James Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007).

¹⁹⁶ See Susan M. Reverby, *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing, 1850–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and Daniel J. Walkowitz, "The Making of a Feminine Professional Identity: Social Workers in the 1920s," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990): 1015–75.

focused on ideas of standardization and segregation, the significance of Virginia teachers in this process cannot be overlooked. The everyday, bureaucratic decisions surrounding state-level measures of teaching reveals how standards for the teaching profession were also embedded in racial standards during this time period.

Virginia State Board of Examiners and Inspectors

In many ways, Virginia educational leaders, during the early twentieth century, formed a foundation for public school teaching expectations and qualifications. From 1900 to 1918, each superintendent worked to develop and improve Virginia teaching standards. In an attempt to create a uniform teaching body, Superintendent Joseph D. Southall designed another branch of the Virginia Board of Education—the Board of State Examiners and Inspectors. The new branch's main responsibilities included developing a standardized exam, creating a "professional course of study," and issuing teaching certificates for those who intended to work within Virginia's public school teaching profession.¹⁹⁷

In order to understand teaching standards in early twentieth century Virginia, it is important to discuss the specifics of the Virginia State Board of Examiners and Inspectors. In 1904, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act, authorizing the Virginia State Board of Education to implement a uniform exam for those hoping to obtain a teaching position within the public schools. In doing so, the General Assembly added another branch to the tree of education by establishing the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors within the infrastructure of the State

¹⁹⁷ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1899–1901), xxxviii, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

Board of Education. In a biennial report several years later, Joseph D. Eggleston described the work of the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors as follows:

Their campaigns in behalf of modern ideals in education, the visits and addresses that stirred our people from the mountains to the sea and their splendid success in placing the examination of teachers on a rational and consistent basis, are fragrant memories of busy and stirring times in Virginia's educational history.¹⁹⁸

As referenced in this quote, the creation of the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors marked a pivotal point in Virginia educational history. Since the primary power of the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors included overseeing the examinations and certifications of public school teachers, Eggleston placed his utmost respect within this sector of the Virginia Board of Education.¹⁹⁹ Before the Board of Examiners and Inspectors, the Department of Public Instruction oversaw teacher certification. Due to the volume of teachers applying for certification, Superintendent Southall advocated for a central authority to oversee certifications. Uncovering the perceived significance of the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors, offers a rich understanding of how the teaching profession grew and developed in Virginia. The official perspective, regarding teacher training and teacher qualifications, reveals the ideals surrounding the teaching standards of education in Virginia during the early twentieth century.

The initial effort to standardize and normalize teaching expectations stemmed from Superintendent Southall's concern about the difference in rural versus city school teachers. In the 1899-1901 biennial report, Southall stated:

The improvement of the rural schools continues to be the most important as well as most perplexing problem with which education administrators have to deal... the teachers are in many instances inadequately prepared and still more inadequately paid.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1905–1907), 31, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

¹⁹⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, xl.

²⁰⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxvi.

In this instance, Southall not only identified the preparation of rural school teachers as a problem within the larger organization of the Virginia Board of Education, but also indicates the "rural school problem" as a persistent issue for school administrators. In an attempt to improve the conditions of rural schools, Southall suggested reforming the expectations of public school teachers—hence his proposal for the Board of Examiners and Inspectors.

Another one of Southall's worries, in regard to public school teachers, pertained specifically to the training of teachers throughout the State. According to Southall, teachers with college and normal school training represented the minority. Southall indicated that many teachers throughout the State received no other training "than that which they received in the district schools."²⁰¹ Continuing, Southall expressed:

The wonder is that so many of these teachers are doing such excellent work, since it is an educational maxim universally accepted that no one should undertake to teach a grammar school who has not had a least a good high school education.²⁰²

Those teaching in public schools without the proper background worried Southall. Without proper training and experience, how could educators perform satisfactory courses of study? Moreover, how could these educators adequately provide their students with equal opportunities and experiences, without an established standard of teaching requirements and a standard course of study, throughout the State? Southall's concerns about the qualifications of teachers, including the educational qualifications of teachers, prompted structural changes to the public education system and expanded the Board of Education.

One remedy for the concern of those teaching without proper educational and professional backgrounds included developing teaching preparatory programs within Virginia

²⁰¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxiv.

²⁰² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxiv.

public high schools. Southall firmly believed that the "public high school" should be the "hive from which must come to the swarms of teachers who are to work" within Virginia public schools. If more teachers underwent a high school level preparatory program, they would be better educated and equipped to teach within the public school system, especially at a primary school level. In his early writings, Southall promoted a new expectation for those interested in pursuing a career in teaching. These new expectations were not complete without a means of monitoring educators' qualifications upon employment within the public school system.

In order to monitor and enforce new expectations for teachers, Southall suggested the Virginia Board of Education form the State Board of Examiners. Passionately writing, Southall expressed:

The necessity for a State Board of Examiners is so self-evident a proposition to every well-informed person that to discuss it would be like arguing to establish the axiom that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points.²⁰³

According to Southall, how could one argue against establishing common eligibility requirements for all Virginia teachers? Yet, Southall must have received pushback from others in the Virginia Board of Education, as well as some in the Virginia legislature. He continued:

And yet it would seem that a statement of the needs that are felt in Virginia for the organization of such a piece of educational machinery must be made before we can hope to induce our law-makers to consent to such a legislation as will give shape and vital force to what every ambitious and well educated teacher recognizes as a prime factor in our system of public instruction.²⁰⁴

Without official support from the Virginia General Assembly, the Board of Education would not have the ability to enforce a common requirement of teaching qualifications. Southall fervently believed the Virginia public school system would not thrive without uniform improvement in regards to standard expectations and standard qualifications for public school teachers. Southall

²⁰³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxvii.

²⁰⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxvii.

needed official legislative documents in order to establish and enforce these professional requirements.

The only way forward, according to Southall, rested upon establishing an official branch of the Board of Education with ultimate responsibility in overseeing and managing educator standards. Southall based his call for the State Board of Examiners on two main pillars. First, Southall believed "the professional spirit of the teacher" would not flourish under a system that allowed "ignorance and unfitness to triumph over intelligence, capacity, and successful experience."²⁰⁵ In order to further cultivate a "professional spirit" within the Virginia teaching body, Southall persistently promoted standardized requirements for teachers. Second, Southall indicated that a professional course of study was the only way to uphold standardized requirements for teachers.²⁰⁶ According to Southall, the development of a professional course of study could only be executed or implemented by an official State Board of Examiners.

After publicly making a claim for the need of a new branch of the Virginia Board of Education—the State Board of Examiners—Southall's proposed legislation passed in the Virginia General Assembly during a 1904 session. This new act authorized the State Board of Education to "appoint a board for the examination of teachers and the inspection of schools."²⁰⁷ According to the 1903-1905 biennial report, the Virginia Board of Education "appointed five experienced and successful educators to constitute the State Board of Examiners and Inspectors."²⁰⁸ The Virginia Board of Education granted these five individuals traveling expenses,

²⁰⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxiv.

²⁰⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxviii.

²⁰⁷ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1903–1905), xxxix, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

²⁰⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xxxix.

incidental expenses, and an annual compensation of \$1,500 dollars.²⁰⁹ The official formation of the Board of Examiners and Inspectors represents a formal transformation from teaching standards determined and monitored on a local basis to teaching standards determined and monitored on a higher, state-level scale. Moreover, the five individuals serving on this Board represented official forms of authority over Virginia teaching regulations in the early twentieth century.

The Board of Examiners and Inspectors materialized Southall's efforts to standardize public school teaching in Virginia. Southall further believed that "the creation of this board of examiners and inspectors is the most important and far-reaching act of the State Board of Education in many years."²¹⁰ Southall advocated for a uniform system of monitoring the qualifications of teachers with proud prose. He anticipated that "great good" would "come therefrom to the school system" by having uniform requirements for teachers.²¹¹

Even though the Board of Examiners and Inspectors was founded upon ideas about "uniform" teaching standards throughout the State, the board created and published different examinations for black and white teachers. Included within each report from the Superintendent, these examinations reveal how Virginia teaching standards during this time were embedded in ideas about race. For example, the first teacher examination published in 1904 included two exams—one for white teachers and one for black teachers.

²⁰⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xxxix.

²¹⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xli.

²¹¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xli.

Examination Questions.

UNIFORM EXAMINATION FOR TEACHERS' CERTIFICATES—1904.
FOR WHITE TEACHERS.

READING.

1. (a) What is the difference between enunciation and pronunciation? (b) How may enunciation be cultivated?
2. (a) What is meant by falling and rising inflection? (b) Give instance where each may be used.
3. Describe a good position for any one in standing to read aloud.
4. What advantage has oral over silent reading?
5. (a) What is meant by quality of the voice? (b) What may be done to cultivate it?
6. Selection by the Superintendent, valued at 75; each of the five foregoing questions at 5.

Figure 3.2 "Examination Questions," from the Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1903-1905, 34.

FOR COLORED TEACHERS.

READING.

1. In which hand should the book be held while reading in class?
2. What is the primary object in reading?
3. (a) What is emphasis? (b) What is the first step toward good emphasis?
4. What determines correct pronunciation?
5. What is meant by phonics?
6. Selection to be made by Superintendent, valued at 75; each of the foregoing questions at 5.

Figure 3.3 "For Colored Teachers," from the Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1903-1905, 38.

As depicted by the above examples, the State relied on different standards of education for white teachers than for black teachers. These professional standards for Virginia teachers also relied on different expectations about the level of education provided to white versus the level of education provided to black teachers. Moreover, the different professional expectations for white

teachers and black teachers reflects the different expectations for the education of white and black students. If the State held white teachers' training to a higher caliber than the training of black teachers, the State also held white students' education to a higher caliber than the education of black students.

The following superintendent, Joseph D. Eggleston, Jr., continued emphasizing the importance of the Virginia Board of Examiners and Inspectors as a means of monitoring and enforcing teaching standards throughout the State. Eggleston framed the work of the Board of Examiners and Inspectors as progress by comparing it to the former method of which local authorities monitored and enforced teaching qualifications. In his first biennial report, he stated:

It will be necessary for many years to have a central body to examine our teachers. The State should not go back to the former method of permitting the local superintendents to examine and grade the papers for their several divisions. To do so, would be to make again more than a hundred different standards by which teachers would be graded.²¹²

Eggleston continued by describing "the present method of having a central board to issue uniform questions and grade all papers" as "an ideal plan" for monitoring teacher qualifications.²¹³ As mentioned in his writing, Eggleston believed in one, uniform standard of teaching requirements throughout the State. As discussed with school facilities, the Board of Education's emphasis on standards and standardization defined public school policies in the early twentieth century. This period marked a transition when superintendents no longer stood for dispersed decisions about public schools. Instead, they advocated for rigid, statewide standards—a trend that still exists within public school systems today.

²¹² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 26.

²¹³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 26.

Compensation

While Superintendent Southall promoted uniform requirements for Virginia teachers, he also developed ideas about standard compensation for those teaching within the public school system, as well. According to Southall, there was no room for "the law of supply and demand" to influence salaries for Virginia teachers.²¹⁴ Instead, Southall believed the Board of Education "should endeavor to secure the best teachers" for public schools and "pay them good living salaries."²¹⁵ Furthermore, how could the Board of Education expect individuals "go to the expense of equipping themselves for the work of teaching when the salaries paid are so inadequate and the school term so short?"²¹⁶ Southall knew his efforts to develop statewide standards for the teaching profession would inevitably fall short without rethinking teachers' compensation. He continued:

As long as we continue to pay such slender salaries and have such short terms for our rural schools, just so long must we expect the profession of the teacher to be considered a stepping stone to more lucrative positions.²¹⁷

The reconsideration of teachers' salaries advanced alongside the increasing standardization of Virginia teaching qualifications. After pursuing rigorous training programs, individuals entering the teaching profession would expect fair and proper compensation for their professional skill sets.

According to statistics encompassing the 1901 through the 1903 school sessions, the average monthly teacher salary ranged from 26.46 dollars to 34.56 dollars.²¹⁸ Men working

²¹⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxv.

²¹⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxv.

²¹⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxv.

²¹⁷ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1899–1901, xxxv.

²¹⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1901–1903), xxi, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

within Virginia public schools maintained a higher average monthly salary than women.²¹⁹ According to Southall, since the dawn of the Virginia public school system in 1871 until 1903, the number of teachers employed by the board increased three-fold.²²⁰ He continued, describing that while the number of teachers substantially increased, their salaries practically remained stagnant.²²¹ While these salaries remained stagnant, the cost of living in Virginia substantially increased.²²² Not only was the cost of living in Virginia higher than 1871, but the preparation and training expected of teachers also increased substantially since 1871.²²³ According to Southall, "the trained teachers" in the public school system received "hardly any more compensation than that given to the raw recruits at the inauguration of the system."²²⁴ This stagnant teacher compensation, according to Southall, represented the "weakest point in the public school system."²²⁵ By increasing the standard requirements for the teaching profession, the Board also grappled with the question of teacher salaries— or in this case, the lack thereof.

The next consecutive superintendent, Joseph D. Eggleston, also commented upon inadequate teacher pay. Eggleston described the lack of proper teacher compensation as one of "ways and means," indicating a problem with resources at the Board's disposal.²²⁶ In any case, Eggleston saw this issue with resources as unacceptable.²²⁷ In developing a case for increasing and standardizing teacher salaries, Eggleston illustrated that many other states dealt with their own "ways and means" challenges with a courageous, practical, and successful strategy.²²⁸ For

²¹⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxi.

²²⁰ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxix.

²²¹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxviii.

²²² Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxviii.

²²³ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxviii.

²²⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxviii.

²²⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1901–1903, xxviii.

²²⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 18.

²²⁷ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 18.

²²⁸ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 18.

example, during this time period, Maryland successfully passed a minimum salary legislation of three hundred dollars for those educating in its higher public school grades.²²⁹

During his time as superintendent, R. C. Stearns developed standards for teachers' compensation. Following the development of uniform standards for the Virginia teaching profession, Stearns advocated for measures that insured standards compensation for Virginia teachers. For the 1913-1914 school year, Stearns reported that the State certified more teachers than ever before with normal school or college training.²³⁰ He continued, describing a scenario where if every "regularly certified" teacher found employment in a Virginia School, it would have been unnecessary for the State Board of Education to issue emergency certificates for white teachers.²³¹ According to Stearns, these standards for teaching held no value without standards for teachers' pay. In the 1914-1915 annual report, Stearns wrote: "But what are schools without well prepared and well-paid teachers?"²³²

The annual report for the 1914-1915 school year, reflects yet another obstacle for the teaching profession in Virginia public schools. Within this report R. C Stearns reflected on the issue of staffing teachers in segregated schools. He stated, "the problem of providing teachers for all of the colored schools is not only a serious one, but its solution is far in the future, I fear."²³³ Further, Superintendent Stearns described this problem as a consequence of the Virginia State normal schools for black teachers' inability to supply an adequate amount of teachers for primary

²²⁹ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1905–1907, 18.

²³⁰ Annual report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1912–1913), 17–18, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

²³¹ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1912–1913, 17–18.

²³² Annual report of the Superintendent, 1912–1913, 22.

²³³ Biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1914–1916), 23, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

and secondary education.²³⁴ Identified by Superintendent Stearns, and eventually the State Board of Education as an official problem of public education in Virginia, recommendations about the training of black teachers are also reflected throughout the annual reports.

While this discussion of vocational training was probably directed at schools for white students, many superintendents also prescribed official suggestions for black public schools. In a biennial report covering the school years 1914-1915 and 1915-1916, Superintendent R.C. Stearns alluded to the notion that only black teachers should teach in black schools.²³⁵ But, supplying black teachers for black schools presented a problem. In the report, Stearns wrote: "[o]ur State normal schools for colored teachers cannot supply the demand, and we are developing a plan whereby the colored high schools may be used to train teachers for colored elementary schools."²³⁶ In this very instance, Stearns suggested that black high school students needed to be trained as teachers, bypassing teacher training at normal schools just as Southall had indicated in the 1899-1901 biennial report fifteen years earlier.

Teacher compensation continued as a steady point of contention for Superintendent Hart in the 1917-1918 school year. Superintendent Hart believed that teacher compensation was one of the most important problems faced by past superintendents and would continue to be a problem for future superintendents.²³⁷ But, the 1917-1918 scholastic year presented an unforeseen decrease in professional teachers serving in public schools. World War I compelled many teachers to leave their jobs within public schools and find work elsewhere. According to Superintendent Hart, "the unusual war activities opened to women a great many positions and

²³⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1914–1916, 23.

²³⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1914–1916, 23.

²³⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1914–1916, 23.

²³⁷ Annual report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1917–1918), 15, digitized by University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

occupations."²³⁸ Moreover, Superintendent Hart stated that "in no solitary case was the school able to compete in salary with other occupations."²³⁹ In order to combat more teachers leaving public schools, Superintendent Hart petitioned the State Board of Education to readjust teacher salaries. Without competent and adequate teachers, Virginia public schools would become inefficient and underprepared.

Gender

In 1871, at the dawn of the Virginia public school system, white male teachers constituted the majority of all teachers within the state—a position these white men would hold for the next ten years.²⁴⁰ During this time period, many perceived teaching as a male dominant profession. But, starting in 1881, white male teachers began a steady decline in their representation in Virginia public schools. During this ten year period, from 1871 to 1881, white female teachers increased in numbers. In 1871, 905 white women were working within the teaching profession in Virginia public schools.²⁴¹ In 1881, this number increased substantially to 5,200, roughly quintupling in size.²⁴² Transitioning into the twentieth century, the teaching profession became increasingly perceived as a feminine profession. Other scholars allude to this decline in male teachers as a decline in teacher salaries.²⁴³ Since women's salaries were considered "supplementary" to the salaries of their male counterparts, women often accepted

²³⁸ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1917–1918, Richmond, 15.

²³⁹ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1917–1918, Richmond, 15.

²⁴⁰ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxix.

²⁴¹ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxix.

²⁴² Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxix.

²⁴³ See also Shaun Johnson, "The Women Peril and Male Teachers in the Early Twentieth Century," *American Educational History Journal* 35, 149–167; J. C. Albisetti, "The feminization of teaching in the nineteenth century: A comparative perspective," *History of Education* 22, 253–262; M. W. Apple, "Teaching and women's work: A comparative historical and ideological analysis," *Journal of Education* 86, 455–473;

teaching positions with lower salaries than those salaries offered to men. While it was somewhat easier to hire and compensate women in the teaching profession, Virginia superintendents of public instruction continually questioned the proper position of women within the public school system. Throughout their annual and biennial reports, Virginia superintendents conveyed their opinions about the importance of employing male teachers within their public schools, something they would continually grapple with during this period of decline for men serving in the teaching profession.

This value, viewing men as superior teachers, also transferred to the black teaching profession in Virginia. In 1903, black male teachers numbered around 706, demonstrating an increase from 1871, when they totaled 335 in numbers.²⁴⁴ While showing an overall increase in capacity from 1871, black female teachers ultimately outnumbered black male teachers. In 1903, the number of black women in the teaching profession constituted twice that of black men.²⁴⁵ Representing 1,467 of the 9,044 teachers in 1903, black women made up a large portion of teachers working within Virginia's segregated institutions.²⁴⁶ As discussed in the decline of white men serving in the teaching profession, the decline of black men serving in the teaching profession portrayed another issue with teacher salaries. Averaging around 34.56 dollars a month, men (both black and white) in the teaching profession, found it difficult to establish a home and raise a family.²⁴⁷

The decline of men in the teaching profession, whether black or white, became a significant problem for Superintendent of Public Instruction Joseph W. Southhall. Within the 1902-1903 annual report, Southhall "cheerfully" recognized the "superiority of the women as

²⁴⁴ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xvi.

²⁴⁵ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xvi.

²⁴⁶ Biennial report of the Superintendent, 1903–1905, xvi.

²⁴⁷ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxviii.

teachers in the primary and grammar grades."²⁴⁸ Women teaching in primary grades was not Southall's primary concern, it was the fact that young men in older grades did not have men as teachers to look up to. As stated by Southall, "the presence of the strong masculine intellect and power to govern the larger boys and train them in manly ways is indispensable to the proper development of any system of education."²⁴⁹ Previously discussed as an issue surrounding teacher compensation, Superintendent Southall instead pointed to an issue of gender. Therefore, this official problem can be identified as a gendered one. While women constituted proper teachers for young children, including young boys, men were viewed as the only proper educators for young men, according to the white bureaucrats of the Virginia Department of Education.

As Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore argues, in her book *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, at the dawn of the twentieth century, public school teaching became an increasingly feminized profession.²⁵⁰ While *Gender and Jim Crow* is a study about North Carolina, Gilmore's analysis of education in North Carolina proves similar to that of Virginia. Gilmore's focus on black men within the North Carolina teaching profession provides valuable conclusions for black men teaching in Virginia as well. Even though white educational leaders thought that men abandoned the teaching profession due to low

²⁴⁸ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxix.

²⁴⁹ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902–1903, xxix.

²⁵⁰ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 157. For other scholarship about black women professional workers, see also Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a woman ought to be and to do: Black professional women workers during the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996). In *What a woman ought to be and to do*, Shaw argues that black women who received formal education were looked upon as "not only school teachers, nurses, social workers and librarians; they became some of the political and social leaders in the formal and informal movements of the larger group." Shaw, 2. See also Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*, (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), chapter two. In this chapter, Higgenbotham argues that "the Talented Tenth's female component should not be overlooked." Higgenbotham, 20.

wages, Gilmore argues it was black men's exclusion from the political sphere that resulted in the declining number of male African American teachers.²⁵¹ Lesser wages influenced the shift of less black men in the teaching profession and more black women in the teaching profession because many black women were often married and partially dependent upon their spouses wages.²⁵² In making this argument, Gilmore draws upon biennial reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina. Therefore, Gilmore's arguments about education in North Carolina also provide a rich comparison to the educational climate reflected in the annual and biennial reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Virginia.

By viewing men as the only proper educators for young men, Virginia superintendents automatically excluded any concern for the secondary education standards for young women. As presented within the annual and biennial reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, education for young (probably white) men seems to be the primary concern during Southall's 1902-1903 evaluation. Describing stagnant teacher salaries as one of the weakest points in the public school system, Southall continued to emphasize the negative effects of the declining number of male teachers for young male pupils.²⁵³ Due to the fact that salaries of Virginia public school teachers remained almost stationary from 1871-1903 and the cost of living gradually increased during this time period, the educational standard of young men in Virginia public schools, according to Southall, steadily declined. The gendered concern presented within the 1902-1903 annual report demonstrates the ideal educational situation for young white men and excludes any reference to the ideal educational situation for young white women, young black women, or young black men.

²⁵¹ Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, 157.

²⁵² Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 157.

²⁵³ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1902-1903, xxvii.

While Southall presented his concerns about the ideal teaching scenario for young men in Virginia public schools, several years later, Superintendent R. C. Stearns also attested to gendered differences within the teaching profession. In the annual report from 1911-1912, Stearns recounted that women represented "more than eighty per cent" of Virginia public school teachers.²⁵⁴ He continued, "our people desire to educate their daughters even more than their sons."²⁵⁵ According to Board statistics, two girls graduated from the public high school system to every boy that graduated.²⁵⁶ Upon graduation, the young women in the Virginia public school system could only pursue a higher degree of education by attending one of four normal schools throughout the State, while young men had the opportunity to attend either a university or a normal school.²⁵⁷ Inevitably, due to the types of higher education offered at the time and the two girls to one boy high school graduation ratio, more women acquired normal training and pursued a career in teaching.

Conclusion

During the early twentieth century, Virginia Superintendents increasingly gave more and more attention to teachers employed in the public school system. By developing an official branch of the Board of Education—the Board of Examiners and Inspectors—these superintendents legitimized professional expectations for those employed and for those pursuing employment as teachers. In doing so, these expectations embodied certain gendered and racialized meanings. While writing with ambiguity at times, Superintendents Southall,

²⁵⁴ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 29.

²⁵⁵ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 29.

²⁵⁶ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 29.

²⁵⁷ Annual report of the Superintendent, 1911–1912, 29.

Eggleston, Stearns and Hart enforced different gendered and racialized standards for white men, white women, black men, and black women. Uncovering the standardization process of teachers, in the early twentieth century, opens a window onto racialized aspects of standardization within the Virginia public education system. Seemingly, these superintendents established a "uniform expectation" for all Virginia teachers and students, but in many ways, these expectations depended on an individuals' race and gender.

Conclusion

It would have been easy to write this thesis only about the perspective of the Virginia Superintendents. In the Fall 2018 semester, I started this project envisioning a story about black girlhood within the Virginia public education system. After some archival setbacks, I began re-envisioning the scope of my work. Instead of writing about girlhood, I chose to write a multi-vocal, cultural history about how individuals contended with big ideas about education during the early twentieth century. As a historian and as a writer, I learned about the power of making these types of decisions. By choosing to write about multiple voices, my project is not an inclusive or intersecting story. To write an inclusive, intersecting historical story would have been challenging because as historians, we want to make historical comparisons, but these types of historical comparisons were not available within the historical documents I consulted for this project.

How do you choose where to start on a long historical project? As a writer, after re-envisioning my project, it was hard to decide where I should begin my project. And ultimately, my choices influenced the questions I asked and the way this historical story is presented. By beginning the project with the Superintendents' voices in chapter one, I ultimately gave more power to the historically dominate voices. But, as I have mentioned, I did not intend for my project to only include the voices of those in the highest position of power. Instead, I chose to include the voices of leaders from black institutions. With this being said, I acknowledge this project does not rest upon a single narrative thread as many other historical projects do. My project's significance rests upon including different voices, even if this decision created divergences within my story.

The annual and biennial reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia offer a nuanced way of understanding early twentieth century educational policies. The office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction published these documents in order to record and therefore, communicate educational changes, challenges, and perspectives to the Virginia Board of Education, the Virginia Governor, and to the local superintendents throughout the State. With the intention of being informative, factual, and official, a close reading of these documents provides valuable perspectives about the smaller, everyday decisions behind standardizing public education in Virginia.

As discussed, during the early twentieth century, the process behind standardizing education in Virginia embodied racial undertones. During this era of legal segregation, I argue the policies of standardization exemplified differing standards for black and white school facilities, black and white students, and black and white teachers. As the evidence portrays, the conversations surrounding public school facility reform and renovation focused mostly on white school facility reform and renovation. Throughout their writings, the Superintendents in the early twentieth century framed their suggestions for improving school facilities around the needs of white schools throughout the State. A close analysis of these letters from the leaders of black institutions to the Superintendent reveals that often these leaders of had to adhere to the standards of segregation, while also attempting to promote their own concerns and visions for black education. Yet ultimately, teachers within black public schools adhered to different standards than white teachers during this time. In order to receive proper certification, white and black teachers underwent various trainings, tests, and schooling. While the general course of certification was the same for white and black teachers, the Superintendent established and enforced different examinations and provided different compensation scales for white and black

teachers. In all, these reports reflect official methods of enforcing segregated education. While sometimes utilizing explicit language and sometimes utilizing implicit language, the voices and perspectives included in these reports reveal how Virginia educational leaders grappled with and enforced segregation policies.

In summary, the various perspectives included in these official, government reports offer a unique perspective about the negotiation behind early twentieth century educational policies in Virginia. My argument demonstrates how leaders of Virginia education developed structures of racism—that is the focus on white school facilities, the intricate relationship between leaders of black institutions and the State, and the disproportionate teacher salaries and standards throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By revealing how changes within the system of public education were embedded in everyday actions and decisions at the state level, this thesis complicates the historical narrative about progressive education during the Jim Crow era and adds to the historical literature by uncovering the everyday, bureaucratic decisions behind state-level measures.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the time period from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century provided the foundation for the bureaucratic nature of public education. The gradual transformation of the State controlling policies of public education represented areas of inequality. While these policies were racialized during this time period, the impact of these initial attempts of standardization are still in effect today. Today, students in Virginia are taught based on state-issued Standards of Learning (SOL), aspiring teachers undergo state-approved teacher training programs, and school facilities adhere to specific standards. Yet, these state mandated standards still portray areas of inequality. If schools do not meet a certain passing percentage on their SOL scores, they are classified as “partially accredited,” “accreditation denied,” or

“accredited with warning.” Teachers’ success is based upon how many students passed the SOL tests. If teachers’ classes do not meet the accepted pass rate, they are often put on warning or denied a contract for the following school year. The atmosphere of the school facility when the SOL scores are not acceptable changes, as students are required to retake these standardized tests. While initially implemented to benefit all, the Virginia SOL is a present example of how everyday, bureaucratic decisions of state-wide measures work in the twenty-first century.

Finally, this study has important implications for our understanding of the history of education, specifically the history of education in Virginia. During this time period, bureaucratic, State decisions reveal how standardization became embedded into the public education system. Moreover, during the early twentieth century, the state-level policies of standardization also show the Virginia Board of Education’s official policies on race and segregation.

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