

The History of South Carolina Schools

Edited by Virginia B. Bartels

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(CERRA--SC)**

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Much of the 300-year history of our public schools is a tragic tale of fits and starts, marked at times by inspired leadership, but too often marred by problems of class, race, war, poverty and geography.

Ten Reasons for Slow Growth of the Statewide Public School System

1. A strong tradition brought from England that public support for education should be limited to the poor
2. Education seen as more of the responsibility of the Church than the State
3. Attitudes of those outside the wealthy class that worked against a unified system, including low regard for learning, reluctance to accept charity through free tuition, and the need to keep children in the family labor force
4. The very high cost in the 1700s and 1800s to provide quality schools outside the cities and coastal areas, where population was sparse and transportation poor
5. Strong resistance to local taxation for schools until the late 1800s
6. Interruption of a burgeoning “common school movement” in South Carolina by the Civil War, and the subsequent disruption of a tax base
7. Increased white resistance to the public school idea following the Reconstruction government’s attempts to open schools to all races
8. An attitude on the part of some 20th century leaders that too much education would damage the state’s cheap labor force
9. The slow growth of state supervision of the schools due to strong sentiments toward local control
10. The financial burden of operating a racially segregated system, and the social and educational impact of combining two unequal systems in the late 1960s

Introduction: Parallels of Past and Present

It is a history worth retelling because it helps explain, though not excuse, the halting evolution of our schools into a unified system committed to quality. Digging into South Carolina’s educational past, one is struck by the common ground shared with our ancestors. “We have a provincial free school paid by the public,” Lt. Gov. William Bull wrote to his British superiors in 1779. “But their salaries are insufficient to engage and retain fit men.”

In the 19th century, state leaders continued to worry over teacher quality, student discipline, parental indifference, and school finance— much as they still do today.

Lt. Gov. Bull’s school was one of the few in the entire colony; it served a select population in Charlestown (Charleston after the Revolution) and offered little more than an elementary education at public expense to a handful of white children too poor to attend anything else.

Over 200 years later, more than 90 percent of South Carolina’s children are receiving a free, public education. The quality of what they receive varies from district to

district, school to school, and even teacher to teacher. But the least of our offerings is superior to that Charlestown school of 1770 because now every child is free to partake of public education, without regard to class or color.

1600s-1700s: A Century of Private Education and Pauper Schools

South Carolina's English settlers brought with them the belief that education was a private, voluntary matter. Families of the upper and middle classes were expected to pay for the education of their children, most of whom attended private or church schools or were taught by tutors. Public support for education was reserved for orphans and pauper children "in limited numbers and a limited time."

In his 1925 history of the schools, former Winthrop professor John Thomason summed up the imported English outlook: "The business of the lower classes is to serve rather than to think." The educational leaders of the colony were not pressing for "equal educational opportunity," as we know it today. Their efforts were focused on spreading rudimentary learning among the population, both for humanitarian reasons and for civilized behavior among the lower classes.

Early South Carolina residents were influenced by the Massachusetts Act of 1647, known as the Old Deluder Satan Act; thus, curriculum stressed religion to drive out evil and the devil.

The first cargo of African slaves was brought to South Carolina from Barbados in 1671, a year after the colony's settlement. In 1701 their schooling was begun by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which was formed in London to convert blacks and Native Americans in the colonies to Christianity.

The society's first active schoolmaster in South Carolina was the Rev. Samuel Thomas of Goose Creek Parish. By 1705, his communicants included twenty blacks who could read and write, according to historian C.W. Birnie in *The Journal of Negro History* (1927). By the time Thomas left the province, he had enlisted white women to carry on his work.

Because of the passage of "An Act for the Founding and Erecting of a Free School for the Use of the Inhabitants of South Carolina," the first free public schools in the state were established around 1710 when the colonial assembly approved funds to establish several "common schools" in and around Charlestown. Students were taught reading, writing, religion, and morality by a teacher who also was the local assistant rector. Later, as the colony grew into a state, private academies flourished.

The schoolmaster of the early 1700s was often an influential community figure. "He drew all the wills and titles to land and made all the difficult calculations. No man in the settlement was more honorable or more honored than the 'Master'," said Edward McCrady, Jr., in an 1883 speech to the Historical Society of South Carolina.

In the Act of 1712, the colony set requirements for its teachers--first, that they be of the Church of England religion, and second, that they be able to teach the "learned tongues"— Latin and Greek. The schoolmaster's compensation was the use of the schoolhouse, dwelling house, out-buildings and land, and "for further encouragement," the sum of 100 pounds per annum, to be paid biannually. He could also collect four pounds per year from the parents of each student except the "free" pupils, the poor children who were educated without charge. If the schoolmaster had more scholars than one man could manage, the school commissioner would appoint "a fit person" to be "usher," who was paid 50 pounds a year.

This 1712 law provided for appointment of a fit person “to teach writing, arithmetic [sic] and merchant’s accounts; and also the art of navigation, and other useful and practical parts of the mathematics [sic].”

While the colony was making arrangements by law for schooling, several societies were going about education in their own ways. One of the earliest was the Society of Propagating the Gospel, which sent out missionaries not only to preach but also to encourage establishment of schools. The Society’s schoolmasters were required to do the following:

- take especial care of the manners of the pupils in and out of school
- warn them against lying and falsehood and evil speaking
- love truth and honesty
- be modest, just and affable
- receive in their tender years that sense of religion which may render it the constant principle of their lives and actions.

As the century progressed, other common schools sprang up in county seats. For the most part, however, the schools were concentrated in the Lowcountry. Public aid was limited to the poor, and the stern masters of the common schools frequently supplemented their incomes by teaching paying students.

In 1712, the colonial Assembly founded a colony-wide elementary and secondary school in Charlestown where up to twelve needy “scholars” had their tuition paid by government or private funds. During the next thirty years, other schools supported in part by public funds were established, mostly in the towns and coastal areas where the population was concentrated. Often parishes and wealthy benefactors contributed to schools and tuition for the poor. Church societies and benevolent corporations also operated schools for “paupers and orphans,” but their efforts— like those of the colonial government— were limited to spreading rudimentary learning among the population.

The Upcountry people were mostly farmers of moderate means. As a rule, they needed the labor of their children on their farms. They often saw little need for education beyond a bare minimum, and they were “ardent opponents of taxation.” The teachers in the upper part of the state were mostly Presbyterian clergymen from Ireland and Scotland.

True scholarship was reserved mostly for the well-to-do who attended the best academies in the state, had private tutors, or went abroad for their education. Wealthy families imported tutors from England or sent their children to Europe to study. In the mid-1700s, no British province sent more sons to England to study than did South Carolina. The colony’s aristocratic English leaders’ argument against taxation and public welfare programs retarded the development of universal education for more than 150 years.

In the *Bill for More General Diffusion of Knowledge in Virginia* (1779), Thomas Jefferson stated that to perpetuate liberty, the mass of people had to be educated. Although the bill was defeated, some upper-class intellectuals from Charlestown and the plantation region agreed with Jefferson and supported the philosophy that a democratic government could not function properly so long as its people “wallowed in ignorance.”

For young women, a May 1734 advertisement in Charleston’s *South Carolina Gazette* (the state’s earliest newspaper), stated: “A Widow Varnod has set up a French-School for young Ladies and teaches them all sorts of Imroidery [sic].” Education for the two sexes was not equal by any means.

For many years the colonists were uncertain what status to give blacks. That question was settled in 1712 with passage of a law declaring that “Negroes, mulattos, mestizoes who have been sold... or hereafter shall be bought or sold for slaves are hereby declared slaves.” For the next couple of decades, the colonists had mixed feelings about educating their “chattels.”

Opposition to schooling of blacks flared in 1739 after a black man named Cato led a slave uprising in which some white men, women, and children were butchered, and their homes were robbed. Public reaction led to a law in 1740 making it a criminal offense to teach a slave to write. Reading was not mentioned. Punishment was a fine of 100 pounds, but the law was widely ignored.

Despite the law, a school for blacks with thirty-six students was formed in 1743 and was headed by the Rev. Alexander Garden of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Society records state:

This organization hit upon the plan of purchasing two Negroes named Harry and Andrew and of qualifying them by thorough instruction in the principles of Christianity and the fundamentals of education to serve as school masters to their people.

Late in the 18th century, several societies took up the torch of education for blacks. They included the following:

- Brown Fellowship Society organized by St. Philip's Church (1790)
- Humane and Friendly (1802)
- Minors Moralists (1803)
- Friendly Union (1813)

Those years were the beginning of the greatest ante-bellum period of prosperity for blacks in Charleston, according to historian Birnie's account in *The Journal of Negro History*. In 1790 there were 775 free Negroes in Charleston, and by 1830, the number had grown to 6,000. Some were contractors and merchants. One was a hotel keeper. Their wealth ranged from \$15,000 to \$125,000.

1800-1860: Rudimentary Steps to Provide Better Public Education

With the American Revolution, a philosophy emerged based on the belief that a democratic government could not succeed if the masses were denied an education. This outlook— which was embraced by some of the progressive thinkers among the aristocracy— eventually led to a new school law in 1811. The *Bill to Establish Free Schools Throughout the State* was aimed at placing at least one public school in each of the state's forty-four election districts. Each district received \$300 per state representative. The legislature gave no consideration to the number of students who might attend a school or the need for more schools in thinly populated areas. The bill failed to accomplish the objectives of its democratic-minded proponents.

Lowcountry leaders were generally wealthy, with enough education to value learning and with a greater willingness to support the government through taxes. With the advent of universal male suffrage in 1810, many Lowcountry leaders felt it imperative to improve the education of the Upcountry majority. Although the law allowed any white child to attend the free schools, it gave first preference to the poor— a "fatal" flaw which "damned the system" in the opinion of David D. Wallace, a state historian. Most working families were too proud to participate in the "pauper schools" and kept their children at home. The middle and upper classes ignored the "pauper schools." So did many of the poor who were too proud to accept the pauper label. About one in fifty of the school-aged white children was estimated to be in the free schools in 1847.

The South Carolina College Faculty presented a report that cited two school deficiencies: physical and moral. The physical deficiency was sparseness of the program. The moral shortcoming was stated as follows:

- the carelessness of the poor about the education of their children

- the selfishness which leads them to prefer their children's labors to their children's improvement
- the foolish pride, which prevents them from receiving as a bounty that which they cannot procure in any better way

It was also reported that "the attendance of each individual is short, irregular and inadequate to secure proficiency." Some pupils attended no more than a few days; at best, some attended a few weeks of the year.

The free school system gained the most popularity in Charleston where it began. In 1812, the city had five schools. A glimpse of those schools comes from an 1887 account by Charleston School Superintendent Henry P. Archer:

No child under eight was admitted unless he or she had made some proficiency in reading. Students were taught "reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, parsing [study of sentence components and parts of speech], geology, grammar and the pence and multiplication tables. Special attention was paid to penmanship.

Schoolmasters were required to furnish quarterly to the school board examples of writing from the best writers in each school. Hours were 8:00 to 12:00 in the morning and 3:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon from March 21 to September 21, and from 9:00 to 1:00 and 3:00 to 5:00 from September 22 to March 20. There were only two vacations, two weeks at Christmas and two at Whitsuntide (the week beginning with the seventh Sunday after Easter.)

In the Upcountry, many districts had no free schools at all, spending the meager aid instead on private tuition for a select few. The law also failed to appropriate state aid according to the needs of each area. Despite population shifts toward the Piedmont, the law's system of distribution tended to favor wealthier counties in the Lowcountry—establishing a pattern of unequal school finance that has plagued the state ever since.

In the 1830s and 40s, critics complained that the local school commissioners provided poor leadership and called for a state school officer to oversee the system. They found no uniform curriculum in the schools. Teacher pay was abysmal, and no system to train or certify teachers existed. "The teachers in some cases never came to the school for three days in a week," said William Gilmore Simms of Charleston. School buildings usually were log cabins known as "old field schools" probably because they were in clearings of exhausted land which farmers had abandoned for newer, more fertile fields. The school terms were seasonal, in session only when the children could be spared from farm work.

These weaknesses were compounded by problems of geography and population density. In order to serve children in rural areas at a time when transportation was virtually nil, schools would have been needed every few miles. The price to provide such a system, along with teachers to man it, was estimated at anywhere from \$200,000 to \$500,000 a year— sums equal to the entire annual state budget during much of the period.

Both the teachers and the students of the free schools were scorned by the more affluent. The teachers in the so-called "pauper schools," where the poor and the orphans got first priority for admission, were not generally held in high esteem. Historian Wallace wrote:

The distinction must always be maintained between the often splendid men and women of the private, church or fraternal order and society-owned schools and the educational 'riff-raff' who are taught in the 'pauper' schools.

As the schools grew in quantity in the mid-1800s, the teachers declined in quality. "It is now a reproach to be a teacher in a free school, as it is regarded as prima facie evidence of a want of qualification," Gov. B. K. Henegan told the legislature in 1840. He said the teachers were "ignorant and possess easy morality," but added what else can be expected:

With the poor pay allowed them we cannot reasonably calculate upon a better state of things. The men who take charge of the public schools and accept so miserable a pittance as a reward of their labors are those who cannot get employment on other terms.

In the 1840s, a truly radical reform idea was introduced to use local property taxes for public education. The idea met with a roar of disapproval, particularly from the Upcountry, where resistance to “infernal taxation” remained strong. Proponents of local taxation persisted, however, and the idea gradually gained some favor in the mid-1850s, largely because of a landmark educational experiment in Charleston.

The horizon brightened some in the 1850s as C.G. Memminger, one of the state’s great educators, set about establishing a true public school system in Charleston. Drawing on the best Northern models, Memminger installed a modern curriculum, imported skilled teachers and administrators, and convinced the General Assembly to approve the first local school tax in the state’s history. By 1859, Memminger had attracted families of all classes to his school and by his example was “about to lead the state into a modern system” when the Civil War intervened.

The two keys to his success were ridding the schools of their pauper image and using a local tax base. Memminger’s successful school made a strong case for local taxation and reduced the fears of “class-mixing.”

In those long-ago school houses, where sunlight sparkled tauntingly through the cracks in the log walls, students cringed under masters whose lessons were ordeals that were long remembered. Samuel McGill remembers his school days in Williamsburg County in the early 1800s:

I missed a word and was whipped; still standing by the side of the teacher, I missed it at the second trial, and again at the third, and was whipped each time. Tears blinded my eyes.

“As we sat at the board with backs to the teacher, he would suddenly crack our knuckles so that the memory pains them,” said one student whose recollections were recorded in David D. Wallace’s *History of South Carolina*. Dr. J.M. Simms wrote of attending in 1819, at age six, a “boarding school” six or eight miles from his Lancaster home:

The teacher was an Irishman, Mr. Quigley, a man about fifty-five-years old, and a rigid disciplinarian, altogether very tyrannical and sometimes cruel. This teacher had one remarkable peculiarity in regard to the admission of small boys to his school. It made no odds whether a boy was good or bad; he invariably got a flogging on the first day. The teacher always sought some pretext to make a flogging necessary and when he began, he seldom stopped until the youngster vomited or wet his breeches.

In the 1800s, parents seldom intervened because they believed in the old saying, “Spare the rod and spoil the child.”

Although teacher training was badly needed in South Carolina, no institutions in the state offered it. In 1848, a law was proposed to provide money to send qualified applicants out of state for training, but opponents fought the government’s “meddling” in education, and the bill was defeated.

A small but significant step in teacher education came in 1853, when a high school department for teacher training was established with a \$5,000 state appropriation for five years. The program might have spurred others if it had not been disrupted by the Civil War.

In 1846, a distinguished group of the state’s citizens declared that “there is scarcely a state in the Union in which so great apathy exists on the subject of education of the people.” Four years later, Gov. Whitmarsh Seabrook said South Carolina had “done nothing” to educate “the middle and poorer classes of society.”

An impassioned speech by Spartanburg Rep. J. W. Tucker in 1853 shows the animosity felt by many upcountrymen toward the coastal gentry and their “elitist” attitudes. The aristocrats, Tucker claimed, had little interest in “the common education of the people,” believing education would produce “as much evil as good” by encouraging the “humbler classes” to participate in governance. Tucker said, “Ours is [either] a government of the people, or it is a profession of damnable falsehoods... If you would build up Southern power, you must educate... the common people.”

In the mid-1800s, some whites believed their slaves were more valuable if they could read and write, while others feared that a little education could be a dangerous thing. “For generations the majority of white people in South Carolina believed that if a Negro were educated, his effectiveness as a worker would be lessened,” wrote Winthrop Professor J. Thomason in a 1920s history. “Some slave owners...found that the slaves who could read and write and attend to simple business matters were more valuable servants,” wrote Asa H. Gordon in *Sketches of Negro Life and History in South Carolina*.

Slaves had their own reasons for wanting to learn to read and write. Some did not live with their masters; they just had to give them a certain sum each week and could keep the remainder, which some used to buy freedom. Also, by law, slaves could not be on the streets at night after a certain hour without a permit from their owner. Some slaves forged their names to the permits, tricking police officers who often could barely read.

Historian William Preston Vaughn wrote the following after uprisings by Denmark Vesey (a former slave from St. Thomas who won the money for his freedom in a lottery) and other blacks:

Some Southern whites became convinced that it was impossible to cultivate black minds without arousing a spirit of self-assertion and rebellion. Others believed that blacks were incapable of being educated, while still others feared that literate blacks would read and be influenced by abolitionists’ literature.

In 1843, South Carolina passed a law forbidding any education of blacks. Any white person convicted of teaching a slave to read or write was fined up to \$100 and imprisoned for up to six months. A freed black was whipped “not exceeding fifty lashes” and fined up to \$50 at the discretion of the court. Informers were entitled to half the fine.

1860-1900: The Ups and Downs of the Civil War, Freed Slaves, Carpetbaggers, Reconstruction, Teacher Training

(SC State Superintendents of Education: Justus K. Jillson (1870-1876); J.R. Tolbert (1876-1878); Hugh S. Thompson (1878-1884); Asbury Coward (1884-1886); James H. Rice (1886-1890); W.D. Mayfield (1890-1898); John J. McMahan (1898-1902)

During the War Between the States, schools in Charleston were disbanded because of “general demoralization consequent upon the occupation of the city by the Federals,” a city school superintendent wrote. As federal troops entered South Carolina, many African Americans appealed to them for help. Union Gen. William T. Sherman sent out a call for aid in February 1862 saying:

Hordes of totally uneducated, ignorant and improvident blacks have been abandoned by their constitutional guardians, not only to all the future chances of anarchy and starvation but in such a state of abject ignorance and mental stolidity as to preclude all possibility of self-government and self-maintenance.

Northerners responded not only with funds for schools, but also with teachers for them. Several of the first schools were on the sea islands, which came under federal control in December 1861.

In 1862, the Penn School was founded on St. Helena Island on land donated by an illiterate ex-slave. It was named in honor of The Pennsylvania Society of Abolitionists who supported it.

Another major benefactor of schools for blacks just after the war was the Freedmen's Bureau, created by Congress a month before the war's end in 1865 to secure health, sustenance, rights and education for the freed slaves. The bureau opened new schools and reopened old ones, including the Charleston schools that had closed when federal troops occupied the city.

In 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau opened Howard School in Columbia. For fifty years after the Civil War, it was the only public school in Columbia that accepted blacks. It served children of all grades until 1916 when Booker T. Washington High opened for blacks. It was the only public high school for Columbia's African Americans until 1948. Because African Americans had so few opportunities to get an education anywhere in the state, some families even moved to Columbia or boarded their children with Columbia families.

At the war's end, South Carolina's black majority found itself emancipated and challenged to take on the responsibility of full citizenship. The literacy rate among the freed slaves was only five percent. Many of the former slaves saw education as the key to answering that challenge. As early as 1865, delegates to the Zion Church Colored People's Convention called for public schools in every neighborhood to overcome the "forced ignorance and degradation of the past" and to realize the "bright inspiring hopes of the future."

After the Civil War, a new group of teachers began to arrive— Northerners who came to teach in black schools. "Many missionary teachers had more earnestness than training and knew little of the delicateness of the relations existing between a lordly and a servile race," wrote John Thomason in *The Foundations of the Public Schools of South Carolina*. Some missionary teachers "were enthusiastic and had good sense; some had little of either and were back home before the summer was over."

Southern whites complained about the following:

- the teachers were political emissaries
- they taught blacks ideas of social equality and dislike of the Southern whites
- the teachers were often fanatical or of bad character
- the schools were centers of trouble
- texts hostile to the South were used in schools
- pupils were forced to sing Northern songs about the war

The Northern teachers complained that they were ostracized and sometimes mistreated, and the Ku Klux Klan burned their schoolhouses.

South Carolina's first attempt to educate "all the children of all the people" ("without regard to race or color") emerged— with bitter irony— during the reign of the despised Carpetbagger government shortly after the Civil War. The new school system's foundation was laid in Charleston during the winter of 1868 when a convention of African Americans, Northerners and "scalawag" white natives gathered to rewrite the state constitution. It also required compulsory attendance of all children, except the mentally or physically handicapped, between the ages six and sixteen, for at least twenty-four months.

When the radical Reconstructionists assumed power in 1868, they wrote into their new constitution South Carolina's first guarantee of a free public school system. The constitution and several subsequent laws described a modern system funded by both state and local taxes open to citizens of both races. But what succeeded on paper failed in practice— due in part to the financial excesses of the Carpetbaggers themselves.

The state's new black citizens were "alive with the desire for education," says one chronicler of the period. Francis Cardozo, one of the most able black leaders, pressed for

a provision guaranteeing free schools throughout the state. Cardozo warned prophetically that the “old aristocracy and ruling power of this State” would one day regain control “because intelligence and wealth will win in the long run.” “They will never pass such a law as this,” Cardozo said. “They will take precious good care that the colored people shall never be enlightened.”

The delegates, made up of Republicans, who were mainly African Americans, and Democrats, who were almost all white Northerners and Southern “scalawags,” heeded Cardozo’s words. The education article of the new constitution included the first declaration in South Carolina’s 200-year history that obliged the state to provide a free public school system:

- The schools would be open to all children of both races, regardless of wealth.
- Financial support would come from a state property tax and a poll tax.
- Local administration of the system would be handled by paid, elected commissioners who would divide each county into school districts.
- A six-month term for all schools and compulsory attendance would be mandated as soon as schools were “completely established” throughout the state.
- A State Board of Education and an office for a state superintendent of education would be established.

However, these goals were not achieved for generations.

The chief architect of the education article was Kershaw delegate Justus K. Jillson, a 29-year-old “Yankee” school teacher who came South shortly after the war to teach black children in Camden. In late 1868, Jillson was elected state superintendent on the Republican ticket and set about trying to turn his “paper” school system into the real thing.

However, from the start, Jillson was plagued by problems of money, leadership, and racial prejudice. An honest and dedicated state official during a time of considerable corruption, Jillson was clearly a visionary, committed to the creation of a modern school system at a time when class, race, and sectional prejudices made the task impossible. Many school commissioners wrote Jillson saying that both races opposed mixed schools. “The natural antagonism resulting from birth and caste, on the one hand, and a sense of equality, on the other, will produce discord and strife in such a school,” wrote Commissioner William Peake of Fairfield County.

Yet, for a few years during Reconstruction, what is now the University of South Carolina in Columbia was integrated. In 1873, an African American student entered the school and paved the way for more black students and faculty. Except for some white Northern professors, all of the white professors, students, or both, left. Later, when Southern whites regained control of the state government in 1877, they closed the school down and later reopened it as an all-white school.

Under Jillson, the legislature appropriated only \$50,000— about 25 cents per pupil. The appropriation increased to \$300,000 the next year, but Jillson complained that he had received only \$91,000 by the end of the school term.

Devastated by the war, the state had difficulty raising sufficient taxes. The chronic shortage of money forced many schools to close for long periods. Teachers went without pay.

Money was not the only problem. Much of the real authority to run the system was left in the hands of local commissioners and trustees.

Jillson was dismayed by poor teacher quality. In 1870 he told the legislature, “Probably no state in the Union is so cursed with poor teachers as is South Carolina.” He faulted county examiners for giving certificates to persons not entitled to them, and he said the time had come for the legislature to begin training programs for first-class teachers. Giving teaching jobs to persons “too ignorant or shiftless to earn a comfortable livelihood

elsewhere is, to put it mildly, a mistake,” Jilison said in 1875. Jilison left office in 1876 as control of the government was shifting from the Radical Reconstructionists into the hands of the state’s former Confederate leaders. Political pressure to decrease educational expenses, especially for black schools, grew after the Carpetbaggers were ousted from government in 1876, according to historian Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr. “Many whites disliked the whole educational program because it was begun by the Radicals, it implied racial equality, it might ‘spoil’ good Negro field hands, and it might improve the Negro’s political potential,” wrote Lander.

By 1878, the new government had cut school spending, eliminated a provision that gave more state aid to poorer districts and instituted policies that would slowly widen the gap between the white and black schools. The state maintained virtually no control over the quality of individual school districts.

State Superintendent of Education Hugh S. Thompson wrote that one of the greatest hazards to the state’s recovery was the “ignorance of a large number of our people.” Nearly 57 percent of the voting population had been unable to read the ballots they cast in the last election. “No other state in the Union contains so large a proportion of illiterate voters,” Thompson said. He proposed that a teacher-training school be started with interest from U.S. bonds.

Poor local leadership, combined with problems of geography and rural poverty, produced thousands of one- and two-teacher schools that were often operated, in the words of one state superintendent, by the “illiterate cousins and aunts” of local school trustees. Thompson, later governor, also complained of difficulty getting teachers for the black schools. He said it was necessary often to pay teachers in I.O.U.s and that the Southerners would not teach blacks and few Northerners would come South for the low salaries that were offered.

Nevertheless, largely due to Thompson’s urging, a teacher corps was slowly built. Finally, in 1880, the first state effort at teacher training began with a summer institute at Wofford College in Spartanburg. Furman College in Greenville offered its facilities the next year.

The first summer institute for training black teachers would not be held until 1881. Bettis Academy, founded by the Rev. Alexander Bettis, a former slave, opened its doors in the small town of Trenton in Edgefield County where it trained African American teachers.

The University of South Carolina began offering teacher training institutes in 1882 and offered the first college courses designed for teachers in 1883. Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, founded in 1867, trained African American teachers to instruct African Americans in Charleston. In spite of a lack of teacher-training programs, the number of African American teachers in the state tripled between 1776 and 1900.

In the late 1800s, the superintendent of Columbia schools opened a training school for teachers with private funds. This program was so successful that it inspired Gov. John P. Richardson to recommend that the state take it over and enlarge it into a college for women. At the urging of the next governor, Benjamin R. Tillman, the college was created especially for training teachers. Named for Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts, who had supplied the funds for the Columbia teachers’ school, Winthrop College in Rock Hill opened to students in 1894.

Even though important steps were being taken to provide college opportunities for teachers, both a deficiency and a discrepancy existed in student funding. In 1880, white schools received an average of \$2.75 per pupil. Black schools received only slightly less--\$2.51 per pupil. By 1895, however, the per-pupil spending for whites had actually risen slightly to \$3.11, while spending on black pupils dropped to \$1.05. Local school officials were not required to share tax money equally between the black and white systems.

In 1890, Ben Tillman vowed to remedy the “absolute regression” of the public schools. But the Tillman constitution failed to accomplish the financial reforms needed to invigorate the rural school system. The constitutionally mandated county tax remained the financial anchor of the system, despite the fact that, in some counties, the required three mills produced less than \$1.00 per child. The new constitution did revive the idea of state aid, directing the legislature to use an assortment of state taxes to guarantee every school district an income of at least \$3 per child. However, the legislature was slow in coming up with the money.

Shortly after the beginning of McMahan’s term in 1898, the state superintendent complained that it guaranteed poor districts only a three-month term and “\$75 teachers” who operated what “can hardly be called a school.”

Black schools— both urban and rural— suffered even greater hardships. Local school officials were not required to share tax money equally between the black and white systems. The belief that black schools deserved no more than a meager portion of the school dollar quickly became official state policy— accepted by the most enlightened white educators. At the turn of the century, the theory that “to educate a Negro is to spoil a laborer” prevailed among the white leadership.

At the same time, however, a movement began among progressive educators to upgrade the rural white schools which had fallen far behind the towns and cities in quality. During the next quarter century, their efforts failed to overcome the extreme localism that prevailed in the General Assembly.

As South Carolina’s public education system stumbled into the 20th century, State Superintendent of Education John McMahan handed down this summary judgment of its condition in his 1900 report to the General Assembly:

It is a misnomer to say that we have a system of public schools. In the actual working of the great majority of schools in this state, there is no system or orderly organization. Each county supports its own schools with practically no help from the state. Each district has as poor schools as its people will tolerate— and in some districts anything will be tolerated.

Two years later, McMahan declared that the state must become the primary source of school funding, apportioning the largest share of state dollars to counties that needed it most. Secondly, McMahan said that every school district should be forced to meet minimum state standards in order to receive state aid. Funds were supposed to be provided for school libraries, building construction, and teacher training. He also said that the state must remove the near-absolute control over school quality from the hands of elected county superintendents. County school boards should be formed, and superintendents should be chosen by them from a list of professionals certified by the state. Unless these steps were taken, McMahan prophesized, economic development of the state would be severely retarded. Thus began a 25-year battle between state education leaders and proponents of extreme local control.

The question of mixed schools for blacks and whites was settled firmly in 1895 when the state adopted a new constitution to replace the one drafted in 1868 by the Carpetbaggers. It stated: “Separate schools shall be provided for children of the white and colored races, and no child of either race shall ever be permitted to attend a school provided for children of the other race.”

The new constitution directly opposed the charter for Claflin College in Orangeburg, which had been granted in 1869 by the South Carolina Legislature. Claflin was a private school begun by Methodist Episcopal ministers whose charter stated no one would be refused admission because of “race, complexion, or religious opinion.”

1900-1910: A Decade of Thwarted Efforts by Education Advocates

South Carolina State Superintendent of Education: O.B. Martin (1902-1908)

As the 20th century dawned, a third of the state's citizens were illiterate, about 85 percent of the population was rural, and the small, country schools were hardly the places to entice eager attendance. One school house in Anderson County was described in 1903 as follows:

This schoolhouse...must be the poorest in the county; I trust I shall find none poorer. It is a frame building, with one room about twenty or thirty feet, having a fireplace in one end...made of rough stone. It had been planned to have a fireplace in the other end, but it had never been placed there, and the opening was covered with a few rough planks, with large cracks between them. How the unceiled room was kept warm in the winter is a mystery to me. Slab benches served as seats. The one blackboard in the room was less than a yard square.

It was reported that "a typical rural school was found away out in the backwoods, at least one-half mile from any dwelling— no good playground or water, inconvenient, lighting poor, seats uncomfortable.

Mayre R. Shelor, touring Oconee and Pickens County schools, reported, "A large percent of the teachers are young people, who cannot pass our grade school examinations... yet the teachers are permitted to shape the destiny of our country."

About Marion County, Penelope McDuffie wrote, "The teachers are fresh from the schoolroom themselves, or quite often town girls who teach for diversion and a salary. Obviously, there is no professional spirit and no attempt to increase the efficiency of teaching." She wrote:

It is almost inconceivable how a self-respecting teacher can remain in a bare shelter, unlighted except for one glass window, minus three-fourths of its panes, and without any desks. I presume the children learn to write on slates— certainly there are in four of the schools just visited no arrangements for writing any other way.

The public school system developed at an extremely uneven rate across the state, leaving much of the territory outside the cities and towns to "wallow in ignorance." According to USC professor Dr. Judith Joyner, the "disastrous neglect of the rural schools in the first few decades of the 20th century heavily influenced the state's uneven and, in human terms, tragic educational history."

The twenty years that followed McMahan's sermon to the General Assembly produced reams of legislation aimed at improving the public schools— and more particularly, the rural schools. The changes looked good on paper. They provided new funds for school libraries and building construction, began the first statewide high school program and strengthened teacher training. But much of the progress the laws sought to accomplish was marred by the twin bugaboos of unequal finance and weak state control.

With teacher training programs gaining in popularity, the state still struggled with hiring quality teachers, a goal that was hampered by a continuing weakness— low pay. In 1907, High School Supervisor William H. Hand said that it was unreasonable to expect a capable man to take a teaching job at \$60 a month (then the going rate) when he could make \$75 a month in any prosperous business. For women teachers, the pay was even worse: \$40 a month. The pattern of inequality, with black women the lowest of the lot, continued until a uniform pay scale was adopted in 1945 as desegregation rumblings began.

In 1907, the legislature passed a High School Act, aimed at nurturing a system of secondary schools. But compromises on the Senate floor produced a law that limited its aid to the smallest and poorest of school districts, which established high schools without the resources to maintain them. Education historian Joyner says the misguided law

“weakened the elementary schools and retarded the growth in public high schools for decades.” High schools were supposed to have at least two teachers with top-grade certificates and be in session thirty-two weeks. Twenty-eight weeks would do if circumstances justified. The High School Act provided no relief to the African-American community.

Before World War I, most African Americans in the state had no access to any high school. During this period the African-American community resorted to self-help by founding a number of private schools to educate their people. African American colleges ran elementary and secondary schools that educated others, including Laing High in Mt. Pleasant, Brainerd Institute in Chester, Friendship Normal and Industrial Institute in Rock Hill, Mather School in Beaufort, Lancaster Normal and Industrial School in Lancaster, Avery Institute in Charleston, Coulter Academy in Cheraw, and Mather Academy in Camden.

In 1908, John Swearingen, a blind college professor, began a fourteen-year term as state superintendent. He pressed for new laws increasing state support to poor districts, but he met modest success. Swearingen and James Hope, who followed him in office, both argued that only a state school tax could change the funding disparities. About teacher quality, Hand reported in 1909:

Time and again I have sat in schoolrooms watching the blind blunderings of teachers plodding through recitations without ever getting hold of a teaching fact or a teaching principle, until my very heart ached in sympathy for the children who had to endure it all. Why are so many incompetent teachers employed? There are several reasons. The one most obvious is that such teachers can be had cheap. When a school board goes out to find a cheap teacher, it usually succeeds in getting a cheap one in every sense.

Another reason for poorly qualified teachers, Hand said, was the way teachers' certificates were granted. They were given by the three-member county boards, which were under the influence of the elected county superintendent. “Many of the people who help elect the superintendents expect a return of favors,” Hand said, adding that that meant hiring the voters' sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, whether qualified or not. Hand said that certifications should be a state matter.

In 1910, State Superintendent of Education J.E. Swearingen agreed. He reported that the method of granting teachers' certificates had created “chaos.” Swearingen said the teacher exams sent out by the state board were graded by each of the county boards of education, each with its different standards. The counties then issued certificates, and some counties recognized the certificates of other counties, while others refused this recognition. Some counties were conscientious, while in other counties, at least 25 percent of the teachers were illegally certified. Because of the fragmented system, he said, there was no complete list of all of the qualified teachers. He proposed that the exams be graded by a central authority and that the certificates issued be good anywhere in the state. Action to bring some order out of the chaos came in the early 1920s when the state began certification of teachers who had graduated from the teacher training colleges.

1910-1920: Deplorable School Buildings, Salary Discrepancies, and Minimal Attendance

South Carolina State Superintendent of Education: John E. Swearingen (1908-1922)

In 1911, W.K. Tate, the state's first elementary rural school supervisor, reported:
The Negro schoolhouses are miserable beyond description ... Most of the teachers are absolutely untrained and have been given certificates by the county board not

because they have passed the examination, but because it is necessary to have some kind of a Negro teacher. Among the Negro rural schools I have visited, I have found only one in which the highest class has known the multiplication table.

Surveying black schools in 1914, Swearingen said about the students, "It is not a wonder that they do not learn more, but the real wonder is that they learn as much as they do." One statistic gives a big reason why: In 1913-14 the state expenditure for white schools averaged \$14.94 per student. For black schools, the figure was \$1.86.

Swearingen's observation changed little, if anything. The gap in quality between white and black schools was to continue well into the 20th century. Statistics of those years reflect the inequities in teacher salaries: In 1913-14, white male teachers were paid an average of \$610 annually, and black males were paid \$133. White women earned \$322, and black women received \$107.

By 1915, the state realized that illiteracy could not be extinguished as long as children were not required to go to school. Even in white schools, 70 to 75 percent of the children never went beyond the fifth grade. Therefore, the state passed a local option law, requiring attendance between the ages of eight and fourteen.

In 1921, attendance was made compulsory statewide, but there were no attendance officers to enforce the law. In 1916 the average class size for whites was thirty-seven students, compared to seventy-two for African Americans.

The length of the school term varied: A white town school term averaged 171 days, compared to 93 for blacks. A white rural school was in session 137 days while blacks went 69 days.

A picture of rural black schools in 1916 is given in the autobiography of Septima Poinsett Clark, who began her teaching career in a one-room log cabin school on Johns Island:

Each year one of the trustees was appointed to look after the school, to do minor repairs on the building and equipment (if you could call what we had to work with equipment), and to furnish an axe, a water bucket and dipper, and a table and chair and... firewood. An unskilled carpenter built a few crude benches without backs for the scholars, as they called the pupils in those days...Some Johns Island children walked eight or ten miles a day to attend school. And while the crops were being harvested, as a rule only the children too young to work in the fields were allowed to come to school. On rainy days when no work could be done in the field, we would have a large attendance. But if by noon the sun came out, the plantation overseer would ride up to the school and call for the tenants' children.

1920s: Small Steps in the Right Direction for Financing (6-0-1 Law), Adult Education, School Consolidation, Teaching Certificates

South Carolina State Superintendent of Education: Dr. James H. Hope (1922-1947)

By the early 1920s, the General Assembly—faced with the miserable performance of the South Carolina recruits on World War I literacy tests—was ready to listen. In 1920, there were only forty-six four-year high schools. In 1925, fewer than half of the whites aged fourteen through eighteen were in high school, and black students lagged even further behind. Within a year after Hope took office, the General Assembly approved a major school finance package aimed at finally resolving the tax imbalances between rich and poor counties.

In the 1920s, adult education classes were begun. Statistics revealed that practically one-half of the population had low productive ability, thus a low purchasing

capacity, which in turn was reflected in all businesses. Some “mill schools” in the textile communities were joint undertakings financed by public taxes and textile companies.

In 1924, the legislature made its first comprehensive attempt to address the problems caused by weak state control and unequal finance. The “6-0-1” law guaranteed six months of state aid to every school district and promised poor rural districts a larger share of the state money. The law encouraged schools to consolidate and improve standards in order to qualify for more state aid. Tragically, the law was not applied to the black schools, and the ever-widening financial gap between the segregated systems spread even further apart.

In 1926, teaching certificates were issued to 236 blacks, one of whom received a class “A” certificate. High schools were begun in 1907, but it was 1929 before the first Negro pupils received state high school diplomas at Columbia, Darlington and Union, according to Lander’s history of South Carolina.

1930s: The Depression

When South Carolina educators surveyed the field of battle in the 1930s and 1940s, they found no political knights buckling on their armor to champion the public school system. “Looking back, I don’t think of any statesmen or public officials who tended to champion education before 1951,” says Cyril Busbee, who served on the South Carolina Education Association’s political committee beginning in the 1930s.

During the Depression years, state historian Ernest Lander says, “The legislature found it necessary to reduce public school appropriations... cut salaries, curtail building programs, and reduce school terms. The lost ground was hardly recovered before 1940.” The state dropped the requirement that teachers attend summer school because they were too poorly paid to afford it.

In 1935, only 71 percent of South Carolina’s school-age pupils were enrolled, and just 50 percent were attending regularly. The Depression curtailed expenditures for all schools, thereby magnifying the educational disadvantage of African Americans. Recalling the 1930s, Busbee said:

I don’t know if anyone else had ever done it, but I went out and visited [the rural black schools] once or twice a year. The buildings were pathetic enough, but what was going on in them was even more pathetic. Three fourths of the kids never reached more than the fourth grade. The teachers were, for all effects and purposes, illiterate or near it. They had come from the same area and were just as deprived as the kids. Some districts didn’t even have a Negro school. If they did finish elementary school in Aiken, there was absolutely no thought of them going to the only consolidated high school, which was for the whites. School buses were traveling even at that time to the consolidated white high school. But there was absolutely no thought of any black getting on one of those buses and coming to high school.

Maudest Squires, longtime teacher in Georgetown who retired in 1974, recalls schools the way they were in the 1930s and 1940s:

There wasn’t any bus transportation for blacks before the ’50s. They would be walking while the whites rode by them in the buses. The children would say how the buses would go by and splash mud on them. The roads were so bad then. Even in the lunch program, it was not equal. The white schools would have lunchroom help. But in the black schools, the teachers had to fix the lunches, and the teachers and children had to do their own cleaning— scrub their own floors. My mother was a teacher, and she would cook the food here in our house and carry it out to the school. That was more in the rural schools, of course. In the early years,

the books in the black schools were usually books that had been discarded by the white schools. If they got new books, they would send us the old ones.

By the mid-1930s, professional educators were organized for political action. Over the next fifteen years, they accomplished several milestones:

- a toughened compulsory attendance law (1937)
- the addition of the twelfth grade (1944)
- the creation of a teacher retirement system (1945)

Largely through their own efforts and with the use of new federal aid, educators also began an adult education system, a vocational training system, and a feeding program for school children. Under pressure from federal court decisions and an awakening black electorate, the legislature approved a uniform pay and certification system for all teachers of both races in 1945.

1940s: World War II Impacts South Carolina Education

South Carolina State Superintendent of Education: Dr. Jesse T. Anderson (1947-1967)

In the year before World War II began, South Carolina had already carved its niche near the bottom of national rankings charts. In teacher salaries and per-pupil spending, the state shared the basement with a trio of Southern neighbors— Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. They would become familiar company over the next forty years. World War II had a lot to do with the change in thinking. Busbee, who was in Kershaw County schools in the early 1940s, said:

There was beginning to be some awakening to sensitivities, though not much about the inferiority of Negro schools during that time. People generally accepted the idea that they were supposed to have inferior schools...A lot of people in the military had contacts with Negroes, which caused them to change their own attitudes toward [them]. In that atmosphere you tend to judge people by what they can contribute and what they can do for you, including protection.

World War II drained the teacher supply as teachers, principals, and superintendents volunteered for military duty or took war jobs. Others found better paying jobs created by war conditions.

Even more critical were the test results of the state's young men who were drafted for the war. South Carolina had more draftees rejected for physical, mental, and education deficiencies than any other state except Alabama. That jarring fact helped spur expansion of adult education programs. Wil Lou Gray, then adult education supervisor for the State Department of Education, wrote in 1946 about the "vicious cycle of ignorance and low income, twins that are as inseparable as Siamese twins."

Another result of World War II was that government spending boosted the economy, which meant more money for schools. Improvements during those years included reduction of the number of pupils per teacher from thirty-one to twenty-nine students in white schools and from forty-one to thirty-five students in black schools. The elementary school term was lengthened by three days to 178 for whites and by twenty days to 162 for blacks. Twelfth grade was added to high school.

In the 1940s the average annual salary for a white male elementary teacher was \$998; for a white female \$856; black male \$411; black female, \$372. In 1944, black teachers and principals in Charleston got a federal court ruling requiring that their salaries be made equal to that of whites. Prodded by a 1944 federal court decision, the board saw the need to wipe out discrimination in teacher pay. The board's study led to new certification regulations and a salary schedule based on education, experience, and the grade on the National Teachers' Exam. However, more white teachers received "A"

certificates and still were paid more. Race and sex were dropped as a basis for pay. The regulations and pay scale were implemented in 1945 and remained in effect until the use of the NTE was challenged in the 1970s.

The most significant breakthroughs, however, had to await a change of attitude among the state's political leadership. That came in the late 1940s, when a new breed of legislator, fresh from the war and ready to push forward economic development in the state, arrived on the scene. Busbee identified U.S. Senator Ernest "Fritz" Hollings— then a member of the House of Representatives— as "one of the first very aggressive education leaders."

In 1948, the National Peabody Commission prepared a report on the state's education needs. Like so many experts before them, the Peabody Commission recommended a school finance equalization program to correct tax imbalances between districts. They also called for a major new building program and a thorough consolidation of South Carolina's 1,700 school districts, which the Peabody group found wasteful and inefficient. As the state neared the halfway mark in the 20th century, the gap in quality was nearly as wide as ever, as shown by some 1949 statistics:

- Per-pupil expenditures for white students was \$111; for blacks, \$50.
- Average teacher salaries for whites was \$2,057; for blacks, \$1,414.
- Of the one-teacher schools still existing, 180 were white, 799 were black.
- The value of white school property was \$68.4 million compared to \$12.9 million for black schools.
- The state was spending \$2.4 million on transportation for whites and \$184,000 on blacks.

1950s: Separate but Equal, *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, Jimmie's Tax, Sputnik, and More

Although the legislature dismissed the finance recommendations as too expensive, it did set up a committee chaired by Hollings to conduct a further examination of school needs. The Hollings Committee spent nearly two years on the task. After testimony and much travel to other states, the committee issued a report in early 1951 calling for a three-percent sales tax dedicated to public education. Education began to be a popular political issue in the early 1950s and developed over time with several governors— particularly Donald Russell and Robert McNair.

James F. Byrnes, South Carolina's most prominent politician, agreed in 1950 to run for governor and push for the sales tax as a means to upgrade the black schools. In his inaugural address, he declared that he did not need "the assistance of Ku Klux Klan" and did not want "the interference of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)." Byrnes made no bones about his motive for the tax: He hoped to avoid desegregation of the public schools by meeting the "separate but equal" standard established many years earlier by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The tax law and accompanying legislation radically altered the fabric of the public school system and sparked a remarkable eight-year building program. The law created a seven-member Educational Finance Commission charged with consolidating school districts, building new schools and establishing a statewide transportation system.

The state forced a massive consolidation of schools and school districts. By 1958, one- and two-teacher schools were virtually eliminated. The number of school districts fell to 109 from a high of more than 1,700— 600 of which had fewer than 100 students. In a three-year period between 1951 and 1954, the state committed over \$100 million to build 200 black and 70 white schools and to improve another 250 schools for both races. The new school bus system offered blacks public transportation to school for the first time in

the state's history, making it possible for African American students in rural areas to reach consolidated high schools.

The state's first sales tax, three cents on the dollar, was known as "Jimmie's tax." It was passed in 1951 and was pledged to pay off a \$75 million bond issue for school construction and school buses. About 70 percent of the money was for black schools, even though African American enrollment was about 39 percent of the total. A law was proposed, but struck down by the court, to provide state tuition grants at private schools for white students who did not want to attend integrated public schools.

For the most part, white leaders were content to invest in the physical side of the black schools and continue their historic disregard for the quality of black teachers or the intellectual challenges placed before black students. Bruce Felton, state agent for Negro education in 1951, wrote:

All are happy to have these (new buildings), [but] many of our schools are concerned with lack of necessary instructional materials and supplies and are thus handicapped in trying to develop the type of program that is needed for the maximum growth of boys and girls.

Twenty-five hundred new classrooms, mostly in black communities, had been built by 1954, and school buses were provided for about a third of the 229,000 black students. Almost half of the 296,000 white students were riding buses.

Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) impacted South Carolina law. The original case of an eight-year-old African American girl named Linda Carol Brown, who had to travel twenty-one blocks to attend an all-black elementary school, in spite of an all-white public school just seven blocks from her home, was expanded into a class action suit that included a group of South Carolina parents from Clarendon County. Oliver Brown, Linda's father, with the help of the NAACP, was suing the school district, charging that segregated schools violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

South Carolina played a role in this historic case. The NAACP persuaded a group of fourteen parents to start a court case in Clarendon County to ask that their children be given transportation to school just as the white students. Some African Americans were walking ten miles a day. Among the parents was Harry Briggs. Because his name was last on the list, the case was named for him and the school officials being sued — *Briggs vs. Elliot*.

Later, the NAACP decided to expand the case and asked for total equality in education. A total of one hundred parents joined the case. Unfortunately, many were fired and could not get loans or buy goods in stores owned by whites. Some even had their homes fire bombed. The Rev. J.A. Delaine, a teacher and preacher who helped organize the case, was fired by the school board along with several of his family members who taught. The state made membership in the NAACP grounds for the dismissal of public employees. Briggs became one of several cases from different states that the United States Supreme Court heard together in 1954. They collectively became known as *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

The Court voted unanimously to support Brown and overturn *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, thus rejecting the "separate but equal" doctrine. The Supreme Court ruled that separation of school children from others of similar age and qualifications, solely because of race, generated feelings of inferiority; thus, they concluded that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. However, many delays prevented full integration in some areas for as long as twenty years.

Ironically, the massive spending did nothing to head off the 1954 Supreme Court decision in favor of school desegregation. Even more ironically, it did not have a major impact on the quality of what went on inside school buildings. In 1955, the Fiscal Survey Commission's education task force stated:

During the past five years South Carolina has made wonderful progress in improving the physical facilities of her schools. We are of the opinion that considerably less creditable progress has been made in improving the quality of education offered in these schools. Some... are of such quality that any community might be justly proud of them. But there are many more for which we can find no more appropriate adjective than 'disgraceful'.

The task force's litany of recommendations sounds disconcertingly familiar. It called for a substantial increase in teacher pay, a teacher merit pay system, incentives to attract brighter teachers into the profession, and the raising of high school academic requirements to twenty units. It also called for tougher state standards over local school districts— not to "centralize control," but to ensure that South Carolina, "which is spending enormous sums for public schools," gets schools that can meet "reasonable minimum standards."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled dual school systems for blacks and whites unconstitutional and ordered an end to segregation "with all deliberate speed." Nine years of court cases followed before eleven black children in Charleston became the first to attend formerly all-white schools.

High schools got a failing grade on preparing students for college. A legislative study revealed that 48.7 percent of the whites and 38.4 percent of the blacks entering college in 1952-53 failed one or more courses. Worse, a "startling number" failed subfreshman English and math.

Also in 1954, the legislature passed the first funding for special programs for students called "the forgotten children," the mentally and physically handicapped. The money paid eighty-six teachers for special education classes. *Brown vs. Board of Education* was instrumental in providing a legal and emotional platform for parents with children with special needs.

In the summer of 1955, parents in Columbia, Estill, Florence, and other areas filed petitions with local boards asking that students be assigned on a "non-discriminatory basis." Signs of retaliation began to appear. In Estill, some blacks whose names appeared on petitions were forced to move from their rented homes, and others were denied credit by white-owned businesses.

In 1957, news reports were that Russians "hung an artificial moon 560 miles out in space and it is streaking around the earth at enormous speed." The "moon" (satellite) called Sputnik was to become a symbol to be held up to U.S. educators for decades. Then State Superintendent Jesse T. Anderson wrote:

The launching of the Russian satellite last fall created consternation and shock throughout America, and many blamed our public school system because Russian scientists seemed to be ahead of America in the satellite age. A good look at our public schools and their curriculum has been taken by educators, businessmen, scientists, and leaders in government with the result that American public schools have been praised and at the same time, weaknesses have been identified.

Anderson said subject matter was getting closer scrutiny so that students of ability could be directed toward math, science, and modern language. The new National Defense Education Act provided funding for those subjects, plus guidance and testing.

Still, all was not bleak in that decade. From 1955-57, seniors participating in the National Merit Scholarship did so well that the results "startled even our severest critics." The pupils of this state won as many scholarships per thousand as were won nationally.

In 1959, more South Carolina students received high school diplomas than ever before and that fall, more students were attending college than ever. Eighty-one percent of all courses taken by freshmen were passed, but despite Sputnik's influence, the courses failed most often were math, history, and science.

1960s: Baby Boom Generation, Integration, Civil Rights Act, Half-Day Kindergartens, Teacher In-services

SC State Superintendent of Education: Dr. Cyril B. Busbee (1967-1979)

Spirited by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as part of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society," the movement for equal educational opportunity caught fire in the 1960s as the baby boom generation moved through the schools. By 1961 enrollment was nearly 200,000 more than in 1947, with a total of 631,000 pupils. The rapid increase put a heavy burden on the schools, causing overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of equipment. Enrollment finally peaked in 1968-69, starting the downward trend that reflected a declining birthrate. Poor children of both races began to stay in school longer, challenging a system which had historically served only a limited class at its upper levels.

Instructional television began in a pilot program at Columbia's Dreher High School, and in 1960, the legislature expanded the program to more schools. That launched a statewide network that would become a model for other states.

Black parents, undaunted by previous retaliatory measures, pursued their children's rights in the early 60s, with the help of the NAACP, through non-violent, legal means but with a new intensity. In April 1960, some of the same Clarendon parents who had filed the suit that led to the 1954 decision went to court again, asking that segregation be ended in their school district. That suit lay dormant, but in May 1962, parents in Charleston and Darlington filed similar suits. Their case gained momentum eight months later when the federal court ruled that Clemson University had to admit its first black student, Harvey Gantt, a future mayor of Charlotte.

While the courts were at work, statistics became available that showed all too graphically the unfortunate results of South Carolina's segregated educational system. In 1962, 49.7% white males and 80.9% non-whites failed the Selective Service exams. A study indicated that many students had communication problems. The study also indicated problems with disrespect for teachers, indifference toward school, and unstable, unhappy home environments.

On September 3, 1963, Jacqueline Ford, twelve, and Millicent Brown, fifteen, were the first African Americans to attend a formerly all-white public school in South Carolina. On that day a bomb scare (a hoax) caused their school, Charleston's River High, to be emptied a few minutes. After nine years of legal wrangling to head off desegregation, the event itself, when it finally came, seemed almost anticlimactic. The eleven black children who entered Charleston's formerly all-white schools described their first day with words like "perfect" and "fine." They said they found their white classmates "pretty friendly." It was the kind of peaceful transition that South Carolina leaders had hoped for, despite their open opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision that separate schools for blacks and whites were unconstitutional.

In the summer of 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, which provided for cutoff of federal funds to school districts where discrimination was evident. A month later, more than a third of the state's school districts had been ordered to produce desegregation plans by September or lose federal funds. That fall, the race barriers went down in Columbia's city schools and those of fourteen other school districts. The number of blacks in white schools was small that first year, but the threat of full integration led to the quick establishment of a network of segregated private schools.

When the federal courts forced massive school desegregation, "white flight" began. The late '60s saw the courts turn thumbs down on freedom of choice as an effective way to desegregate schools and rule that a mixed faculty was one of the equal educational

opportunities to which students were entitled. As federal officials applied pressure for desegregation, leading to busing and zoning, some parents rebelled with brief boycotts. When a previously all-white school opened in one farming community in August 1968, nobody showed up, not even the teachers and principal. They had quit in protest of student and faculty desegregation. Faculty desegregation began, and black teachers were transferred suddenly to white schools and vice versa.

In 1965 South Carolina, Mississippi, and Virginia were the only states without a statewide compulsory attendance law. In 1967, compulsory school attendance became law again.

In 1966, a century of neglect and disarray in achieving teacher quality came to haunt South Carolina educators. Teacher shortages during World War II and the post-war baby boom that packed the schools caused trustees to hire almost anybody to staff the classrooms. As late as the mid '70s, the State Board of Education was still granting teaching certificates to persons with just one year of college.

Programs called in-service training became an urgency to upgrade teachers' abilities to teach. Dr. Jim Rex, then education dean at Winthrop College, said, "We are not getting the best and the brightest of the women that we were once able to attract to the profession." Bad-mouthing of the profession, with low pay, discipline problems, and endless non-teaching duties, had caused others to turn away from the profession. "[To address the teacher shortage,] we accepted students that previously we would not have accepted," said Dean John D. Mulhern of the University of South Carolina's College of Education.

Black teachers grew defensive. Ellen Watson, a former SCEA vice president, said then that black teachers were as well prepared as, if not better than, whites. She said just five years earlier, blacks were not allowed to attend then all-white colleges and universities and so went out of state, often to the top ten schools in the nation.

The establishment of a half-day kindergarten program funded by the state was the major achievement of Busbee's first term as state superintendent, which began in 1967. Governor Robert McNair first opposed the program because of its estimated \$20 million cost. He shifted his support, however, after a 1968 study of state government by Moody Investors Services recommended its establishment. In 1968 the Moody Report, commissioned by Gov. McNair, said the state's education system lagged in quality and quantity. It cited the large number of first-grade repeaters, an abundance of disadvantaged children, a low level of in-service teacher training, and low salaries. It recommended kindergartens to prepare all children, especially the disadvantaged, for higher-quality education. In 1969, kindergartens were established on a pilot basis with 3,400 children enrolled. Full funding for a statewide half-day kindergarten program for all five-year-olds came eight years later.

In the late 1960s, when the federal courts forced massive school desegregation, two widely disparate systems were combined virtually overnight. "White flight" continued—including the flight of many white leaders—and those who remained were left to sort out the legacy of the past. Between 1968 and 1973, the families of 25,000 white children chose to flee the system—opting instead for private schools or one of the "segregation academies" that had sprung up during the period. Some who left simply could not cope with the social equality implied by the change. Others feared racial violence in the halls and playgrounds. Many believed that the mixing of two unequal systems would inevitably lower the quality of public education.

In some school districts, white leaders fled the school boards as well, reluctant to grapple with the challenges of a new order. In other districts—mostly rural—white trustees and politicians patronized the private schools but retained control over a majority

black public system. In some instances, they froze or reduced local school taxes and ignored school-building needs.

Longtime Columbia High principal Roger Kirk, later a University of South Carolina education professor, recalled that period:

I walked into a faculty meeting, and a fellow came up and said, 'Hi, I'm your new science teacher.' It was crazy. Students who were already practicing football and who'd already had uniforms made for one school found themselves in another.

In the period between 1940 and 1970, school spending increased tremendously, from \$178 million to more than \$300 million. At the same time, support for the schools shifted away from the local property tax as the state sales tax assumed more of the burden. A heavy infusion of federal funds during the thirty-year period accounted for some of the increase.

The largest federal contribution began in 1965 with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I of the ESEA earmarked millions for the education of disadvantaged children, of which South Carolina had a disproportionate share. During the first five years of the act, the state received more than \$150 million for Title I purposes alone.

Student unrest and campus protests of the late 1960s had an effect by causing colleges to lower standards, said Mulhern of USC. The same thing happened in high schools, he said. The whole approach to education changed. We were more interested in making kids feel comfortable in the school and colleges than requiring them to learn something.

As the 1960s ended, the state school system was in better financial shape than it had ever been. One glaring inequity remained, however— the historic spending gap between tax-rich and tax-poor school districts.

In 1969-1970 twelve South Carolina districts still operated desegregated schools. Eight of these districts eliminated their dual systems voluntarily; the other four districts established unitary systems due to court orders.

1970s: Social Changes Mirrored in Schools

By 1970, public schools had become South Carolina government's biggest business— consuming nearly 50 percent of the tax dollar. Then-State Superintendent of Education Cyril Busbee wrote in 1977:

Social changes occurring in our country have exerted influence on our schools far exceeding those affecting any other institution. Schools are required to operate recreation and cultural centers in the form of athletic contests, movies, dances, drama, band concerts, and art exhibits. Our schools are challenged with the duty of providing moral guidance, since many patrons insist that the school is responsible for the morality of the younger generation; our schools are expected to serve as health centers; our schools are restaurants; our schools are job-training centers.

Coping with that myriad of responsibilities without sacrificing the basics became the schools' challenge for the '70s and '80s. Two-century-old, legally distinct systems were merged virtually overnight. Black and white teachers and students— strangers to one another— were suddenly called upon to work and study together in harmony. The sense of community, so important to the wellbeing of any school, often got lost in the cultural clashes that followed. Issues like zoning and busing combined with charges of racial discrimination and favoritism to polarize— sometimes paralyze— our citizens.

Early in January 1970, the NAACP went to court to ask for immediate desegregation of two school districts, Greenville and Darlington, where continued freedom of choice had led to little mixing. The U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for the

NAACP and ordered full desegregation in the two districts by February 17. It was a tough order. It meant rapid shifting of students and teachers and redrawing of bus routes. Appeals for more time by Gov. McNair and U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-SC, to President Richard Nixon were unsuccessful. On the morning of February 16, the Greenville and Darlington schools opened with total mixing. In Greenville, about 12,000 students and 750 teachers were transferred to other schools. Transfers in the Lamar District totaled about 2,500 students.

In the small, tobacco-farming Darlington County community of Lamar, some white parents seethed for two weeks. Then, as buses carrying black students rolled up to Lamar High School on the morning of March 3, the seething erupted in violence. An angry mob of about 150 white men and women overturned two buses just moments after they were emptied of students. Gov. McNair, who had been forewarned of trouble, had law enforcement officers on the scene, and they quickly made arrests. The schools were closed. Although the incident was quickly over, the schools were reopened in a week and the mob leaders were prosecuted. The event drew national media coverage, and South Carolina's record of non-violent school desegregation was marred.

In the decade of the 1970s, South Carolina's schools' problems were shared with the nation. Rampant social change— spurred by revolutions in human rights, communications, and technology— rocked the country. As always, those changes were highly visible in the social mirror our schools provide. Other problems had roots closer to home. A legacy of poverty, racial segregation, and extreme individualism had retarded the growth of our state school system, creating formidable challenges for education leaders.

The major test for South Carolina teachers was the National Teachers Exam, used since 1945. It was challenged as discriminatory in 1972 by black educators who said low scores by minorities were attributable to poor backgrounds and poor schooling. The continued use of the NTE would hasten the disappearance of black educators in South Carolina, critics said then. Despite such attacks, the use of the NTE was upheld in 1978 by the U.S. Supreme Court, which said it was unable to find any discriminatory intent in the test. In the meantime, South Carolina changed its use of the test. The state stopped using NTE scores as a basis for salary, and it dropped the use of the general knowledge portion of the test— which African Americans charged was the most culturally biased.

By the mid-1970s, a newly energized black electorate began to show its strength. White control in the rural black-majority districts weakened or disappeared entirely. Elsewhere, blacks began to share school board leadership with the whites who stuck out the transition.

As local school officials wrestled with the myriad of problems of the 1970s, state government began to assert its sovereignty over the public school system as never before. Educators began relying more and more on their state lobbying groups to influence school policy as state legislatures seized more control from local trustees and administrators.

The first major legislation came in 1974 with the passage of the Teacher Employment and Dismissal Act, which established uniform procedural rights for teachers and reduced the discretionary powers of local boards.

In the early 1970s, a movement began to reform the state's school finance system, stimulated by national lawsuits and our own historic funding gap between tax-rich and tax-poor counties. That movement culminated in the passage of the 1977 Education Finance Act— perhaps the most ambitious piece of education legislation in the state's history. Signed by Gov. Edwards, the law specifically addressed the underfunding issue in rural and black-majority districts. While it guaranteed these districts more state dollars, it also required each district to pay a fair local share based on its property wealth. Although the law did not equalize per-pupil spending across the state, it did guarantee a "minimum foundation program" for every student and poured nearly \$100,000,000 into the system

over a five-year period. Significantly, the law also tied state funding to a set of “defined minimum standards,” developed in 1974 by the State Board of Education. Although the standards emphasized “quantity” rather than quality, their inclusion in the EFA represented the state’s first attempt to put teeth into the accreditation system.

By 1978, education-minded legislators—alarmed over talk of declining basic skills—began to question the wisdom of measuring what went into the schools without measuring what came out. Across the country state assemblies were considering “minimum competency” exams designed both to gauge student proficiency in the three R’s and to exert pressure on school systems to do a better job.

South Carolina wrote its own version of a minimum competency testing program in 1978—The Basic Skills Assessment Act. The well-designed law directed the state Department of Education to develop a twelve-year basic skills curriculum and to test student progress at six grade levels. The tests themselves were “diagnostic,” meant to reveal weaknesses in math, reading, and writing, which the schools were told to repair. Initially, the tests confirmed the depressing fact that many students had a poor grasp of the basics. As a class, black children were the furthest behind. On average, they achieved scores 50 percent below whites. Over several years, statewide averages rose steadily in the lower grades, with black students showing the greatest gains. At the upper grade levels, the picture remained grim. In 1983, only 42 percent of the state’s eighth graders passed math—a two percent drop from 1981.

The 1979 Educator Improvement Act focused its attention on beginning teachers, requiring a basic skills test (EEE—Education Entrance Exam) for entry into teacher training programs and an on-the-job test during a teacher’s first year in the classroom.

The Assessments of Performance in Teaching (APT) required student teachers, first-year teachers, as well as continuing contract teachers, to be observed and evaluated. The evaluations focused on fifty-one performance indicators ranging from beginning the lesson promptly to communicating the value of the lesson to students. The law included general language calling for better evaluation of all teachers, but critics claimed it lacked any muscle and would do little to cleanse the system of incompetents already working in the schools.

The ’70s saw a greater mix of students, brought to sit side-by-side because of desegregation mandates of federal courts. Students who, in other years, would have dropped out were present because of a compulsory attendance law, repealed in 1955 and reinstated in 1967. The children of the “flower children” of the ’60s came to school, unencumbered by mores of earlier students and insistent about their rights. Many had only one resident parent, often a working mother who was not home to take care of them after school. Students faced increased social pressures with fellow classmates pushing pot, and sometimes, hard drugs on school buses and playgrounds. Television became a constant companion, one which stole innocence while at the same time giving maturing wisdom.

1980s: A Nation at Risk, Latchkey Children, Standardized Testing, Dumbed-down Curriculum, Teacher Shortages, EIA

SC State Superintendent of Education: Dr. Charlie G. Williams (1979-1991)

School leaders were called upon to cope with far more than the throes of integration. Across the nation, the social fabric was changing. The National Commission on Excellence in Education said in its 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, that “the educational foundations of our society” were beginning to erode. This report stated the following:

- Average achievement of high school students is lower than in 1957 when Sputnik was launched.

- Many 17-year-olds do not have the “higher order” thinking skills that should be expected of them.
- Secondary school curricula have been diluted to the point that they no longer have a central purpose.

In effect, we have a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main course. Social and family issues impacted students and schools. Economic pressures forced more parents into the job market. Rising divorce rates resulted in many more single-parent families. As the society became more mobile, there were fewer grandparents, aunts, and uncles around to help with child-rearing. Where children once wore skate keys around their necks, many now wore the key to the front door. The media branded them “latchkey” children— those who had no one at home to greet when they came home to reinforce the school experience.

Test scores were disturbing. Results of BSAP testing revealed the following:

- Among 11th graders, 38 percent failed to meet minimum standards in math, and 37 percent were substandard in reading.
- Among 8th graders, 58 percent were below minimum standard in mathematics. The 8th graders had shown no progress since they were first tested in 1981.
- Of the 6th graders, 44 percent were substandard in math, and 39 percent fell below the minimum in reading.
- Wide gaps existed between achievement of blacks and whites at the upper grade levels.
- Brighter findings included these facts: Second grade math scores jumped 12 percentage points between 1982 and 1983 (the largest improvement in any of the basic skills testing), and the number of children ready for first grade in the fall of '83 grew to 72.6 percent, up 12.4 percent in five years.

Other standard tests revealed alarming outcomes. South Carolina's score was lowest in the nation on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the most widely used college entrance exam, despite the fact they were up an average of 18 points over the past two years. The state was near or on the bottom of other lists: 43rd in the number of high school students who graduated (65.1 percent) and 49th in what it spent on each elementary and secondary student (\$2,016). On the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), this state's scores were below the national average in every area tested. All this testing made some educators question the expense, time, intent, and impact of testing. Record keeping and remediation resulted in a lot of paper work for teachers.

On the other hand, scores brought an awareness of what needed to be emphasized in the classrooms; they served as documentation to justify retention of a student, and they identified students who needed special help.

Regarding the basic skills law that was passed in the '70s, educators complained it was unrealistic to demand remedial teaching for several hundred thousand students without significant funding. In 1983, the General Assembly finally appropriated \$1 million for that purpose. Educators estimated the true cost was closer to \$60 million— the amount called for in Gov. Dick Riley's sales tax plan.

Generally, student motivation declined. The gratification provided by drugs, television, and the new sexual permissiveness came easily, often unlike the gratification of learning. Teachers began to notice that students had trouble maintaining interest in anything beyond a brief span of ten to twelve minutes. “You've got to be entertaining,” said West Columbia English teacher Karen Lumpkin. “Don't make me think',” her students told her. In Mrs. Lumpkin's opinion, student apathy was a direct result of television.

Social change also affected the curriculum and the teaching force. “Soft” courses often proliferated in the high schools. In the struggle to meet the remedial needs of

historically undereducated black and white children, schools sometimes lost sight of the need for high standards and a challenging curriculum for the more gifted.

Problems of discipline and motivation, traditionally low teacher pay, and a tarnished image of the teaching profession brought about declining enrollments in the state's teacher colleges. The human rights movement created new job opportunities for talented women and blacks— long a mainstay of the state and nation's teacher corps. Those who did choose teaching were often less capable than the generation before them.

By the end of the decade, the typical SAT score for entering teacher candidates was 50 points below the South Carolina average— already the worst in the nation. Critics said the teacher institutions were lowering their demands— offering more education and “methods” courses and cutting requirements in the subject areas students planned to teach. State certification requirements matched that trend.

Critics also charged that the state was not tough enough on teacher college standards. In some instances, colleges with few resources and the weakest of students were allowed to retain their accreditation. Among the twenty-eight South Carolina colleges offering teacher education in the 1970s and '80s, only one ever lost its accreditation.

South Carolina, like much of the nation, suffered from a shortage of math and science teachers. In 1981, according to a report from the National Academies of Science and Engineering, forty-five states had a shortage of math as well as physical science teachers. The report said the number of high school math teachers being trained declined by 77 percent during the 1970s, while the number of high school science teachers in training declined by 65 percent. Researchers said fewer college students were willing to submit to the academic rigors of the hard science. Meanwhile, industry was wooing potential science and math teaching candidates with larger salaries and more attractive working conditions. The resulting loss of teachers hampered the schools' ability to help promising science students— even as America battled with Japan and other nations for technological supremacy. Some math and science teachers simply were not qualified to teach those subjects. Forty-nine percent of science teachers taught with a certificate that required only six to eight hours in biology, chemistry, physics, or science electives. That minimal preparation sometimes amounted to no more than one year of introductory science in each of the four disciplines.

Other educators found fault with students who lacked a good work ethic. Dr. John Kenelly, a Clemson mathematics professor in the '80s, said that students did not often choose science and math courses that generally required a lot of study. He said, “It's frustrating to see students arriving at college wanting to pursue careers that require great amounts of math, yet they have squeaked by in high school with the minimum requirement.”

Another deterrent to hiring good teachers was salary. Dr. Elmer Knight, director of teacher education and certification for the State Department of Education in the 1980s, said, “Teaching is a low-wage industry. I know that sounds like a broken record, but we are no longer able to attract some of the people who provided a great deal of quality.” The state's salary schedule was among the lowest in the nation and the Southeast. It ranked 45th nationally and 10th among the twelve Southeastern states in 1982-83. Some educators said the problem was not with the beginning pay (then about \$12,000), but with what teachers were able to earn after they had been teaching a number of years (an average of \$17,232).

Ideas for rewarding good teachers with merit pay or career-ladder advancement were debated; however, South Carolina used a uniform pay scale, which meant teachers were paid the same regardless of the quality of their teaching.

Another drawback to the profession was identified—the peripheral duties without extra compensation. Dr. Thomas Sills, chairman of Francis Marion College's teacher education program, said:

Teachers have a sense of frustration that they are not in charge, that they are running hard to deliver on what somebody else set up, and that's not teaching. They have bus duty and lunch duty. Maybe our biggest problem in education is that what society primarily expects of schools is not education, but child care. A teacher's first duty is not how to teach children, but how to take care of them. They are responsible for them from the time they get off the bus until they get back on. We should separate the child-care function and the teaching function and have staff for child care.

"Professional achievement and job satisfaction are closely linked," Sill said.

Dr. Knight said:

The image of teacher turmoil in the schools in the last few years, as advanced in the media, has had an effect. People say teaching isn't a respectable profession. It's not that many years ago that teachers and superintendents were looked on as being the finest people and they had respect, but that has changed. At the same time, the schools are expected to shoulder a great responsibility. When there's unrest and moral degeneration, people blame the schools. The general public expects public education to accomplish all these things, and yet at the same time, the image of the teachers has diminished.

Sills commented, "More than anything else, we need to project a public image that teaching is an acceptable profession. The business community and the legislature should do what they can to recognize teachers as professionals."

As South Carolina slowly evolved from a rural farming state to an industrial and tourism state, the schools were forced to adapt quickly. As *Time Magazine* stated, "Signs of hope mingle with tokens of disaster even within the same schools."

In 1984, under the leadership of Gov. Richard Riley, the Education Improvement Act (EIA) was passed. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (1985), the EIA was the most "comprehensive single piece of legislation" passed by any state to better education. A one-cent increase in sales tax provided an additional \$217 million to educate the state's 610,000 students. Some of what it addressed follows:

- Raising student performance by increasing academic standards (increased the number of academic units required for high school graduation, with a minimum of three math units and two science units; stiffened eligibility requirements for participation in school sports; limited student absences of ten days without special approval, etc.)
- Strengthening the teaching and testing of basic skills (required students to pass an exit exam to receive a high school diploma; established promotion policies; funded a massive remedial program; established half-day child development programs in targeted areas, etc.)
- Evaluating the teaching profession stressed teaching as a career in high schools and colleges; fostered teacher recruitment (The South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment was formed.); established a loan program for those planning to teach in critical areas; provided increased pay and incentive programs to attract and hold bright teachers; set up in-service training; extended school year to 190 days for teachers; provided evaluation measures to weed out incompetent teachers, etc.)
- Improving leadership management and fiscal efficiency (assessed principals; set up training programs for administrators, etc.)

- Implementing quality controls and rewarding productivity (provided incentive grants for schools; established school improvement councils; created provisions to intervene in seriously impaired school districts)
- Creating more effective partnerships among schools, parents, community and business (encouraged teacher-parent conferences, parenting classes, adopt-a-school programs for businesses, school volunteer programs, etc.)
- Providing school buildings conducive to improved student learning (addressed construction and renovations needs for school buildings, etc.)

In 1989, the “Target 2000--School Reform for the Next Decade Act” was passed to address current concerns and amend some aspects of the EIA. Kindergarten programs for four-year-olds were established in public schools for at-risk children. Other issues addressed were dropout prevention, higher order thinking, problem-solving skills and disciplined-based arts (visual arts, music, dance, and drama). It also supported higher education centers “for the advancement of teaching and school leadership.”

1990s: Restructuring, Technology, School-based Management, School Choice, School-to-Work, SCCTR, Challenge for 21st Century

SC State Superintendent of Education: Dr. Barbara S. Nielsen (1991-1999)

The 1990s brought about several educational endeavors, including teacher empowerment, school-based management, school choice, restructuring and technology. Top-down management had created a sense of loss-of-power among teachers. As a result, many educators called for restructuring the profession to provide teachers with a greater sense of professionalism and involve them in decision-making and leadership.

Restructuring also empowered parents and community members as a collective force dedicated to improving schools. School choice and vouchers became major educational issues. The idea behind giving families a choice of which school their children would attend was based on the belief that effective schools would thrive, and ineffective schools would either measure up or close. On the other hand, school choice might inadvertently leave students (whose parents were not aggressively involved in seeking out the schools best for their children) in inferior schools attended merely on the basis of location and convenience.

Beginning in the mid 1980s and still growing throughout the next three decades has been the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment. The SCCTR, later renamed as the Center for Education Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA), targets teacher shortages in five areas: rural schools, minority teachers, male teachers, critical subject areas (especially math, science, foreign language, special education, speech clinicians), and teacher quality. The Center has several programs to address educational endeavors.

- Teacher Cadets is a high school course, offered mostly to seniors who have outstanding academic skills and character. Recruiting New Teachers recognized it as one of the best pre-collegiate teacher recruitment models in the nation. The curriculum, *Experiencing Education*, enables students to study the learner, the teacher, and the school. Many Teacher Cadets choose teaching as a profession and others become community leaders who support educational endeavors.
- *College HelpLine* assists seniors in gaining admission into college and obtaining financial aid. These services are particularly important to Teacher Cadets who are first-generation college students.
- Teacher Job Bank provides districts with information on qualified teacher applicants, assists teachers in finding jobs in South Carolina schools, and helps to

fill critical needs positions. These goals are accomplished through advertising, Teacher EXPO (statewide teacher job fair advertised nationally), a national toll-free telephone line for applicants and districts, and mailings.

- Teacher Forum, led each year by the state teacher of the year, is made up of district teachers of the year. They are recognized for their contributions to education, receive leadership training, and are provided a means to address educational concerns.
- Mentoring and Minority Recruitment are major endeavors that are significant aspects of every facet of CERRA. Because the percentage of minority teachers declined for years, CERRA incorporates numerous organizations, programs, and policies to increase the number of male teachers and teachers of color in the state. Statistics demonstrate that the programs show gains.

In the 1990s nearly 670,000 students in eighty-six school districts filled the classrooms of South Carolina's public schools. Fifty-five percent of the state's students were white, and forty-two percent were African-American. Most of the state's lower-income residents, a disproportionately large number of whom were African American, had low levels of education.

Approximately 46 percent of all students were labeled as poor or nearly poor. The Latino population was growing. South Carolina ranked forty-one among the fifty states in terms of per capita personal income. Students taking PACT (Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test) and high school exit exams were showing higher scores. During the 1990s the number of South Carolina adults with a high school diploma increased by almost 15 percent. Eighty-three percent of South Carolina's adults had a high school education (compared to the national average of 84 percent). In spite of general progress, there were wide disparities in the amounts of money and other resources available for children's education in the state. Schools with large numbers of low-income or minority students on average received and spent less money on education of students than predominantly white and/or more affluent districts. Twenty-five percent of students in South Carolina schools with high levels of poverty in the mid-90s were taught by teachers who lacked a major/minor in their field of instruction. By the end of the decade South Carolina ranked eleventh out of sixteen Southern states in teacher salaries.

2000-Present: NCLB, PACE, CERRA, Mentoring, Service Learning, NBCT, Equity Law Suit, Teacher Quality

SC State Superintendent: Mrs. Inez Moore Tenenbaum (1999-present)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was passed "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments." The federal law places emphasis on hiring highly qualified teachers who have at least a bachelor's degree, demonstrate content knowledge in each core content area in which they teach, and meet all the requirements for full state certification. Parents are granted "the right to know" their children's teachers' credentials. Teachers must successfully complete HOUSS (High, Objective, Uniform State Standards of Evaluation), a modified ADEPT (Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching). Student achievement is being tied to teacher performance. New regulations for paraprofessionals as well as certified middle school teachers have also been established. High goals are set regarding student proficiency in reading and math. Goals are included for high school graduation rates and safe, drug-free, conducive-to-

learning environments. An accountability program known as AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) measures student and school progress.

The Division of Teacher Quality (DTQ), under the umbrella of the State Department of Education, works with the Governor's School of Excellence in Teaching, addressing the following: Professional Development Schools, Standards and Assessments, Mentoring, and National Board Certification for teachers. State Standards include ADEPT, curriculum standards, and program approval standards. National standards include NCATE, INTASC, and NBPTS.

A new emphasis is being placed on the value of mentoring. South Carolina schools often lose one-third of their new teachers by the end of the fifth year of teaching. CERRA and the DTQ have moved forward based on research indicating that effective mentoring can result in teacher retention, thus lowering teacher turnover rates, enhancing the quality of education students receive, and reducing teacher-training funds lost when new teachers leave the profession. Cognitive Coaching and California's Santa Cruz mentoring models have been extensively used to promote sound mentoring skills. "South Carolina Mentoring and Induction Program Implementation Guidelines" are now in effect.

To address teacher shortages in critical need subjects such as math, science, foreign language, special ed, and English, PACE (Program for Alternative Certification for Educators) was established to serve the state divided into five geographic regions. Completing two rigorous summer courses as well as additional weekend seminars is required of the PACE participants (all who hold college degrees in critical need fields). They read an assortment of professional texts, complete unit plans, conduct an inquiry study, prepare a portfolio, and take specified graduate courses. Coordinated by the DTQ, PACE now produces more teachers than any one single school of education sponsored by a college or university.

In 2003 the SCCTR (South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment) changed its name to CERRA (Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement) to reflect its more comprehensive nature of serving multiple programs throughout the state. Located on Winthrop University's campus in Rock Hill, CERRA is the only statewide organization of its kind in the United States. It draws the attention of and collaboration with educators and political leaders throughout the nation. CERRA employees conduct much research, provide large workshops and symposiums, and produce numerous publications. They also help with funding for future teachers through scholarships through the Teaching Fellows Program. The Teacher Cadet Program has earned great respect state and nationwide. High school seniors, usually earning college credit for their work as TCs, study an in-depth, standards-driven curriculum that builds a basis for learning and teaching; in fact, the Cadets complete a field experience in which they work in other classrooms with master teachers. CERRA has also done much to provide awareness, financial support and achievement of certification for National Board Certified teachers. They have been instrumental in obtaining and sustaining the \$7500 annual stipend granted to all South Carolina NBCTs for the life of their certificate.

Another main focus of this decade is on minority requirement, placing more emphasis on recruiting teachers of color as well as male teachers into educational professions. Serving as role models for all children, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and male teachers can represent a variety of heritage and culture. They can reduce racial stereotyping as well as create a more varied and inclusive curriculum. In South Carolina the number of minority teachers in the school workforce has decreased by about 40% in the last two decades. Obstacles to minority recruitment include issues pertaining to standardized scores, completion of college, and competition from other career opportunities.

South Carolina is also promoting service learning to help students connect academic skills to knowledge in real-life situations. Students may have personal contact with the people they are serving, channel resources to those in need, and address community problems. School-to-Work specialists and service learning mini-grants are available to promote preparation, implementation, and reflection. Students may work with younger children, environmental endeavors, health programs, charity organizations, and citizens with a variety of special needs.

Thirty-two South Carolina colleges and universities currently have teacher education programs. The state adopted NCATE standards to serve as campus guidelines and for evaluation. Through collaboration, research, and professional endeavors, these schools of education strive to prepare their graduates to be successful on PRAXIS I and II and meet state and federal guidelines.

Although the state has provided funds for many more new school buildings, state-of-the-art technology, and better paid employees, it still lacks sufficient funds to budget for smaller classes, provide more support staff, pay more administrators and consultants, provide more money for travel and school supplies, and replace the aging fleet of school buses. Funding sources for South Carolina education include the Education Finance Act (EFA—General Fund), Federal Funds (NCLB, Special Ed, vocational, etc.), Education Improvement Act (EIA) and the state lottery.

In 2003 several school districts, including Allendale, Dillon 2, Florence 4, Hampton 2, Jasper, Lee, Marion 7, and Orangeburg 3, filed a suit against the state of South Carolina, saying that they are entitled to equitable funding. A documentary entitled *Corridors of Shame* revealed that there are still pockets in the state where teachers and students contend with inferior, and sometimes dangerous, building situations. With weak tax bases generating little revenue for schools serving large percentages of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, the districts argue that they do not have the money to meet students' academic needs. Court testimonies have generated long lists of problems with school facilities, including leaking roofs, collapsing ceilings, mildew and water stains, exposed wires, poor lighting, antiquated plumbing, inadequate bathrooms, limited wheelchair access, insufficient heating and cooling systems, and generally deteriorating buildings. Attracting and retaining high quality teachers is an on-going challenge in these school districts because many teachers do not want to teach in these conditions or live in rural areas of the state. The children often come from homes in which the parents lack high school and college degrees and face issues with unemployment and minimum-wage pay. Many of these student have to ride school buses over an hour each way each day to get to school, and more than not qualify for free lunch.

Another current focus is on teacher leadership, which is based on the belief that teachers have daily contacts with learners and are therefore in the best position to make critical decisions about curriculum, instruction, and schools. Teachers typically define career satisfaction in terms of their ability to have an impact on decision making, collaboration, school culture, problem-solving, professional development, and sharing a vision or mission. In 2005 a Working Conditions Survey was administered statewide to get teacher and administrator feedback about many aspects of individual school environments.

Special education continues to get more attention as the state strives to serve more than 105,000 children a year, all who are identified as having a special need. The state currently hires approximately 6,000 educators and service providers to work with these students. Inclusion for these students is being promoted so that these students receive instruction alongside their peers not being labeled with special needs. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, and related service providers work side by side on 504

plans and IEPs to provide these students with free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environments.

This booklet entitled *The History of South Carolina Schools* begins with this statement: "Much of the 300-year history of our public schools is a tragic tale of fits and starts, marked at times by inspired leadership, but too often marred by problems of class, race, war, poverty and geography."

Because of the strides made by citizens, both individually or collectively, South Carolina now has much for which it can now be proud, as indicated by this list of education accomplishments as of 2004:

- Students have made significant improvements in statewide PACT testing, with gains across all grade levels, subjects, and demographic groups.
- South Carolina high school seniors have improved their average SAT score by 38 points in the past five years, the largest gain in the country and four times the national increases.
- The national report card "Quality Counts," published by the respected magazine *Education Week*, ranked South Carolina Number 1 in the nation for improving teacher quality in both 2003 and 2004, and seventh in the nation for improving academic standards and accountability in 2004.
- South Carolina ranks third in the nation in the number of teachers certified by the prestigious National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- The *Princeton Review* ranked South Carolina's testing system as Number 11 in the nation and praised the state's academic proficiency standards as among the nation's most rigorous.
- South Carolina is one of only three states in the nation that has increased high school seniors' scores on the ACT college entrance exam over the past five years despite doubling the number of students who took the exam.
- The number of South Carolina first-graders scoring "ready" for school is at an all-time high. The funding and phase-in of full-day kindergarten have dramatically improved school readiness, with the biggest improvement made by minority students and students from low-income families.
- Scores on the South Carolina High School Exit Exam have improved by 3.8 percentage points in the last three years.
- South Carolina students are now scoring above the national average in reading, language, and math on TerraNova, a nationally standardized test.
- South Carolina students have dramatically improved their performance on "The Nation's Report Card," a set of standardized tests administered by the federal government. Fourth-grade math was a major success story in 2003, when only ten states outperformed South Carolina.
- South Carolina eighth-graders meet or exceed the international average in the Third International Math and Science Study, which compares test scores of students in thirty-eight nations.
- The nonprofit RAND organization's analysis of improvement in student reading and math test scores ranked South Carolina seventeenth among the states.
- Four independent national studies have confirmed that South Carolina's standards for student academic proficiency are among the nation's most rigorous.
- South Carolina is a national leader in service-learning programs, which enable students to develop community service projects linked to their academic studies. Each year, more than 100,000 South Carolina students volunteer more than a million hours of community service through service-learning programs.

Many issues dominate the attention of educators not only in South Carolina but also throughout the nation. How do teachers and administrators address complicated social issues such as multiculturalism, poverty, moral issues, child abuse, parental involvement, substance abuse, sex education, censorship, discipline, brain-based learning, ESOL, and violence— all of which impact our schools? Each issue has produced policies and laws. How do schools better prepare students for the work force and international relations? Major emphasis is now placed on cooperative learning, vocational training, school-to-work coursework, frameworks for courses, and use of technology. How can it be determined if school personnel are doing their jobs? Thus, the issues of accountability, test scores, upgraded teacher preparation on the college level, and ADEPT (Assisting, Developing and Evaluating Professional Teaching) are part of the reform efforts in South Carolina's attempt to upgrade its education system.

Dr. Terry Peterson, when he was Executive Director of the South Carolina Business Education Committee of the Education Improvement Act, said:

Future education leaders have a tremendous challenge before them in preparing the state's young people and adults to be productive and caring citizens in a new century and in a global economy. The state has a history of both being on the cutting edge of educational change and of being very complacent. Complacency ... will doom the state and its students to mediocrity... at best. The state has moved education forward in recent years when strong leaders mobilized large numbers of educators, parents, businesses, and government officials to act. This type of participatory leadership in education is critical to move the state's schools and colleges forward.