

CONSIDERING DECISIONS BEFORE THEY BRING CONSEQUENCES:  
AN ANALYSIS OF D.C. SCHOOL BOARDS AND THEIR DECISION-MAKING

by

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Sociology at George Mason University

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the family and friends who patiently supported me through this work.

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## ABSTRACT

### CONSIDERING DECISIONS BEFORE THEY BRING CONSEQUENCES: AN ANALYSIS OF D.C. SCHOOL BOARDS AND THEIR DECISION-MAKING

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This thesis is a comparative historical analysis of the appointed and elected District of Columbia Public School Board of Education. Using the Boards' meeting minutes, the study illuminates how the selection method of the two governance structures influenced each of the body's meeting structures and decision-making. The current evolving roles and responsibilities of school boards have led to the significant scrutiny of them, including their impact on schools and whether or not they should remain in existence at all. However, with the acknowledgment that every school district has uniquely different needs, this research provides insight into the dialogue and rhetoric to help us understand how the different governance structures approached their policymaking roles.

## INTRODUCTION

1968 marked the first year when District of Columbia residents elected their Board of Education. Since 1906, the Board of Education had been appointed by District Court judges. The Board of Education was the first avenue through which the city's residents were able to exercise their democratic capacity on a municipal-level and was intended to be "a people's school board" that would play a key role in the improvement of the school system ("An Elected School Board" 1968:n.p.). The newly elected Board was more geographically and economically (and undoubtedly racially, as well) representative of the city" ("An Elected School Board" 1968). Members were selected for their commitment to education, as opposed to members who were previously appointed by judges based on their "past business accomplishments" (ibid.:n.p.). With big expectations of how changes in the city's public education governance structure might transform the overall system, the transition from an appointed board to an elected one did not elicit the dramatic educational improvement for which some had hoped. Previously, school boards are commonly used as one approach to solve the challenges faced by their school systems. However, Diner (1982) argues that education governance should not be used "to solve immediate problems" faced by education systems given that the same factors that prompt their scrutiny in the first place emerge from beyond the school system

itself (Diner 1982:1). In other words, these structural changes would not be the most effective way to producing “quick, discernable improvements in the schools or in social conditions” (ibid.:70). Additionally, when such changes are made, there is usually limited knowledge regarding previous structures, let alone how they might inform future ones (ibid.).

My research provides just that – an historical perspective into DCPS Board of Education. Furthermore, my research is not conducted from the perspective of solving larger or complex educational challenges through the governance structure or identifying a universal superior structure, rather it is conducted with the objective of improving school boards’ capacity and providing support to approaches that are actually effective in producing change in schools. A look into the dialogues of school board members can offer a constructive step towards improving education governance by understanding the attributes offered by each board type.

In this thesis, I ask: Does the selection method of a school board influence the educational aspects members considered in their meetings and decisions? To answer this question, I compare the appointed school board from 1950 to 1969 with the elected school board of the District of Columbia Public Schools from 1969 to 1985 through their meeting minutes. Each governance structure reflected their own principles and approaches to policymaking. Therefore, my research demonstrates how the selection method of each school board influences the educational aspects members considered and prioritized in their work as school board members.

Existing school board research comparing appointed and elected school boards commonly examine their relationships to various outcome variables and focuses less on the actual nature of their processes. Through the identification of boards' thematic considerations and perceptions, this research demonstrates how each board conducts their work and illuminates the factors that were present, and absent, in their decision-making. As long as students' educational needs and educational systems continue to change, research into understanding how education governance can effectively support the approaches implemented to address the consequences of these changes should continue.

#### *Literature Review*

1969 was the beginning of the elected DCPS Board of Education (BOE), which had been federally appointed up until then. During its appointed years, the BOE was predominantly comprised of white members even though its student body was largely black and approximately three-quarters of teachers were black (Henig et al. 1999). Black leaders contested this racial discrepancy between the board and the schools it governed. Since its first election though, the Board has been predominantly black, yet frequently clashed with white school administrators who were accused of being insensitive to black students' needs (ibid.). Appendix I lists the members of the BOE for each year of this study and their race. Appendix II lists the source used to identify or confirm their race.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984) explains that social systems are developed through the cultural reproduction of the dominant group's habitus, or the collective life experiences – including the attitudes, behaviors, and outlooks – of those who have created and led it.

Systems, including public education, developed and operated by dominant groups prioritize the habitus of those same groups leaving less capacity for the consideration of non-dominant groups. They serve as mechanisms for the transmission of the dominant group's culture to all those who engage with it. School systems provide "value-inculcating and value-imposing operations" that assume cultural standards for its students before they even enter the classroom and such standards are reflected in the governing decision they make (ibid.:23).

Education systems can be divisive structures as the dominant groups' decisions primarily benefit the students of that same group, or those who were already dispositioned to academically succeed within it (Bourdieu 1984). School board members impose their own ideologies on students and their families, which, could be particularly concerning in the case of DCPS given the racial discrepancy between the predominantly white appointed board and the predominantly black student body. Previously excluded from the dominant and governing group, black residents understand the impactful role of race in policymaking as "more than a demographic characteristic," but rather a "shared experience" among subordinate groups (Stewart, England, and Meier 1989:288).

Local school boards were originally introduced to education systems in the United States more than 200 years ago in Massachusetts when running the schools of growing communities became "too great of an administrative burden" for local officials (Land 2002; Danzberger 1994:368). Since their initial establishment, public education governance structures have evolved in response to higher-level education reforms and initiatives causing them to become increasingly "complex" (Danzberger 1994:368). The

increased prevalence of federal and state education policies, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and No Child Left Behind, have detracted from school boards' ability to govern schools more directly as they have in the past (Sell 2005). In addition to increased federal and state oversight, interest groups have also become increasingly influential on school boards as they "want their perspectives reflected in the policies" that govern their schools (Danzberger 1994:368). With the overall loss of power and authority as a result of legislation, reform policy, and interest groups, the public finds themselves "further from the real school decision-makers," which have become the state and federal governments (Sell 2005:77; Brodinsky 1977).

Researchers debate not only the role of school boards in today's education system but also their overall relevance (Danzberger 1994; Hess 2010; Hess and Meeks 2010; Hochschild 2005; Finn and McGuinn 2013; Land 2002; Resnick and Bryant 2010; Tremper 2016). Some research suggests boards are outdated and actually interfere with the improvement of education systems, fail to include the public in its work, do not collaborate well with school administration, are too "politically charged," and are comprised of individuals inexperienced in education (Finn and McGuinn 2013; Land 2002; Sell 2005:75). The changing authority brought by federal and state governments' roles in education has also brought confusion to school boards' role in policymaking, which can lead to their micromanagement of schools (Danzberger 1994; Johnson 2012). Consensus on the role of school boards and how they should govern is needed in order to establish effective governance. Otherwise, their governance will only allow for "short-term micromanagement" catering to special interests, especially in the case of urban

school districts (Massie 2010; Danzberger 1994:371). Unfortunately, according to Danzberger (1994), school boards, particularly those in urban school districts, have little incentive to address these discrepancies through their reform.

The National School Board Association claims arguments challenging school boards' efficacy and success are unrepresentative of the over 14,000 school boards in existence across the country because they tend to focus on "chronically weak performance of several high-profile urban districts" put under mayoral control (Resnick and Bryant 2010:12). In response to such critiques, it is argued that school boards are necessary because schools are too important to be left "solely to educators and administrators" (Sell 2005:75). They balance students' needs with "the zeal of specialists," serve as a link between schools and their communities, and "are grounded in American tradition" (Sell 2005:75). School boards, in other words, could function as a collection mechanism for these local concerns then strategically project them to higher-level policymakers through organized lobbying (Brodinsky 1977:15). In this way, school boards could convene various stakeholders by which they would create a "culture of collaboration" to support their own success as a board (Resnick and Bryant 2010:13).

As authority becomes increasingly centralized at higher-levels and away from local levels, school board professionals and scholars argue that the need to provide communities with the space to communicate with their policymakers becomes increasingly important and prompts the question of how school boards can serve as an "effective central policy-making body...at the local level," rather than the concern for how to maintain local control (Finn and McGuinn 2013; Resnick and Bryant 2010:13;

Danzberger 1994:368). School boards could serve as the “first word in confrontations” with all stakeholder groups within the district – school administration, school faculty, the district’s families and students, taxpayers, and even the state and federal governments (Brodinsky 1977:14). Not only do school boards support federal and state education requirements, but they do so in a way that integrates the “local values and priorities” (Resnick and Bryant 2010:11). They represent the unique context in which these initiatives are introduced and executed allowing them to serve as a liaison between higher-level policymakers and local needs while exercising authority and accountability (Resnick and Bryant 2010). Their position relative to higher political levels also allows them “to proactively engage the community” (Resnick and Bryant 2010:13). To support school boards to serve as a proactive policymaking body, they should define student-focused policies that “plainly communicate their priorities and expectations” and developing or supporting decisions more aligned with those policies to preserve student learning (Sell 2005:92).

School boards’ evolving roles and positions in education policymaking lead to contradictory understandings of both school board responsibilities. Even though experts agree that boards should focus their efforts on educational policymaking, school boards spend limited time actually doing this (Sell 2005; Hochschild 2005; Massie 2010). Board members often spend their time overseeing budgets, handling teacher and contract negotiations, communicating to the public communications, and implementing federal legislation and court orders. In other words, they often pursue the work of school administrators who are responsible for “the daily business management of schools” (Sell

2005:81). Scholars recommend a clear distinction between policymaking and the implementation of policy that is to implement it suggesting an “effective board” would define the actions that constitute as policymaking versus those of implementation (Garcia 1990:144). A lack of distinction in this area, otherwise, could hinder a constructive relationship between school board and administration, which can have serious consequences on the school district as a whole (Garcia 1990).

Some scholars argue boards’ communication with the public is another obstacle to providing effective governance in itself. As a body intended to serve as the linkage between the community and its schools, board members rarely communicate the state of the schools to the public (Sell 2005). Despite their strategic placement between the educational establishment and the community, the public still generally feels alienated from the schools due to the lack of understanding and communication between the two (Brodinsky 1977:24). When the board does communicate with its public, it is generally done with a “homogenous audience in mind” failing to effectively communicate to the community as a whole, especially to those with children in the schools (Sell 2005:82).

*Impact on education.* Over the years, an increasing amount of school board research has looked whether specific governance structures improve schools (Resnick and Bryant 2010). While empirical research is still limited, results have largely shown the selection method of school board members has minimal impact on students’ academic performance (Hoover 2008). A study from 2008 demonstrated no significant difference on student academic performance based on the selection method of their school board

members. The prevalence of students participating in free lunch programs was actually the most significant indicator (Hoover 2008).

Another study from 1967 with a sample of the country's 67 largest cities showed similar results. The research found no difference between per-pupil expenditures under elected or appointed school boards. The findings suggest appointed board may be advantageous in protecting the quality of public education when the public themselves "lack great interest in education" (Dye 1967:359). Additionally, environmental factors, such as socioeconomic characteristics of the community's population, actually have greater impact on educational outcomes. In fact, those environmental factors usually go unaddressed by governance structures or changes in governance structures altogether. Therefore, Dye warns "against making simple assumptions about the policy consequences of political system characteristics" (Dye 1967:380).

In comparing school boards' use of authority and its influence on student achievement, another study showed students score lower when school boards exercise greater authority (Peterson 2000). Contrarily, in schools where boards exercised less authority, students academically performed better (Peterson 2000). The excessive act of authority in schools creates a negative learning climate which impacts students' ability to do well. The impact, however, is not great suggesting school boards do not offer a quick solution to improving academic achievement (Peterson 2000). Additional research compared school finances under appointed school boards under mayoral control to elected boards to determine how their school district expenditures impact schools' performance (Anderson 2011). The research found the type of board does not impact the

quality of education provided, but noted “differences in the pattern of expenditures” as the two board types allocate resources differently (Anderson 2011:37).

Other researchers argue school boards could be the key to achieve the effective implementation of the various initiatives put forth by our policymakers (Nowakowski and First 1989). While empirical research linking effective school board governance to student performance, or other similar output-focused measures, does not reveal significant impact, other studies using less output-focused variables may provide more insight. Evaluating school boards themselves, rather than conventional educational outcomes, provides meaningful insight into their actual impact as a governance structure. The policymaking work of an entire school board must be evaluated as such, rather than by the work of individual board members, in order to more accurately evaluate its effectiveness since it is the board as a whole that practices policymaking, not a single member themselves. One way to measure this is through “how well the members interact and communicate during meetings” (Garcia 1990:145).

Noting the challenge in determining school board impact through school boards’ indirect influence on students, researchers have shifted from achievement-related measures and, instead, looked at the board members themselves through an analysis of their social capital to determine the effectiveness of their governance. Through this approach, one study has determined that school board members through their meetings determine the degree to which such ideas are discussed and embraced by the school district and, therefore, control the extent to which they are institutionalized and implemented within the schools (Nowakowski and First 1989). Another study conducted

a social network analysis, which revealed a school board's ability to effectively collaborate within itself and with stakeholders outside of the board could foster an environment for student achievement (Saatcioglu, Moore, Sargut, and Bajaj 2011). In addition, school board member questionnaires demonstrated both bonding and bridging were positively associated with student achievement and district expenditures showing that social capital "plays an important role" in bettering school districts' financial and academic outcomes (Saatcioglu, Moore, Sargut, and Bajaj 2011:29).

The results are resounding in that governance structures alone cannot provide a cure-all to challenges or barriers within educational systems (Hess 2010; Danzberger 1994; Diner 1982). However, "*how* a board governs is every bit as important as the decisions" it makes (Campbell and Greene 1994:392). Accordingly, research needs to investigate how school boards can be used to facilitate school improvements as they can "[create] the conditions necessary" necessary to improve student achievement (Hess 2010; Johnson 2012:90). While governance reforms are not the whole answer to improving education - nor is there a single perfect governance structure that exists - they need to be considered because their disparate nature inherently limits the capacity to foster improved education opportunities and improve students' academic achievement (Finn and McGuinn 2013). To better understand how school boards can create the conditions under which education can be improved, it is necessary to understand how the school board governance structures differ, the different roles and attributes each one brings.

*Appointed school boards.* In recent years, urban school districts have experienced a shift from elected school boards to appointed as a result of the public's lack of confidence in the public school system as they tended to micromanage and were influenced by special interest groups (Massie 2010). Appointed boards are argued to highlight members' qualifications, rather than their actual ability to campaign (Kraus 2013). However, appointment from other elected officials could also deter members from challenging information, asking "uncomfortable questions," and, overall, "hinder[ing] public demands in favor of the policies of dominant interests in the city" (Hess 2010:17).

Existing research has characterized appointed boards as being more responsive to their constituents' concerns than elected boards (Massie 2010). Without the direct political obligation to their constituents, boards have one less layer of bureaucracy under which they work. Appointed members are "insulated by at least one level of bureaucracy from the public" making them more likely to pursue less popular approaches to improving student achievement (Hoover 2008:645). A school board member of one study's sample even stated that they "do not have constituents and, therefore, 'represent the body as a whole'" (Tremper 2016:104). Appointed boards under mayoral control experience lower administrative costs, likely due to their emphasis on efficient spending, as well as higher pupil-teacher ratios (Anderson 2011).

Accountability, a central component to education reform in the 1990s, led city mayors to insert themselves into their city's schools viewing public education as a vital asset to reviving urban life (Wong and Shen 2003). Appointed school boards under mayoral control was intended to foster political and public support of the school system,

particularly in “high-poverty neighborhoods” where schools serve as community centers providing students with services and, ultimately, offering them a safe environment (Wong and Shen 2003). However, appointed boards have demonstrated greater accountability towards those who appointed them versus the elected boards who were more likely to serve the public (Massie 2010). The democratic selection of school board members may increase their accountability towards their constituents, whereas the non-democratic approach to selecting board members reduces the public’s involvement with the school board. Appointed members may feel less responsible to those within the school system as they were not directly selected by the constituents who represent them (Cantrell 2002).

On the other hand, although the public may not be at the forefront of appointed boards’ work, school administration may benefit more from appointed boards compared to elected boards. Research suggests appointed members may maintain a more constructive relationship with their superintendents. One study showed superintendents under appointed boards had a longer tenure in their position than those under elected boards and superintendents under appointed boards were more likely to consider their relationship with the board “mutually respectful” (Cantrell 2002:142). Furthermore, superintendents were asked to rate their own board members and, those who were appointed, were always scored higher (Cantrell 2002).

*Elected school boards.* The attribute most commonly associated with elected school boards is their capacity to include the public in the selection process of its members allowing citizens a space to voice their opinions regarding education (Hoover

2008; Sell 2005; Hess 2010). The democratic selection of its members is a way through which taxpayers and the students' parents control or influence the school system (Sell 2005). The democratic nature of elected school boards emphasizes transparency in boards' work. In addition, members' desire to evidence academic progress leads to their focus on student performance (Black 2016). Their democratic, therefore often more bureaucratic, nature also leads them to be less responsive and flexible than appointed boards (Hoover 2008). Elected school board members often operate exclusively from other municipal leaders (Black 2016; Hess 2010). Dissenting evidence on elected school board-superintendent relationships with elected boards has also been evidenced despite elected boards' tendency to micromanage (Hess 2010; Black 2016).

Another notable theme of elected school boards is that, along with the election process comes political candidates. Elected members' political careers may interfere with their broader work as a school board member (Hochschild 2005; Hoover 2008). Not only does this political support lead to a lack of "coherence, discipline" across members, but it could also jeopardize the best interest of their constituents and education policy as members' decisions may prioritize their own political careers instead (Black 2016:22; Hochschild 2005; Hoover 2008). Elected members strive to promote "rapid improvement" throughout the school district, which often leads to unaligned visions across members (Hess 2010). As possessors of authority granted by their constituents, elected board members may also feel obligated to exercise their democratically achieved power, "whether or not they actually know what to do" with it (Peterson 2000:48). Eager to bring positive change to justify their election, the empty use of authority opens the

door to potential decisions that could bring unnecessary negative consequences, which could likely interfere with student learning experiences (ibid.).

Even though elected boards have been argued to generate greater “public interest in educational issues,” constituents are actually less likely to participate in the school board election process compared to other municipal or higher-level political elections (Sell 2005, Cantrell 2002:24; Hess 2010). Despite board members’ own political motives, school board elections usually elicit low voter turnout from their communities because candidates often run unopposed or elections are held at times uncommon for voting (Sell 2005). As a result, elected boards may not demonstrate as much accountability to the public as broadly believed due to a lack of voter turnout and members’ greater susceptibility to special interests (Hochschild 2005; Hess 2010; Black 2016). Research has attributed this to a variety of reasons, one being the public’s desire to directly contribute to educational outcomes through their vote. When educational concerns, such as school finances, are largely determined by outside forces voters are less likely to participate in elections (Bridges 1972).

In addition, school board candidates generally portray themselves as nonpartisan leaving voters unsure of which candidates best align with their own values and “uninformed,” due to their inability to directly connect educational issues with consequences (Hochschild 2005; Bridges 1972:15). Together, these factors contribute to the low voter turnout of school board election, which, as a result, may cause school board representation to become unrepresentative of its public with the potential to maintain, possibly exacerbate, both “political and educational inequality” within schools (Sell

2005; Hochschild 2005:n.p.). Aspiring to represent the interests of their constituents, this may leave board members to support and uphold issues that have contributed to the inequality.

*Need for Additional Research.* Historically, in the case of the District of Columbia, alternating between governance structures has had negligible impact on improving educational variables as it was hoped it would because it does not resolve the problems within the schools?. The city's education system has always faced "conflict and competition" among the city's various levels of educational decision-makers – the board of education, municipal government, school administrators, and federal government (Diner 1982:i). Because conflict within the school system results from the social and political context in which the school system operates, structural changes do not resolve, or even effectively mitigate, the challenges they present (1982).

Scholars have consistently highlighted school boards' evolving authority and their resultant complex, confusing organization. From this, conclusions are drawn regarding which type of school board is more effective, or whether they are even needed at all. However, I would argue that evaluating the role of school boards cannot be accurately determined as long as the purpose and roles of the governing bodies in question are unclear. While school boards in general remain in a state of significant transition where even their existence is challenged to the extent that it is, I suggest a clearer understanding of their work and organization is needed before it can be determined whether they should exist at all. In other words, how can we accurately decide if a governance body is needed without first understanding what it actually does and how it operates?

Existing research primarily seeks to associate the different board types with broader outcome variables, but has limitedly explored the patterns within those variable that distinguish the two boards from each other. There is strong consensus regarding the limited impact of school boards on educational outcomes and, consequently, research often suggests pursuing other, more effective ways to address the educational needs of schools and their students. Much of the research explores how school boards and their different selection methods impact indirect educational outcomes, such as educational expenditures and students' academic performance. Instead of determining boards' efficacy based on educational outputs, school board research should look to understand the capacity they provide to supporting and improving education. Attributing the governance structures to the distant outcomes of the students within their system without, first, having greater knowledge of how school boards can add to, or detract from, their capacity to support the education provided by their schools can create a skewed perception of them. Rather than focusing on the complex relationship between school boards and educational outputs, research should explore how these governance structures could cultivate and foster the capacity needed to allow for educational improvements.

Instead of working to identify an ideal governance structure for every district, it is important to, first, identify the problems in need of resolution, then seek an understanding of how school boards can support that work (Hess 2010). Scholars have recommended clarifying school boards' current roles and responsibilities in order to effectively improve governance. First, creating a distinction between governance, the institutions which influence implement policy, and policy, comprised of initiatives created by governance

systems, to help devise a more effective approach to addressing challenges within the education system (Finn and McGuinn 2013). Because policy can bring “direct governance implications,” the two often lose their distinction (Finn and McGuinn 2013:10). Rather than looking to governance structures to solve challenges, they should only be used to provide capacity and support to the initiatives implemented that actually have the power to make change.

Not only could addressing educational governance structures allow for better capacity to support improved educational outcomes, but it could also serve as an opportunity to improve the representation of its schools. As black students and minority teachers have been consistently excluded from the consideration of equal educational opportunity since the twentieth century, school boards could be used as a mechanism for improving their representation. Increased representation of minorities has been shown to lead to the hiring of more minority administrators which, in turn, leads to the hiring of more minority school staff (Baratz-Snowden 1993; Rocha 2007). Descriptively representative learning environments allow for higher student performance, as well as less discrimination against minority students and black students particularly “make more favorable assessments” of their schools when their school board is more representative of them (Rocha 2007:319).

While it is generally understood that school boards tend to feel greater accountability to the stakeholders who have selected them for their positions, there is far less consensus regarding which governance structure offers a clear advantage over the other. Given the strong agreement that different school districts, and their corresponding

needs, require different structures, this research will not argue which governance structure is better. Instead, it will seek to provide a more nuanced understanding of the capacity each provides. The insight can provide a more accurate understanding of how school boards may optimize their capacity to better fill their evolving roles in education.

### *Methods and Sources*

The term “decision making” was originally created as a broader reference to the processes of both “resource allocation” and “policy making” (Buchanan and O’Connell 2006:n.p.). While originally created in the context of business and public administration, it is also seen in business processes that occur in public social institutions, such as the governing entities of public schools. The term ‘decision’ implies “the end of deliberation and the beginning of action” and will be represented as such in this research. Decisions are made when consensus among the decision-making group is reached. In a growing body of research on decision-making, it has become well understood that, while consensus may be the goal, any consensus “achieved too easily” could signal a homogenous group of decision-makers and, therefore, a lack of diverse perspective from which more dynamic or effective decisions could arise (Buchanan and O’Connell 2006).

Historical analyses are informative to understanding complex social phenomena since they evolve out of events that occurred prior to them (Mills 2000). Situating phenomena within an historical context provides insight into how institutional structures and their operations change over time and also help to identify contributors to these changes (ibid.:47). A school board’s decisions can bring impactful and pervasive

consequences to students long after they are officially enacted; for this reason, an inductive comparative historical analysis of the DCPS BOE was employed in hopes of providing insight into improving their decision-making process.

This research examines the decision-making of the appointed Board of Education from 1950 to 1969 and elected Board of Education from 1969 to 1985 to understand how their selection methods influenced the educational aspects members considered in their meetings and decisions. To do this, the Board's meeting minutes, housed at the Sumner School Museum and Archives, was used as the primary data source for this research as they provide a written record of the members' deliberations.

As governing bodies of the school district, school board meeting minutes are recorded for "legal evidence" documenting the deliberations and decisions that are covered (Nowakowski and First 1989:391). This documentation serves as a reflection of the perspectives and positions held by board members. School board meeting minutes are typically readily available sources of data that describe board meeting activity making them unique sources for data collection (Nowakowski and First 1989). While the District of Columbia's Administrative Procedures Act of 1968, and later the Home Rule Act of 1973, codified requirements for making meeting records and minutes available to the public, the Board of Education produced meeting minutes throughout its existence since its establishment in 1906.

Other studies have used school board meeting minutes for other purposes, one of which analyzed the different ways elected and appointed school boards allocate funding, measure progress, and align school boards' and administration priorities. Similar to

Nowakowski's and First's research, one study used meeting minutes to determine whether school boards' perception of implementation and actual implementation of their approach to allocating fiscal resources aligned (Tremper 2016). Through this study, it was determined that non-elected school boards "were less focused on seeking community input" than their elected counterparts (Tremper 2016:117). Another study used school board meeting minutes to supplement the primary data attained from one-on-one interviews to understand how the role of interest groups changed as the school board changed from appointed to elected (Feuerstein 1996). This study is different in that it uses school board meeting minutes as a primary source of data in order to understand their decision-making processes without attributing them to outcome variables.

The sample for this study is divided into two cases, the appointed period, encompassing 1950 to January 24, 1969, the final meeting of the appointed board, and the elected period from January 27, 1969, the first meeting of the elected board through 1985. The study's timeframe begins in 1950 so as to include decisions made before the 1954 desegregation of schools through 1985, the last year for which the Sumner School has minutes. In total, this paper includes a sample of 58 meetings – 30 appointed board meetings and 28 elected.

Minutes and their agenda items were chosen for at least one of two reasons: one, to correspond with impactful events occurring in education or the District of Columbia at that time or, two, their relevance to thematic issue areas identified through secondary data sources. The secondary data sources of this study – being the District of Columbia Public Library's Washingtoniana Special Collections' Board of Education vertical file and

ProQuest's online historical newspaper repository – provided the newspaper articles, community flyers, public reports, and other documents through which these thematic issue areas were identified. As a federally funded, yet local, education governance body, the DCPS BOE followed multiple calendar years: the standard calendar year, academic year, and the federal fiscal year. Accordingly, the sample is also comprised of decisions made at all points in each of those calendars to ensure a fair representation of how each Board handled a variety of decisions that could happen at any appoint in the year.

Additional data sources provide financial and demographic context of the District of Columbia, DCPS, and the Board of Education members. A timeline was created to outline the District of Columbia's population by race from 1950 to 1985. A second timeline of federal appropriations to the District of Columbia's public school system was calculated for each year.<sup>1</sup> These amounts were found in the District of Columbia Appropriations Act passed each year by U.S. Congress located through the Library of Congress or the U.S. Government Printing Office's collections of statutes.

Prior to the Home Rule Act of 1973, meeting minutes were typed on paper and comprised of summarized discussions on each agenda item. Verbatim remarks were included usually when members made lengthier statements. Through the Home Rule Act of 1973 a transcript was required of all open meetings of the municipal government agencies and boards. Meeting minutes following the passage of this Act include verbatim transcripts on microfilm (United States, Congress 1973). For both the appointed and

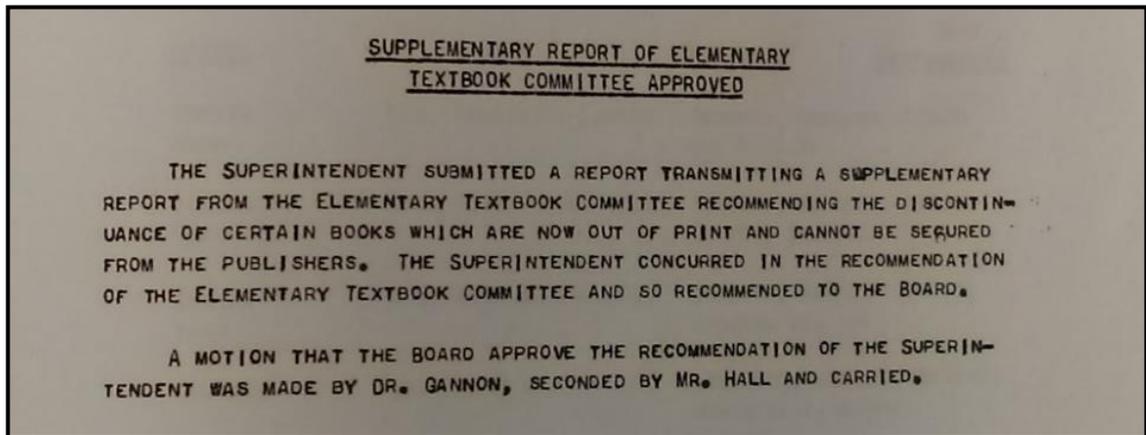
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<sup>1</sup> The timeline of federal appropriations can be found in Appendix III. Due to time constraints, I was unable to incorporate the resource in a more meaningful way but thought it would be worthwhile to include in an appendix for the sake of knowledge-sharing and potential future research.

elected Boards, minutes were kept by a Secretary appointed by the Board, but did not serve as a member (United States, Congress 1906; United States, Congress 1968).

Only decisions that elicited substantive deliberation were used in this study. In many cases, meeting minutes, particularly those prior to the Home Rule Act of 1973, did not indicate any deliberation on an item, such as agenda items where the Board would “accept” a presentation or report for the information of the Board without holding subsequent discussion on it, or if members voted on an item immediately following its presentation without any proceeding inquiries or comments. Routine administrative- or personnel-related meeting agenda items – such as discussions surrounding Board approval of liquor licenses or faculty appointments or promotions – were not considered in order to maintain focus on educational decisions. These decisions usually did not elicit any substantive deliberation anyway.

The meeting minutes in Figure 1, for example, indicate no substantive discussion occurred on this agenda item after the Superintendent’s routine procedures of submitting a report and expressing his recommendation. The Board voted on the item immediately without any inquiries or comments from any of the members. It must be noted that the exclusion of decisions due to their lack of substantive deliberation does not mean such decisions were interpreted as any less impactful or important as decisions with deliberation. Such decisions were excluded simply for the fact that they would not directly inform the study’s question.



*Figure 1. Example of Excluded Decision<sup>2</sup>*

Decisions were considered for this study if they elicited discussions beyond basic procedural actions or clarifications. It was these conversations that reflected the priorities and considerations of Board members' decisions. Figure 2 is an example of an agenda item that elicited substantive deliberation and could have been included in the sample. Similarly to decisions excluded from analysis, whether decisions were included in this study or not does not serve as an indicator of their level of impact on the school system.

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<sup>2</sup> District of Columbia Board of Education Meeting Minutes 3/7/1951:57

MRS. PHILLIPS INQUIRES IN RE SPECIAL  
EQUIPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COST OF  
INSTALLATION OF FIXED EQUIPMENT IN JUNIOR AND SENIOR  
HIGH SCHOOL SHOPS; SUPERINTENDENT TO REPORT THEREON.

MRS. PHILLIPS STATED SHE FAVORED EQUIPPING NEW SCHOOLS WITH SPECIAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS RECORDERS, RADIOS, PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS ETC., BUT THAT SHE DID NOT BELIEVE ENOUGH EFFORT WAS BEING MADE TO EQUIP THE OLDER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH SUCH EQUIPMENT. SHE ASKED THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT FURNISH THE COMMITTEE ON BUILDINGS, GROUNDS AND EQUIPMENT WITH A REPORT LISTING EACH SECONDARY SCHOOL, THE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT THAT HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS SINCE 1940, WHETHER THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE SO EQUIPPED WITH SUCH SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND FROM WHAT FUNDS IT WAS PURCHASED. THE SUPERINTENDENT STATED HE WOULD SUBMIT SUCH A REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE.

THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, IT WAS SO ORDERED.

MRS. PHILLIPS STATED SHE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE COST OF THE INSTALLATION OF FIXED EQUIPMENT IN THE SHOPS IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OVER A PERIOD OF THE PAST FEW YEARS. SHE STATED THAT WHILE IT IS ADVISABLE TO HAVE SEVERAL SHOPS IN A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SHE BELIEVED THAT IF THERE ARE ALSO TO BE EXTRA TYPES OF SHOPS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS A GREATER USE OF THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL SHOPS MIGHT BE DESIRABLE FOR NINTH GRADE STUDENTS.

SEVERAL OF THE MEMBERS EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN INVENTORY OF THE EQUIPMENT IN THE SCHOOLS. MR. STEINEM RECALLED THAT THE QUESTION OF AN INVENTORY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN RAISED. THE SUPERINTENDENT STATED THAT THERE IS IN PROCESS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY-WIDE INVENTORY OF ALL OBJECTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THE SUPERINTENDENT STATED HE WOULD PREPARE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BY MRS. PHILLIPS WITH REGARD TO THE COST OF INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT IN THE SHOPS IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

*Figure II. Example of Decision to be Included<sup>3</sup>*

The meeting minutes analysis show the general structure of the Board's meetings and the conversations around the decisions made at them. The analysis was informed though a variety of factors captured in the meeting minutes, such as the following:

- Member(s) and/or other stakeholders involved;
- How members were educated or informed on the topic;
- The amount of time spent deliberating;

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<sup>3</sup> District of Columbia Public Schools Board of Education Meeting Minutes 10/15/1952

- Quality of information; and,
- The level of consensus reached upon reaching a final decision.

Thematic school board operations and meeting structures emerged from the aforementioned factors. The proceeding findings chapters are organized, first, by these themes, then chronologically where applicable. The organizational format is also intended to strike a balance between providing sufficient context of each decision and maintaining focus on the decision's broader theme.

### *Limitations*

As with any archival research, the representation of this study's data source must be considered. Prior to their required transcription, meeting minutes were taken and summarized by the Board's Secretary. Information in the minutes would only reflect what information the Secretary could note or what they believed to be important enough to include. The pre-Home Rule Act of 1973 meeting minutes used in this study include the information found pertinent by the Secretary and may exclude details the Secretary was unable to record or did not believe to be important.

### *Conclusion*

To understand how school boards may optimize their efficacy in the midst of their evolving roles and education system, this research uses the historical context from which DCPS BOE's education governance structures have evolved in order to inform an effective approach to supporting impactful educational initiatives. The thesis is organized

with an historical overview chapter followed by two chapters of findings, one for each board type. Proceeding the historical overview and findings, the paper concludes with a summary of findings and their greater implications on local education governance more broadly. In addition, the conclusion includes an adaptable model depicting the primary attributes of each board identified through this research and how they can be employed in conjunction with one another to optimize decision-making regardless of a board's selection method.

Regardless of how impactful or vital they are believed to be, school boards continue to be a prevalent component to public school systems. Therefore, this study informs how they can most effectively support education within their district while responding to higher-level governance bodies policymaking roles.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Numerous educational structural reorganizations and policies have been implemented since the establishment of the city's dual public school system that differentiated between schools for white and black children prior to their desegregation. In addition, several significant demographic transitions – especially racially and economically – have occurred within the city as a result of profound historical events, such as wars or civil rights movements. These monumental historical moments have greatly affected the evolution of DCPS over the years. The Historical Overview chapter illustrates how significant moments in the city's education history coincide with historical factors beyond the school system itself. It also outlines how the DCPS BOE itself has changed, racially, over time between its appointed and elected periods. Altogether, this chapter provides historical context to the analysis of the proceeding chapters.

The first public school for white children in 1806. It was not until (Mitchell 2012). May 1862, about one month following the passage of the District of Columbia Emancipation Act on April 16, 1862, the District of Columbia established public schools for black students using 10% of black property taxes to pay for them. Through this establishment, a Board of Trustees of the Colored Public Schools, originally comprised of

all white members, was established through federal appointment leaving the colored schools controlled by the federal government (Mitchell 2012). A couple years later, in March 1864, the District's first primary school for the city's black children, the Ebenezer School, was opened (ibid.).

In 1866, Congress allowed "empty army barracks" to be used for black schools and appropriated funds for their construction, which left white city officials feeling snubbed (Green 1967:85). Compared to other regions throughout the country, the District of Columbia allured new residents, particularly black individuals and families from the rural South, throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The migration brought an influx of black residents requiring a "large-scale expansion of the public school system" to address the resultant teacher and building shortages (ibid.:91). By 1867, the city was home to "five schools for blacks with seven teachers and four hundred students" (Mitchell 2012:4). A census even revealed a higher percentage of black students attended public schools than white seemingly offering black residents a better chance at a future compared to other cities of that time (Green 1967).

Despite decreased funding from Northern aid societies and its subsequent challenges, Dunbar High School, originally known as Preparatory High School, was established in 1870 as, not only the city's first high school for colored students, but the country's (Green 1967; Mitchell 2012). Then, in June 1878, Congress was the designated governing body over the District of Columbia leaving the U.S. President to appoint District Supreme Court justices and commissioners, who appointed school board members (Green 1967).

At the turn of the twentieth century, largely as a result of rapid industrialization, countries began developing “mass education systems” in order to address the new economy, and the subsequent evolving demands of the labor force (Tucker 2013:6). The industrialized economy required higher levels of education from its workers. The organization of these education systems reflected the “design of the mass-production industrial systems” dominating the country’s economy at that time (ibid.). School boards focused on the expansion of education systems through twelfth grade, as well as incorporate “comprehensive curricula” (Hunt and Blanchard 1990:49). It was during these years when common approaches to operating education systems meant the separation of politics from education. The systems, instead, were entrusted to “expert professionals and independent, nonpartisan boards” (Finn and McGuinn 2013:23).

Black schools offered educational opportunities and fostered black pride, yet, despite their high quality, Congress proposed a reorganization of the school system in 1900 as white school officials alleged black officials were unfit to run their own system (Asch and Musgrove 2017). The plan resulted in the creation of a white superintendent position that would oversee two assistant superintendents: one for the white schools and one for the black. Additionally, a director of high schools was hired giving white leaders control over two prominent black teachers’ schools (ibid.).

After the reorganization in 1900 failed to prevent political influence on the schools, another reorganization was passed in 1906 (Diner 1982). The reorganization shifted the responsibility of the appointment of the board of education members from “the presumably more political hands of the Commissioners” to judges (ibid.:13). The

city commissioners who did not work directly with the city's education system "found it especially easy to cut the school budget" (ibid.:13). By the end of 1905, a U.S. Representative cited "great room for improvement" on the board of education and outlined a tentative bill to establish a nine-member body including three women and three colored members, all without pay (*House District Committee Organizes for Business* 1905:4).

By June 1906, the reorganization establishing the appointed board had passed. One main focus of the bill was to improve teachers' salaries as they were reportedly "grossly underpaid" compared to other larger cities of the time (*Teachers Who Do Not Teach* 1906:2). To do so, the bill encouraged a reorganization of the public school system, largely left to the Superintendent and the board of education to determine. A couple fiscal inefficiencies that reportedly attributed to this discrepancy were classes with low rates of student enrollment and an unnecessary number of school-level leadership positions (*Teachers Who Do Not Teach* 1906). The bill was intended to allow the school system more financial autonomy as the board of education was required to develop their own budget proposal that the city's commissioners were required to forward to Congress (Diner 1982).

During World War I, the country's economy geared towards the war effort bringing an approximate 50% increase in the city's population (Asch and Musgrove 2017:227). While black and white schools alike suffered from overcrowding "and insufficient physical equipment," a building program passed by Congress in 1925 allowed for the gradual building in white neighborhoods leaving formerly white, old

schools to the black school system. The board of education argued this was done strictly as an economical practice “when shifts in the racial character of neighborhoods occurred” (Green 1967:212).

The Great Depression left black residents unemployed at higher rates than whites, and “strengthened lower-class Negroes’ convictions that any schooling beyond the legal minimum was useless” (Green 1967:244). It encouraged them to pursue junior and senior high school educations while upper-class black residents, on the other hand, questioned the quality of education itself referring to it as “watered down curriculum” in comparison to white schools (ibid.:244). Meanwhile, the Miner Teachers’ College received an ‘A’ rating from the American Association of Teachers’ Colleges leaving black residents feeling as though they had proved they could successfully run their own education system (ibid.).

As international conflict grew in the 1930s, the field of education introduced skepticism from scholars outside of field making them increasingly unlikely to work with education scholars. Education researchers, in response turned to their colleagues in the schools and school faculty, which led to the development of teacher-centered research designs and the designation of “curriculum” as its own sub-field in education (Lagemann 1997). On the heels of the Great Depression and heading into World War II, new curriculum objectives emerged as researchers debated on “the value of child- as opposed to society-centered goals for education,” which promoted social cohesion (Lagemann 1997:10).

Curriculum became centered on learning objectives, as opposed to the “acquisition of knowledge” (Lagemann 1997:10). Through this new focus, the 1940s introduced a shift in curriculum from subject-centered classes in attempt to better accommodate and support non-college bound students. Schools, instead, offered courses focusing on “the problems of youth” where students were expected to meet clear objectives that promoted social cohesion, such as "manners, speech, dress,” communism versus democracy, etc. (Lagemann 1997:10).

World War II attracted even more migrants, particularly black ones, to the District of Columbia in hopes of better economic opportunity. The population influx, known as the “greatest internal migration in American history,” brought the city’s population to over 900,000 by 1943 and is said to be a large contributor to the disparity between the two school systems seeing as the allocation of public school funds was determined by the city’s population (Asch and Musgrove 2017:273).

Back in 1864, an *Act to provide for the Public Instruction of Youth in the County of Washington, District of Columbia, and for other Purposes* was passed declaring the amount of municipal funds designated for the education of both colored and white students ages six to 17 “be ascertained by the last reported census of the population of said cities” (United States, Congress 1864). Such approaches to funding allocation were prevalent in the South during the early twentieth century and are believed to be a leading factor in the “increase in racial inequalities in educational opportunities” at this time (Walters, James, and McCammon 1997:35). The law actually “shortchanged” black

schools due to significant changes in the population not reflected by older census data (Asch and Musgrove 2017:305).

After peaking in 1935, white school populations declined by 15% through 1947. Contrarily, black schools increased over 28% during that same time making them the majority of the school system by 1950 (Asch and Musgrove 2017:305). In attempt to alleviate overcrowding, the board of education cut back on students' instructional time requiring them to receive "only four and a half hours of instructional time," which fell below their own minimum requirement of six hours (ibid.:305). While teachers of the black schools had class sizes as high as 58 students, nearby white schools had vacant space for about 200 more students (ibid.:306).

School officials were reluctant to transfer vacant space in white schools due to the federal expectation of maintaining a segregated school system and also worried the integration would drive the schools' remaining white families out of the city. The Superintendent "began pumping money into the [black] schools in a bleated attempt to equalize facilities" allocating about 72% of the school district's construction funds to black schools by 1947 (Asch and Musgrove 2017:306). That year, a student requested to transfer to a white school with vacancies so that she could receive a full-time education, but was later denied the opportunity through the infamous case of *Carr v. Corning* (ibid.:307).

The incident led to the U.S. House District Committee's request to survey the school system's facilities, personnel, and teaching education practices led by George D. Strayer, along with 22 of his staff, from the Teachers College of Columbia University

(Strayer 1949). In February 1949, the “blistering, 980-page report relentlessly criticized the school district’s ‘unresponsive’ administration, ‘complicated, inflexible, and cumbersome’ financial system, and ‘inadequate’ facilities, funding, and academic programs, particularly in the black schools” (Asch and Musgrove 2017:309).

The school survey movement, such as Strayer’s work, was a prevalent approach to education research during the first half of the twentieth century. It investigated the “efficiency” of cities’ entire school systems (Lagemann 1997:6). Statistical analyses were developed and used to inform this approach replacing the formerly dominant historical approach. Over this time, “special methods” became increasingly complex and specific to different courses and other aspects of the education system (Lagemann 1997:7). Results from this research was limited in scope as education journals would mainly only publish the results from the studies conducted by the “White, male, Protestant members” of the education research community (Lagemann 1997:7). As a result, “relatively small in size and both isolated and elite in character, the education research community” generated insightful findings, but also promoted theories fostering the researchers’ beliefs of their own racial superiority (Lagemann 1997:8).

Table I. See Appendix I and II for the racial identification of each member for each year

<b>Number of Appointed Members by Race each Year</b>		
Year	Black	White
1950	3	6
1951	3	6
1952	3	6
1953	3	6
1954	3	6
1955	3	6
1956	3	6
1957	3	6
1958	3	6
1959	3	6
1960	3	6
1961	3	6
1962	4	5
1963	4	5
1964	4	5
1965	4	5
1966	4	5
1967	5	4
1968	5	4

Table I shows the number of board of education members by race for each year from 1950 to 1985. Appointed by the District of Columbia’s District Court judges since 1906, it was a predominantly white body for nearly every year of its existence. Since its establishment through 1961, the board was comprised of three black members and six white. Note there was a predominantly white board in power at the time that *Carr v. Corning* was decided, the *Strayer Report* was released in 1949 and when schools were instructed to desegregate in 1954. The traditional composition, while not a part of the legislation that established the board, was considered an “unwritten rule” to which the

federal appointers adhered for decades even despite the growing number of black residents during those years (*Dr. Johnson to Be 4<sup>th</sup> Negro on School Board* 1962).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, interest in education research grew and legislation was enacted to support it due to “growing elite concerns around educational equity and economic and military competitiveness” (Lagemann 1997; Patrick 2015:80). Both Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 and the National Defense Education Act from 1958 introduced the first “large-scale education aid to the states” (Patrick 2015:79). The public investment expanded research to consider education beyond individual students and curriculum “moving...to program evaluation” (Lagemann 1997:12). Policymakers and researchers saw value in evaluation as it served as a tool to ensure the proper implementation and administration of federal legislation, like the ESEA, and provide expenditure oversight (Lagemann 1997).

New schools during the mid-1900s, such as the John Phil Sousa Middle School in Southeast, were constructed to attract and accommodate the white families of government workers that had migrated to the District of Columbia throughout the 1940s while black schools became increasingly crowded (Asch and Musgrove 2017). On September 6, 1950, a group of twelve black students attempted admission to the new Sousa School on its opening day. The students were denied admission resulting in the *Bolling v. Sharpe* lawsuit and became one of several other cases under the federal case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (*National Historic Landmark Nomination: Sousa, John Philip, Junior High School* 2001).

In 1952, a hopeful example of cross-class and cross-race collaboration emerged as a variety of stakeholders across two schools – including a PTA president, school principal, teachers, parents, and students across the white Adams School and nearby black Morgan School – discussed ways through which they could “revitalize the area without dislocating its residents” (Green 1967:324). Through a federal grant to the municipal government, city commissioners partnered with a local university to explore possibilities. The effort became known as the Adams-Morgan Project and each block had its own representative who sat on a planning committee. A community council relied on its vast array of stakeholder perspectives to “reach a consensus on wanted changes and to set the machinery of rehabilitation in motion” (Green 1967:324).

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court deemed segregated schools unconstitutional. By the summer of 1954, the city seemed to be divided into three types of residents: those who were confident the ruling was a complete resolution to civil rights issues, those who viewed the decision as a “tragic mistake” which would require eventual correction, or those who saw the decision as part of a large, yet incomplete, victory (Green 1967:313). President Eisenhower dubbed the DCPS as a “model” of desegregation for the country. Accordingly, the board responded by approving “a nondiscrimination resolution in teacher and student placement” and the Superintendent’s plan for piloting desegregation was enacted (Asch and Musgrove 2017:314).

About 2,700 black students were transferred to previously all-white schools by September of that same year school exacerbating the white flight by turning many formerly white schools almost “entirely black” five years later (ibid.:316). By the mid-

1950s, the school system was spending \$1,208 per pupil, more than nearby school systems. Even so, school buildings remained “dilapidated, the curriculum was outdated, and the bureaucracy was eating up precious funds. Test scores were low and the dropout rate was high” (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:98).

Although legally desegregated since 1954, by the mid-1960s, most of District of Columbia’s schools were over 90% one race and 34% more was spent per-pupil in “underenrolled schools in wealthier, white neighborhoods” than black and poor schools (Asch and Musgrove 2017:340). There were only about three public high schools with a “66 percent black population” (Barry and Tyree 2014:67). In 1960, an estimated 2,000 black 16- to 18-yearolds were out of school and work for not having found employment with the “vocational skills they had acquired in high school” (Green 1967:318).

The 1960s marked a time when there were “enough black folks who were fired up and aware of the political process in Washington” ushering in a strong movement for civil rights (Barry and Tyree 2014:69). A few of the District’s most prominent civil rights activists during this time, such as Julius Hobson, Sterling Tucker, Walter Fauntroy, and C. Sumner ‘Chuck’ Stone, successfully mobilized residents across a variety of causes, including education (Asch and Musgrove 2017).

1962 was the first year the board was comprised of more than three black members, yet it was still a mostly white body (*Dr. Johnson to Be 4<sup>th</sup> Negro on School Board* 1962). The change occurred only after significant public pressure where “a number of community organizations” – including the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance, the Federation of Civic Association, the Central Northwest Citizens

Association, the Urban League, the Republican Central and the Democratic Central Committee - had called for it (*Negro Seats on Board of Education Increased to Four* 1962). The once majority white school board only became a majority black body for the first time ever in 1967 – near the end of its establishment as the political and social climate had already changed radically compared to the decade before – with five black members and four white.

A track system, implemented by school officials in the 1950s under a mainly white board, grouped students based on their abilities. Civil rights activists, such as Hobson, criticized the program for having grouped students more closely by race and class than ability (Asch and Musgrove 2017). Hobson filed a lawsuit against Superintendent Hansen arguing “though ostensibly race neutral, nonetheless prevented poor black students from receiving an equal education” (ibid.:340).

In June 1967, Judge Wright ruled the track system re-segregated the schools and “unconstitutionally deprived Washington’s poor and black students of their ‘right to equal educational opportunity’” (Asch and Musgrove 2017:340). Additionally, the groupings were determined by “racially and culturally biased tests” inevitably grouping poor and black students in lower tracks and, ultimately, revealing *de facto* segregation (ibid.:340).

District of Columbia residents voted in their first presidential election in 1964 and a few years later, voted in their first school board election in 1968 signaling the emergence of an “independent, elected political structure” (Barry and Tyree 2014; Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:94). The first Board of Education election occurred on November 5,

1968 where residents voted on three at-large members and one from each ward for a total of 11 members (*Voters in Capital to Conclude City's First School Board Election on Tuesday* 1968:49). With exceptions provided by the law regarding members' terms following the first election, Board members were elected to four-year terms (United States, Congress 1968).

The first election concluded with a run-off election of 19 candidates, five of whom were white at a time when the city was made up of 93.6% black residents. One article of the time reported that voters' primary concerns at the time were improving education for "poor black students without discouraging white and upper-class and middle-class" black students (*Voters in Capital to Conclude City's First School Board Election on Tuesday* 1968:49).

In 1969, the presidential administration encouraged scrapping what existed and starting from scratch. President Nixon believed the District of Columbia had fallen victim to "rural poverty in the South, by a failure in education, by racial prejudice, and by the sometimes explosive strains of rapid social adjustments" concluding that, in order to progress, the city "must truly rebuild" (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:89). Mainstream white media conveyed the city in a negative light focusing on "the failings of the city government, violent crime and the downtown business scene. It reported on the deteriorating public schools and suburban growth" (ibid.:119). The reality of the city's flourishing black community from its social scene to its "academic, business, and professional life" were typically only portrayed through local black media outlets (ibid.:119).

Table II. See Appendix I and II for the racial identification of each member for each year

<b>Majority Race of Board Members by Year</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
1969	6	5
1970	7	4
1971	7	4
1972	7	4
1973	7	4
1974	7	4
1975	8	3
1976	8	3
1977	8	3
1978	7	3
1979	7	3
1980	8	2
1981	8	2
1982	10	1
1983	10	1
1984	9	2
1985	9	2

Table II shows the racial majority of the Board for each year since 1969 when the elected board came into power. The Board was predominantly comprised of black members each of these years. As the city’s number of white residents and white student population declined over the years, the black-white member ratio generally did too with having as little as one white member during the early 1980s. Between 1978 and 1981, the Board only had one Hispanic member (1978-1981), hence the total of 10 members for those years.

By 1971, nearly 95% of DCPS students were black (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:98). Coming from lower-income families, they were in a disadvantaged position for learning and DCPS was faced with some of the lowest graduation and achievement rates in the country (Barry and Tyree 2014). White students living in the higher-income areas of the city at the time often only attended public schools through middle school, after which they attended “Catholic schools, private schools and boarding schools” (ibid.:87). In the early 1970s, DCPS’s graduation rates were some of the lowest in the country while their dropout rate was one of the highest (ibid.).

Similar to metropolitan areas across the country, the 1970s brought “serious demographic and economic problems” to the District of Columbia as its population was shrinking and middle-class white families continued flocking to the suburbs followed by businesses that catered to them (Asch and Musgrove 2017:382). Some white residents felt vulnerable to the change in political tides as Congress served as a sense of political security to whites (Asch and Musgrove 2017).

Black families struggled to afford to renew their leases in areas where white-owned development was occurring, such as the Southwest area. As a result, they were steered to low-income housing in Southeast. This meant “Ward 8 in the Southeast had the highest poverty rate in the city,” in turn leading to significant health disparities, increased stress, high rates of unemployment, and, consequently, “the highest crime wave in the city” (Barry and Tyree 2014:67). In this environment, these students’ academic performance suffered producing “the lowest test scores” as a result and bringing an entire generation of youth raised in poverty “with little job training or hope” (ibid.:67, 81).

Eager to become involved in the District of Columbia's politics, Marion Barry ran for the Board of Education with the goal of attaining "more power to make bigger change" and was elected President in 1972 (Barry and Tyree 2014:79; Jaffe and Sherwood). His work on the board prioritized the school system's finances believing no improvements could be made unless the board had funding for them. Accordingly, he advocated for "a bigger budget and a raise for the school teachers" (Barry and Tyree 2014:87). His critics argued his position on the board was not in the interest of education, instead, it was "political growth, expansion" (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:99). Regardless, he described his time on the board as "an overwhelming task" and "a real taxing process to deal with" (Barry and Tyree 2014:89).

During his time on the Board, Barry brought Dr. Barbara Sizemore to DCPS making her the first black female superintendent of a major public school system in the United States. Coming from Chicago, she understood the needs of urban school districts, particularly as they related to "curriculum and testing," yet her perspective often clashed with the Board's and at one point even refused to release the District's test scores claiming they were biased against black school children (Barry and Tyree 2014:88). She was ultimately fired in 1975, after Barry had already left the Board for the City Council, due to her alleged "problem communicating" (ibid.:89).

Following Barry's election to the board, the District of Columbia Home Rule Act of 1973 established "an elected government with a mayor and a thirteen-member council empowered to levy taxes, determine spending and pass legislation...subject to congressional review and veto" (Asch and Musgrove 2017:379). The city's first elected

mayor, Walter Washington, was black, as well as 11 of the 13 city council members (Asch and Musgrove 2017).

Throughout the 1980s, and even more so into the 1990s, the District of Columbia’s population continued to decline as black residents tried to “escape the city’s high crime rate” and drug epidemic (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994:309). The black flight eventually brought the population to fewer than 600,000 residents by 1992 (Jaffe and Sherwood 1994). The District of Columbia faced a drug epidemic that caught national concern with a higher number of drug arrests per capita than any other city in the country in 1985, which largely contributed to the city’s increased murder rate at that same time (Asch and Musgrove 2017).

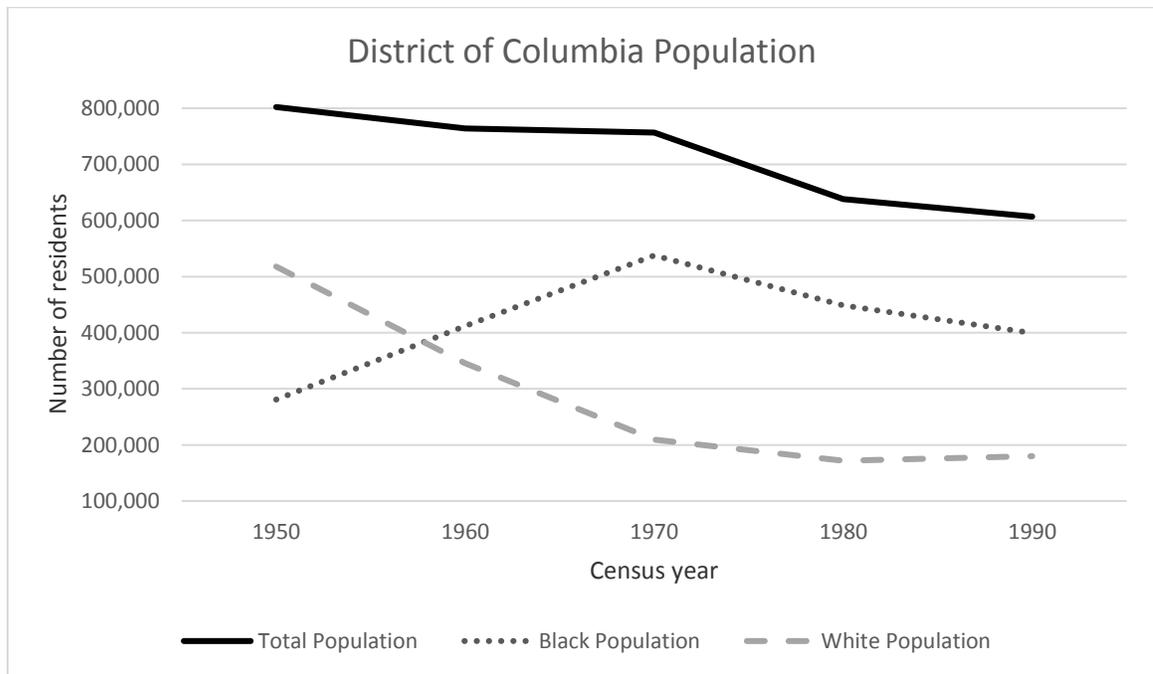


Figure III

An overview of population trends in the District of Columbia for the years of this study are demonstrated in Figure III using U.S. Census data. Overall, the city's population has declined. An inverse of growth in black and white residents' population occurred between 1950 and 1970 where black residents migrated to the city as white residents relocated to the surrounding suburbs. As described earlier, following World War II, white flight brought a significant decline in the number of white residents living in the District of Columbia, then plateaued from 1980 to 1990. Unlike the white resident population that seemed to level out between 1980 and 1990, the black resident population peaked in 1970, but continued to decline in the following two decades. The decline in black residents from 1970 through the next two decades reflected the black flight trends seen during those years.

The white and black flight from the past several decades and DCPS leadership turnover "had crippled the schools" (Asch and Musgrove 2017:448). The elected Board remained in power until 1996 when poor student achievement and "mismanagement" led to the District's Control Board's take over, which came with its own complaints as well (Levy 2004). Then, in June 2007, another new school board came into power. The Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007 established a nine-member body where four members are appointed by the Mayor and the others are elected (D.C. Law Library. 2007).

The Act also called for the establishment of a Mayor-appointed DCPS chancellor, which was filled by Michelle Rhee. Rhee counted conflict as natural part of the process and emphasized accountability on the system's administrative offices and teachers (Asch and Musgrove 2017). Following the release of her controversial plans to close 23 "underpopulated, underperforming schools, all of which were located in low-income black neighborhoods," some believed the pursuit of her political agenda seemed to show "an almost reckless disregard for the racial implications of her actions," while others believed it necessary (Asch and Musgrove 2017:452; Mead 2017).

Rhee supported using students' standardized testing scores to determine teachers' performance and pay even despite arguments against it for providing too narrow of a focus into students' performance and learning (Strauss 2018). The testing mechanism was reportedly comprised of "performance goals that were impossible to meet and metrics that were questionable" and had cultivated a "climate of fear" in the schools (ibid.). Supporters of the accountability assessment praise it for encouraging low-performing teachers to leave the schools and cite increased student test scores as justification for Rhee's approach to education reform (Mead 2017).

U.S. Census data for the District of Columbia from July 2016 shows a total population of 681,170, increasing more than 100,000 from 2000. The city's white resident population, especially, continues to grow balancing out the once predominantly black city that is now 47.7% black and 44.6% white. In fact, the percentage of black and white residents from 2016 is more comparable to the demographics of 1960. These demographic trends signal another substantial racial transition is occurring and

consequently, added potential for inequitable opportunity through the city's institutions, including education. As a result, there is a need to prepare for equitable educational policymaking to ensure opportunities across racial and socioeconomic groups.

As the city continues to evolve and barriers to equitable educational opportunities persist, a review of the public school system's governing body and its decision-making is needed to determine how relevant and effective it is in the midst of these current changes. Understanding the considerations that inform board members' decisions will help illuminate how DCPS's policy is made. An analysis of its governance structure will demonstrate the system's capacity to support educational policymaking that focuses on the student as a whole, rather than a test score that measures their teacher's performance. The two proceeding chapters identify and discuss the thematic aspects of each school boards' structure and decisions showing how each board type influences the decisions they make and the attributes of each board as a whole.

## APPOINTED BOARD FINDINGS

From 1906 through 1968, members of the board of education were appointed to their positions by District Court judges with the potential for reappointment. During this time, the nine-member body was required to hold public meetings at least once a month throughout the school year. These board members were to “determine all questions of general policy relating to the schools” (United States, Congress 1906). The statute clearly distinguished the task of overseeing expenditures of public school funds as one for the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, not the board (*ibid.*). Between fiscal oversight from the city’s Commissioners and appointments from the District Court judges, the appointed board demonstrated a greater sense of accountability towards their appointers, as opposed to the constituents served by DCPS.

The board largely, and even explicitly, perceived themselves as a business transacting entity who relied on the educational expertise of the DCPS Administration to inform their decisions regarding educational matters. Its members established the board’s meeting structure and operations based on their own personal preferences prioritizing efficiency, and even convenience. The focus diverted the members’ attention from answering broader policy questions, which were, ultimately, often left to the Administration to handle.

Members' appointment by government officials removed pressure from them answering directly to the city's residents. They often worked without challenging the system's existing practices, which were usually most relevant and advantageous to the dominant, white upper-class group despite the school system's predominantly minority student group. Members largely supported existing laws, or at least expressed obligation to supporting them, despite their own beliefs or their impact on students' learning, and rarely adopted new information that could improve the education system.

### *The Board and the Public*

While open to the public, citizens' participation and access to board meetings did not serve as a driving force behind the establishment of their meeting structure. In fact, board rules clearly prioritized board members over citizens basing their decisions regarding meeting structure on their own convenience, consequently, revealing a member-centric meeting structure. The appointed board regularly held their meetings on weekdays during standard business hours, or at times inconvenient to other full-time working citizens. The meetings were usually held at the board's offices in the Franklin Administration Building (*National Historic Landmark Nomination: Franklin School* n.d.).

The option for the public to attend these meetings was required, but their participation was not highly valued. To the board, the public's primary role in these meetings was about accountability, not to serve as an outlet for citizens to share their ideas or concerns. At the first meeting of the calendar year in 1951, President Sharpe's address to the board set the stage as he referenced the board's legal obligation to holding

public meetings (with the exception of committee meetings that dealt with personnel appointment-related matters) (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951).

He declared the purpose of the public's presence was to "emphasize the necessity for decorum and dignified interchange of ideas among the members of the board, without recourse to unwarranted interchange of non-constructive personal remarks" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). President Sharpe's publicly proclaimed definition of citizens' roles in board meetings was a passive one that merely served to encourage the professional and diplomatic discourse between members (*ibid.*). The appointed board saw the purpose behind open meetings was to deter members' negative or unprofessional behavior towards one another, rather than for the sake of providing District of Columbia residents a democratic outlet through which they could engage with their school system's policymakers.

The meeting structure, determined by the board members themselves, was established through the prioritization of efficiency and convenience. Meetings were scheduled at times that were more convenient to the members' schedules and the deliberations as when meetings would be held did not incorporate the consideration of citizens. As President Sharpe's address continued, he expressed a desire to hold meetings earlier in the day than what they already were (*ibid.*).

Previously, meetings commonly began at 1:00 PM and often lasted until 6:00 PM. However, due to an "increasing amount of work of the board" and the Administration, he proposed holding only one regular board meeting per month, as opposed to two, and a separate one "solely for consideration of Committee reports" (DCPS BOE Meeting

Minutes 1/17/1951). The impact of these schedule changes on citizens' accessibility to meetings was not discussed. Although the change in meeting structure would have shortened the meeting times, citizens who worked full-time, nine-to-five jobs would have been less likely to attend and participate in one of these meetings, let alone two, if they desired.

Members were also allowed to treat their role on the board as secondary to their other professional obligations. The fact that several members of the board were "professional men" was enough to justify the change in meeting structure, and was even described as a "prudent" matter (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). Those members' schedules were, reportedly, less flexible than the other members' meaning they could not "reasonably be expected to expend too much time away from their offices," so the board accommodated the members' work schedules accordingly (ibid.). The President's proposal to hold only one stated meeting a month was intended to put less burden on the professional members' schedules by shortening the length of the meeting.

The formal motion to change the meeting structure was made in a meeting about one month following the President's address. The Superintendent proposed decreasing the number of stated meetings held each month from two to one on the first Wednesday of each month. In addition to his suggestion, a board member proposed moving the meeting time from 3:30 PM to 2:30 (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/7/1951). The minutes showed the members voted unanimously without any discussion on why the number of regular monthly board meetings was reduced or moved to an earlier time in the day (ibid.).

Even before the action was voted, the Superintendent acknowledged how, over the past couple months, the board had already been adhering to the once-a-month frequency suggesting the board's lack of integrity in upholding their own rules for bimonthly meetings (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/7/1951). The board's approach to establishing its structure was so member-centric that, about one year later, one newspaper even referred to the board's meetings as an "iron curtain" due to the public's limited accessibility to meetings and lack of knowledge of what happened at them (Rogers 1951:n.p.).

Over the years, particularly starting in the mid-1960s, the board decided to allow for increased public participation in meetings, but it was done so reluctantly. The public expressed a strong desire for increased accessibility to board meetings, which had been largely inaccessible to them due to their daytime occurrence. The board eventually considered this change in meeting structure, but only after having received significant public pressure (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/21/1965). In 1965, 15 organizations throughout the city had submitted requests to the board to change their meeting time from the afternoon to the evening, which would have allowed citizens working full-time during the day could attend (*ibid.*).

Even with significant public pressure, the board was reluctant to make changes to their meeting structures, especially in comparison to how readily the members supported shortening their meetings, holding them at earlier times of the day, or otherwise changing it based on members' preferences. Ultimately, the request was deferred to the Committee on Rules with one member even emphasizing the need to consider "both sides of the

question” to ensure board members’ perspectives were heard as well (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/21/1965). Members advocated for the consideration of their own preferences before the preferences of the community.

Furthermore, the board did not openly welcome or actively seek criticism of themselves or DCPS as a whole. When they did solicit feedback, they proposed more controlled, methods for receiving citizen input since board meetings were not the most feasible route for doing so. One member proposed an outlet for soliciting feedback through the installment of a suggestion box in schools so the board could “receive suggestions... for the good of the school” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/18/1953).

The member even offered her own personal letterbox because she believed the public was a “wealth of material and ideas” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/18/1953). However, the Superintendent discouraged the idea believing it would merely serve as an outlet for citizens with an “ax to grind,” rather than providing citizens with an opportunity for meaningful or constructive contribution (*ibid.*). The board demonstrated discomfort with receiving feedback from the community out of fear it would be too critical; therefore, deterred opportunities through which the community members could provide it.

Largely starting in the early 1960s, the District of Columbia experienced a racial transition where the significant majority of the city was black and civic organizations served as key political forces mobilizing residents and advocating for their rights. The increased prevalence of these organizations, coupled with the Johnson federal administration of this time, which toted its own civil rights political agenda, led to the

appointment of more black members than previous years. For the first time, the once predominantly white entity shifted to one that was predominantly black. As the board became more racially representative of the city in its last years, it gradually became more citizen conscious in its structure shifting away from its previous member-centric focus.

Between 1966 and 1967, the board had transitioned from holding its meetings from the afternoon to evening. Later, in November 1967, members demonstrated an increased consideration for public access and participation as they proposed designating one meeting a month for the sake of hearing residents (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/15/1967). The suggestion came more than a decade after the board's decision to hold one meeting a month. A member explained, by holding two meetings a month, one would be held for "the purpose of conducting Board business and the second meeting of the month to be held...for the purpose of hearing persons who desire to address the Board" (ibid.). The member explained the recommendation from two separate studies as a way to save time and increase productivity by allowing all members to participate in the discussion of a matter once versus holding the same discussion twice (ibid.).

Compared to previous years, board members were more open to these recommendations. In fact, one member even replied to these suggestions in support for residents' participation saying it was her belief residents should have the opportunity to address the board at all meetings, especially those at which "questions were to be decided" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/15/1967). Another member clarified the purpose for the change was to allow residents the opportunity to discuss matters of

concern whereas the second one would provide the board with “the opportunity to reflect upon the testimony presented by citizens rather than acting immediately” (ibid.).

Not only were members beginning to consider the opportunity for citizen participation, but they were also conscientious of the extent to which the community could participate. Under the same agenda item, another member suggested the provision of a meeting agenda to attendees (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/15/1967). The meeting agenda would allow the public the opportunity to “respond and relate to items” that were to be discussed (ibid.). The political spirit of the time and public pressure shifted the understanding under which meeting structures were established increasing their accessibility to the public and equipping residents with resources to facilitate their participation.

Yet, even with a more public-centric focus, the board inconsistently enforced the members’ adherence to their own meeting structure. Approximately one month following the change in meeting structure from one to two per month, a meeting had convened at 7:30 AM where one member voiced his frustration with holding meetings at particularly early or late times of the day (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/11/1967). He argued “there was no reason why the Board should be reaching momentous decision in meetings hastily called for 7:30 in the morning,” even if it was permitted by the board rules, and expressed his concern for the board’s authority to conduct business whenever necessary so long as a quorum was present (ibid.). Another member replied to the concern stating the reason was for his own professional obligations that required him to be somewhere by

9:00 AM that day and added he was “grateful” to the other members for allowing the time change (ibid.).

Other than what had been defined by statute, the board did not exhibit strong accountability to upholding the meeting structure they had established because, even without the one board member’s presence at the meeting, the board would still have had enough members to conduct business without their presence and vote on items requiring action. Even though the appointed board in its last years encouraged greater public participation and accessibility, members still demonstrated a greater sense of accountability to their appointers as they held meetings at unusual times of the days based on their own professional schedules regularly enough for it to be a concern even for members themselves.

### *Expediency*

The appointed board viewed expedient decision-making as an indicator of its efficient problem-solving. Meeting minutes often directly referenced the urgency with which actions were taken where such remarks most commonly came from the members themselves as they expressed their own concerns of the issue. President Sharpe explicitly acknowledged this trend in his address to the board in 1951 where he briefly described the board’s success in solving problems, regardless of the amount of time spent deliberating on them (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). Although some problems were solved “in an expedient manner, [they] were nevertheless solved” (ibid.). Such a

reference suggests the board prized efficiency over efficacy, and expediency, or perceived efficiency, over the quality of their decisions.

In the board's pursuit of hiring a planning consultant to lead an urban education project, the Superintendent presented the candidate whom he believed to be the top contender. The Superintendent advised the board not to delay or postpone their decision so that the project could be ready by September meaning the consultant would have to begin work immediately (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/25/1968). One member noted the Board had not been provided with information regarding the reasons as to why this particular candidate was preferred over the others, or even what other candidates had been considered. Regardless, they still voted to hire him (*ibid.*). Even though the consultant would be leading impactful work within the school system, the board did not request clarification surrounding the candidates' qualifications and expertise.

Expediency was prevalent throughout the appointed board's existence, but a justification for it was not always apparent. In fact, members seemed familiar with expedient processes and usually did not question them. The Superintendent's proposal to measure the secondary school population projections made in November 1968 was one example of this (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/20/1968). Only one board member commented on the limited amount of time to review the proposal, before the members voted on the action as normal. Carrying on with the vote without other members raising concerns for the lack of time to review the proposal suggested their familiarity or comfortability with such expedient practices.

When members did express their opposition to expedient decision-making and advocated against it, it was usually done in the interest of the board when the matter at hand had the potential to bring significant legal or financial implications. Board members' concern for acting too quickly on momentous and legally impactful decisions was particularly prevalent in meetings following the enactment of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 as the board began to navigate the process of desegregation in the public schools (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 6/2/1954). The days following the enactment of this pivotal legislative decision, the Board received numerous divisive responses from community organizations and individual residents both supporting and discouraging the board's principles or the Superintendent's plan for desegregation. Although a significant policy issue, the board delegated the task of desegregating schools to the Superintendent who then presented his plan to the Board in May 1954 (*ibid.*).

Following the presentation of the Superintendent's plan, Board members voiced their reactions where one advocated the system "be cautious rather than impetuous" in the implementation of desegregation procedures adding that whatever is decided to be the most effective approach could then be pursued in the "most expedient and direct method" possible (*ibid.*). The remark distinguished between expedient decision-making and expedient implementation encouraging the latter. Such caution, however, was expressed in this instance as it followed a great deal of legal scrutiny and public comment, as well as national attention from the President having identified DCPS as a model.

On September 23, 1964, the board president presented two contrasting statements, a statement from the Washington Urban League (WUL) on their disappointment in the

Superintendent's recommendations to the presentation of their own report, *Integration and the Washington Public Schools*, and another from Americans for Democratic Action criticizing the WUL's report claiming it unfairly prioritized black student from higher income families and neglected those from lower income families (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/23/1964). Following these remarks, the board debated on how best to proceed in handling the concerns that were raised. In this discussion, one member argued the board did not have "sufficient time to weigh the pros and cons of the whole situation" and another warned against taking action without sufficient consideration explaining, "if [the Board] come to too hasty conclusions, [they] can greatly limit [their] influence" (ibid.).

The explicit discouragement of members to make urgent decisions further demonstrated their own awareness of the board's expedient approach to decision-making and the implications it could bring. The process for handling desegregation had the potential to bring great consequences, especially legally, if not handled appropriately, and had already received public attention. As board members, it was their responsibility to ensure the implementation or execution of their own work in respect to their federal appointers. Accordingly, these impactful decisions brought increased scrutiny from the board members in order to uphold federal, and other seemingly larger, decisions.

Expedient decision-making also served as a reactive response to long emerging trends. For example, a meeting in 1955 discussed changes to construction and modernization projects in the 1956 fiscal year budget in order to accommodate overcrowded schools in Northeast and Southeast (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/16/1955). About a month prior, the Superintendent had been instructed to continue

monitoring overcrowding in schools and to present possible solutions for “temporary relief” (ibid.). Accordingly, the Superintendent had proposed the postponement of multiple construction projects throughout the city in order to cope with the “rapid increases in [the city’s] population” due to emerging housing developments and the resulting displacement of other citizens (ibid.).

While such population increases and development plans did not arise overnight, the board spent approximately a month since the Superintendent studied the overcrowding deciding how to reallocate the funds necessary for temporary relief to affected schools. The decision was so briefly discussed that one board member referenced her strong attendance implying she was already unaware of what was being discussed after having only missed a total of four meetings over the past two years. She continued by suggesting the Administration conduct a city-wide assessment of population projections throughout 1956 including pupil-teacher ratio to better assess the entire city’s upcoming needs (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/16/1955).

The proposition served as an attempt to proactively understand upcoming population trends, which could eliminate urgent, last-minute decision-making on such matters in the short-term future. While issues with overcrowding and building availability were prevalent years before, as seen in the case of *Carr v. Corning* in 1947, for example, the board was faced with an urgent need to address these concerns, despite their longevity, in a piecemeal fashion. The board did not exercise foresight to address concerns in a more planned, and potentially more sustainable, and was left to make urgent funding reallocations while delaying other projects.

A similar case of delayed decision-making was seen when the board received a report “detailing the school system’s efforts to cope with the increasing number of Spanish-speaking students” in the public school system at a meeting in April 1968 (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/17/1968). In response to the suggestion of considering content courses being offered in Spanish for the rising number of Spanish-speaking students, one board member deemed this as a “precipitous conclusion” (ibid.). The motion did not guarantee or elicit any immediate establishment of these courses, but provided a potential solution to an increasingly needed service. Even so, there was still reluctance among the board to pursue educational options that, potentially, could eliminate urgent or expedient decisions later down the road as the Spanish-speaking student enrollment continued to increase (ibid.).

Board members deemed issues unnecessary when they personally did not understand or value the impact that proactive planning could have. They did not ensure sufficient building capacity until it was an urgent matter and, likewise, did not value the importance of supporting Spanish-speaking students even despite the evidence of its need. Without the pressure from their federal appointers, members were less likely to consider decisions in the best interest of the students’ learning experiences.

### *Lack of Information*

To maintain their expedient decision-making, members commonly made decisions with a lack of information. As opposed to waiting on decisions until a complete understanding of the matter in question was achieved, members made decisions with a

lack of clarity or impactful details on what they were voting. Only a couple members would explicitly note instances where information was missing or lacking, but this was not a common, nor board-wide, practice.

Recounting a discussion from July of 1954 on revising school boundaries and the progress of school desegregation, one board member inquired about a large group of 600 students who graduated from formerly all-white junior high schools but did not go on to attend high schools within their respective boundaries, as the desegregation policy declared (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1955). Although the Superintendent had assured the board his staff had reviewed all “cases concerning doctors’ certificates and things of that sort,” the board requested the Superintendent to investigate the situation and those students’ circumstances (ibid.).

In addition, another member referenced a “previous tabulation from the Superintendent [that] was incomplete and did not include children promoted from” elementary to junior high school, and promotions from junior high school to the senior high-level adding she never received an answer regarding its incompleteness (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1955). A third member voiced his support for the Superintendent and his Administration, but added “he felt it was time the Board recognized the fact that too many things go unanswered” and that there were “many things going on within the school system that he felt the Superintendent should be aware of” (ibid.).

Almost an entire year had passed before the board inquired about the instances of incomplete information mentioned above, which was done in response to the

Superintendent's suggestions on how to revise school boundaries. The board members, ultimately, were the ones who allowed for the persistence of this lack of information, which they themselves had recognized as a trend. If the lack of information was as much of a concern of theirs as they had described, members should have questioned these instances earlier to ensure the process of desegregation was handled effectively, as opposed to having let one year pass before addressing them. By this time, in the event any of the 600 students in question should have attended schools other than what they already were, their current education may have been disrupted if the board and/or Administration decided they would have to correct any of these cases by enrolling in the school originally designated by the Superintendent's desegregation policy.

A lack of information was apparent in the board's discussions of the Track System, for instance. On April 30, 1956, the Superintendent presented his proposal for a reorganization of the senior high school curriculum students grouping them in honors, regular college preparatory, general, and basic curriculum (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956). He alleged the intention was to encourage college aspiring students to enroll in more "academic subjects," strengthen the curriculum for gifted students, and allow a better opportunity for teachers to work with "slow students without retarding the progress of others" (ibid.).

Given its curricular reorganization, the Track System would undoubtedly affect the school system's teachers. Accordingly, one board member proposed the postponement of the decision since, at that time, they did not know how many teachers would be with the schools nor how they would be distributed throughout the system. A

second concern was raised by another board member who voiced potential support for the reorganization, if there was more information regarding the approach to grouping students (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956). Without better projections of the availability of teachers or specifics on how students were to be identified for one grouping over the other, the board voted to implement the program.

In a meeting in April 1965 where the board debated the abolishment of the Track System, one board member accused the others for not having made the necessary effort to understand the Track System in its entirety, including its implications on the students and their education. She contested the other members did not study the matter or adequately prepare themselves to make an informed decision on the Track System and argued they would have taken a different stance on the matter had they “done the kind of reading that [she had]” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/22/1965).

Furthermore, that same member questioned why the DCPS Administration and others decided to support it saying she was unaware of “any educators who want it or anybody who wants to support it” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/22/1965). The minutes did not indicate any member had responded to these statements, let alone provide her with evidence or rationale for their decision to support the Track System. Therefore, it could be understood that the other members did not educate themselves on the Track System outside of the information provided largely by the Superintendent and other members in the meetings. The board voted to keep the Track System anyways.

About a year later, the board requested a third-party study of the Track System to understand “what needs to be done in the Washington Public School System to develop

the most productive educational opportunity for all members of the urban community” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/16/1966). The Superintendent presented the board with two options for potential third-party evaluators who could conduct the study naming the Columbia University Teachers’ College as his own preference. In his presentation, he shared the cost estimate of the study, potential source for funds, and the scope of the study. However, he did not share what other candidates were considered and the reasoning for his preference. Two board members explicitly questioned the reason why the Superintendent had selected Columbia University because nothing was provided to them regarding the other potential candidates (ibid.).

The Superintendent explained both Columbia University and Michigan University had submitted “very favorable” proposals, but did not clarify who the other applicants were or why those two were the more favorable ones. The Superintendent did not provide clear, objective reasons for his recommendation of Columbia University other than its advantageous location in New York City, ultimately stating “either one would be adequate” ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/16/1966). No other board members seemed to question the selection despite the lack of concrete evidence supporting his decision. Most members did not even see the need to critically question how the Superintendent arrived at his conclusion (ibid.). Without additional information to support the Superintendent’s recommendations, it could be understood the board trusted the Administration to make the best decision.

In April 1967, controversy surrounding the Superintendent’s Track System continued to grow. The results of a reading survey revealed all predominantly black

schools performed below national standards, whereas predominantly white schools were either at or above these standards (Franklin 1967). Just about a month earlier on March 15, 1967, the Superintendent, creator of the Track System, was reappointed prior to the release of these results by the “narrowest” vote yet of 5-4 (ibid.:84). The Superintendent’s reappointment was a clear representation of the board’s racial makeup at the time with five white members and four black. Of the five members who had voted to reappoint the Superintendent, three of their own appointments would expire only a few months later.

A school boycott was organized by civil rights activist, Julius Hobson, in response to the racially biased program, but students were discouraged from partaking in the demonstration as they were reportedly threatened with “reduced grades and the loss of college admission recommendations” (Franklin 1967). The predominantly white board overseeing the predominantly black school system disregarded the evidence that demonstrated the Track System’s inefficiency and promotion of race-based grouping of students choosing to support it regardless. The board’s racial composition changed a few months later in June when the board became a predominantly black body for the first time.

Similar to the Superintendent’s presentation of the proposal to study the Track System, the board voted on the Superintendent’s proposal to study population projections and school boundaries without having thoroughly understood it. In his presentation, the Superintendent reported on how the work would be executed, as well as a cost estimate, but a member attested “he could not vote on the proposal because he had just received the

report and had not had time to read it” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/20/1968). The proposal, which cited collaboration with the Office of Crime Analysis, would cost almost \$16,000, but, despite the members’ lack of time to consider the information including the cost and partnership, the board still voted to authorize its immediate implementation (ibid.). The board voted to support the study without full knowledge of what the proposal entailed and the collaboration with other municipal agencies (ibid.).

In the appointed board’s final meeting in late January 1969, the members were presented with a Washington Teachers’ Union contract on which they “had reached a final agreement at 4:30 that morning” after 16 hours of negotiations (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/24/1969 2, Denton 1969). The contract was reportedly the second one to have been negotiated by the Teachers Union since it was “recognized as the exclusive bargaining agent for city teachers” a couple years before and was intended to relieve teachers from some of their administrative responsibilities at the same time providing them a platform “in shaping education policy,” particularly as it related to curriculum (Denton 1969:E1).

Early on in the members’ discussion of the contract and the proposed amendments, one member asked if the board was interested in hearing the Superintendent’s report on the matter. The offering to present his report initially went unacknowledged, but, following additional discussion, two other members inquired about the Superintendent’s report (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/24/1969). These additional inquiries also went unacknowledged and the board approved the contract without hearing the report from the Superintendent, or others who had dealt with the negotiations (ibid.).

The members' interest in hearing the Superintendent's report went entirely unaddressed. The minutes did not indicate that those members' requests to hear the report were ever acknowledged by the president or other members, even though multiple members had requested it and, being from the Superintendent, could have provided valuable insight as members commonly relied on his educational expertise.

Typically, members did not question the lack of information in the board's decision-making, but, when it was, the board was unreceptive when their decision-making was challenged. At the end of one meeting in January 1961, one member expressed general concern for the board's overall lack of knowledge on programs within DCPS calling it "ignorant of projects...in connection with educational problems and [was] not therefore fully informed as to what the projects [were], how they [were] organized, where the funds [came] from to operate them" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/24/1969).

He believed the board should possess more awareness and knowledge of its projects and, therefore, suggested the establishment of a Study Committee to deal specifically with such elements. In response, the president suggested the board member take his concerns to his own Committee, the Committee on Health and Special Education (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/24/1969). Because the member's concerns of the lack of information resided with the board as a whole and not a single committee, the president's deferral seemed to perpetuate the lack of information which had been noted on several instances by other members. The board, overall, did not actively seek ways to address the

members' concerns with the lack of information used in their decision-making and, instead, valued expediency over the extent to which their decisions were informed.

Decisions made with a lack of information perpetuated the negative consequences of disadvantageous academic programs, such as the Track System. Deliberately excluding potentially valuable educational insight, such as reports from the Administration on contracts, and not monitoring or promptly addressing outcomes, like those of the Superintendent's desegregation plans, does not allow for well informed decisions. Furthermore, the board's own awareness of the lack of information used in their decisions, yet lack of action to address this concern, suggested members valued their ability to make decisions quickly, rather than completely, establishing a perceived reputation of responsiveness to situations.

#### *Interpretation or Implementation of Complex Information*

The appointed board struggled to interpret or implement complex information or tasks – such as third-party research and legislation. Not only was the board unable to independently interpret complex or vast amounts of information, but it even struggled to establish an approach as to how such information would be reviewed, understood, and implemented. Members seemed to debate more on what they believed to be the most effective approach to reviewing the information, rather than the actual information, or how they could use it to improve the school system, itself.

The board failed to make full use of, or even fully understand, the information provided in the *Strayer Report* released in 1949. It was not until the end of 1950, a

member noted how the board had failed to take advantage of the recommendations provided by report released one year prior and, therefore, relied on the Superintendent to interpret what information should be implemented through his own recommendations. The board decided the Superintendent would present recommendations through a series of monthly reports. The suggestion for this approach to presenting information came about, not just because of the valuable insight the report offered, but also because of the fact it had cost the taxpayers a “substantial amount of money” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950).

The Superintendent argued that such an approach would be ineffective saying he, and the other Administrators, were already familiar with the recommendations provided by the 980-page report, and to consider all recommendations individually would not be “very productive” because there were so many calling it “humanly and physically impossible” (*Strayer Report Used By Schools, Corning Says* 1956; DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950). The president then proposed reviewing the section of the report pertaining specifically to the Board, but a couple other members pushed for a review of the report in its entirety (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950).

It was eventually decided the Superintendent would present the report to the board by chapters followed by the Superintendent’s recommendations (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950). The back-and-forth debate suggested the appointed board members were not only unaware of how to interpret the information of the *Strayer Report*, but it was also unaware of how to even review it so they could actually make use of it.

By January 1951, the Superintendent had presented three monthly reports on the *Strayer Report*, which another member described as “superfluous” claiming anyone interested in learning about the school system “ought to know the *Strayer Report*” and described the task as an “imposition” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). Instead, he suggested each committee take ownership of the reports’ sections applicable to them. A couple other members argued the board had already “studied” the report, but the task was intended for the Superintendent to “analyze and evaluate it” in addition to providing recommendations (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951).

The board member who initially proposed the monthly reports from the Superintendent reiterated its cost of \$100,000 adding the Superintendent was qualified to make recommendations. The Superintendent argued, as he had in previous meetings, the report was so “voluminous” it could not effectively be considered in a “piecemeal” manner (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). As an alternative approach, another member suggested the board could consider the three reports with which they had been presented so far. Ultimately, the board decided any recommendation the Superintendent found “a worthwhile opinion” should be included in his report on any given matter as it arose; no further monthly reports were given by the Superintendent (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951).

Explicitly referring to the Superintendent as qualified to make recommendations implied the board members were not. The board’s lack of consensus on how to review and understand the *Strayer Report’s* information revealed members’ apparent inability to utilize the information without the guidance of the Superintendent. The board’s many

opinions on how it could approach utilizing information from the *Strayer Report* exhibited the members' inability to apply its findings. The final decision on how to use it removed the board from the responsibility of learning it themselves and using it to inform their decisions, and placed the accountability on the Administration instead.

Over the years, the *Strayer Report* was rarely and inconsistently referenced, but usually only by the same couple members. On May 18, 1956, the Superintendent submitted a report to Congress upon request by a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee "as a result of parent charges that recommendations in the study had been ignored" (*Strayer Report Used by Schools, Corning Says 1956:17*). The Superintendent explained to Congress more recommendations had not been adapted either due to a lack of funding to implement them or "population shifts and school integration." He continued the report was not meant to serve as a rigid blueprint, but agreed more work needed to be done (*Strayer Report Used by Schools, Corning Says 1956*).

The report revealed very telling information regarding DCPS, particularly strong evidence of separate and unequal education systems like the city's black residents had suspected for some time. Unfortunately, the insight went largely ignored and the concerns identified in the report mainly went unaddressed. The board could have used the report more responsibly, which may have had a more significant impact on the school system if the board would have made a greater effort to understand and implement it in their own policymaking, as opposed to leaving the task to others.

In discussions surrounding the desegregation of the schools, it was decided a committee of board members would develop and present principles to guide the

Superintendent's plan, which would be presented thereafter. One of the five principles presented to the board declared student records would no longer include their race following the current school year calling it "irrelevant to the education of children" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/25/1954). While a couple members argued against the proposal suggesting the information was useful and would also be consistent with all records collected since the beginning the District of Columbia's school system, the principle was approved by the board.

Members lacked experience and understanding as to how information on race, such as "attendance and the effect of attendance," as argued by one member, could be advantageous, yet they still decided against its collection without further consideration (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/25/1954). The board did not understand how such information could be valuable. Although the decision would significantly impact the school system's capacity to monitor and evaluate students in the future, members did not solicit insight from stakeholders who would have worked more directly with the collection or utilization of it. A member justified the principle, calling such information irrelevant, but the explanation was not made with substantiated evidence, rather, from their own ideological beliefs that race would no longer be a factor in a desegregated school system.

As the complex task of having to desegregate its schools became increasingly likely in the early 1950s, the board debated on the best way to proactively address it. In this instance, one of the board's first steps in planning for desegregation was actually deferred to the community as they discussed having "leading citizens of [the]

community” speak to the board on “the mechanics of integration,” or how it would occur, and any “educational preparation” they thought would be necessary (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/17/1952). Not all members were supportive of the proactive planning and suggested delaying the motion because more information may be included in the ruling and planning for desegregation may be perceived as “prejudicial” (ibid.).

Supporting members found the motion practical and informative to their (potentially) future work, as well as an opportunity for building “community good will” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/17/1952). One member suggested holding the community meeting in the evening hours so as to avoid its interference with the transaction of regular meeting business (ibid.). Those in support of planning for desegregation argued it would be “very important at some time or other to get community reactions” before the board took any concrete steps itself.

Once school desegregation was passed, as with instances before involving complex information, the board debated on how it should receive the Superintendent’s plan for desegregation at the special meeting to be held several days later. First, the board debated whether or not to establish a set of principles to ensure standards within the Administration’s plan to desegregate and eventually identified several members who would develop them. Then, the board debated whether it would be best to have the principles presented before or after the Superintendent presented his report.

Lastly, following the determination that it would be best to present the principles before the Superintendent was to present his plan, board members disagreed on whether they should receive the Superintendent’s report at or before the meeting. The

Superintendent felt it was best for members to receive the report together at the meeting where it would be presented, after which they would have time to make decisions (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1954). One member requested a copy of the legislation in question be provided and another asked if the community's feedback had been incorporated into the plans. The Superintendent agreed to provide a copy of the legislation and noted the community's feedback was "carefully considered," but did not confirm whether it was included (ibid.).

It was eventually decided the Superintendent's report would be disseminated to the members at the meeting. One member expressed his confidence in the Superintendent saying "a good administrator would have been preparing himself...for a long time," although the board itself never seemed to have requested it (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1954). The Superintendent replied he had been "preparing for weeks," even though it was a legal matter that had been considered for years prior (ibid.).

The board had not even discussed the possibility of principles on desegregation until the Superintendent was about to share what he had already developed. In this instance, members' lack of foresight in their planning for this monumental ruling may have impeded the Superintendent's work, for which he had been preparing before the board considered their role in the process deciding on the establishment of principles. The board did not even appear aware the Administration had been preparing for desegregation.

A central component to the Superintendent's desegregation plan was the boundary lines used to determine which schools students would attend was later deemed

unconstitutional in 1967. Federal Judge Wright declared the approach merely exacerbated segregation by excluding consideration of students' economic status (Franklin 1967). Judge Wright cited evidence of predominantly black schools expending \$292 per student, versus white schools which expended \$392 per student (Franklin 1967). Further, it was found the plan "intentionally" gerrymandered lower-income black students to schools offering the basic curriculum of the Track System and more white students were enrolled in the regular and honors tracks (ibid.:24). The Judge's ruling on Julius Hobson's lawsuit, however, did not include the "enforced merger" of the predominantly black school district with the predominantly white schools in the surrounding areas (ibid.:24).

Another conversation on how to understand and engage with complex information occurred at a meeting in April 1956 based on a board member's presentation of his own report *Today's Solutions to Today's Problems* about a month prior. The Superintendent proposed reading his response to the report, but one board member expressed reluctance to the suggestion arguing the 21-page response required "close examination and scrutiny on the part of the members" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956). Similarly, another member proposed the board hold a separate meeting to review the material more thoroughly saying members should not "read a twenty-one page report at a regular meeting" (ibid.). A third member announced, despite the Superintendent's recommendations, he still would "not feel qualified to render any judgment" (ibid.). Once again, members spent a significant amount of time deliberating on how they would consider the report, not its contents, but still required support from the Superintendent's expertise to actually understand and act on the information at hand.

### *Administrative Relationships and Collaboration*

Board members were not required to possess specific education-related qualifications to serve; as a result, members did not always possess the educational expertise needed to independently understand the matters with which they dealt developing a reliance on the DCPS Administration. The Superintendent's knowledge allowed them to better understand the actions with which they were presented establishing the Superintendent as a primary source of information to guide the Board's decisions. Members rarely questioned or challenged the Administration and their recommendations.

The appointed board trusted the Administration's recommendations were thoroughly planned and considered leaving the board with little onus to independently arrive at their own conclusions or determinations. This usually provided members with a unilateral way of understanding a specific matter and its implications on the school system and a limited perspective on alternatives. The board regularly requested the Superintendent create reports regarding DCPS-wide concerns and emerging trends. These reports served as a primary source of information that guided members' discussions.

For instance, in discussing how to proceed with the Superintendent's report on *Today's Solutions to Today's Problems*, the board requested the Superintendent to help them understand its content and, also, that he provide recommendations on how they should proceed as they did "not feel qualified to render any judgment" otherwise (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956). Similarly, the Superintendent presented monthly

installments of the *Strayer Report* to the board because members relied on his interpretation as they were incapable of making their own (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/17/1951). Together, the sole perspective of the Superintendent's interpretation of these reports, coupled with members' desire to act expediently, fostered a limited understanding of educational matters as the Administration determined what information would be presented and how it would be presented, which greatly influenced members' perspectives.

The Superintendent even played a significant role in policymaking, a role of the board's, such as creating an approach to school desegregation. One member recalled a previous meeting where citizens addressed the board with "their ideas on integration" and inquired whether the feedback was included in the plan the Superintendent had created. The Superintendent did not confirm whether any of the feedback was actually incorporated, rather, only noted it was "carefully considered" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 6/2/1954). The Superintendent did not provide the board with any confirmation of how the community's ideas were fairly considered, if at all, and the board did not question the Superintendent's approach to incorporating community feedback beyond that.

The board often lacked a stake in the work happening in the school system leading to their lack of knowledge of the Administration's work. At the meeting prior to the Superintendent's presentation of his approach to desegregation, the board discussed establishing integration principles stating "a policy-making board has an obligation to express an unequivocal statement of principles to be translated into particular action"

(DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1954). The Superintendent had already been working on a plan independent of whatever guidance the board's principles would have provided. The board's desire to establish principles after the plan, versus before or in conjunction with, signaled their lack of knowledge on the Administration's work and the limited impact the board's role had on the nearly completed plan for desegregation (ibid.).

When the board was not in a position of reliance on the Administration's expertise, members were quick to criticize. Approximately one year later, the board's discussion on the enforcement of school boundaries, and the case of 600 students who graduated from formerly all-white junior high schools, led to the board's request of the Superintendent to investigate those cases (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1954). One member claimed the Superintendent was unaware of "many things going on within the school system that he felt the Superintendent should be aware of" (ibid.). The members' own limited understanding of the desegregation progress resulted in the members questioning the Superintendent credibility, rather than their own lack of involvement.

The board's criticism of the Administration grew in instances when DCPS was publicly criticized. In response to an article criticizing the school system for not offering sex education, one member recalled his request of the Superintendent to report on the "instruction in personal hygiene and sex education" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956). Over a year later, the same member noted his request had gone unaddressed to which the Superintendent assured the board "a good many people [were] working on this problem about which there [were] conflicting authorities and ideas" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 7/1/1957). Had the matter not received attention from the press, the

member may not have inquired about the concern he had raised almost two years ago when the matter was originally raised in April 1955. The board, again, was unaware of the work carried out by the Administration (ibid.).

A similar instance occurred following the publication of an *Evening Star* article on enrollment projections as provided by school principals. One board member questioned why the press had those numbers before the members themselves. The Superintendent assured the board the Administration's official report with such projections was still in draft form but would be provided to the board once finished. Debate between certain members and the Superintendent ensued as they inquired as to why they could not see a draft report. The members even questioned if the Administration would have provided the report to the board had the article not been published in the first place (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956).

The Superintendent explained he did not want to release a report until numbers were finalized and assured the board would receive a copy once they were. Another member supported the Superintendent's approach calling him the "man in charge" and even recalled the concern a "recurring matter every year" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956). Despite its annual presentation, members still questioned the Administration's provision of information (ibid.). Feeling only as knowledgeable about the information as the general public, the board directed criticism towards the Administration.

Furthermore, the board's priorities did not always align with the Administration's. When this happened, the Administration would demonstrate less obligation or support in addressing the issue at hand. Items which the Administration genuinely supported

themselves incited a quicker response or less reluctance in addressing the matter. For example, one board member raised their concern for the lack of foreign language course offerings beyond the first four years. The member described it as a “handicap” to students who have already progressed through the four-class sequence and asked whether there would be an extension offered for students who qualify (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1961).

The Superintendent replied no extension was being considered and that students who have already completed four years should have acquired enough “mastery” of the language could use it “recreationally” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1961). The Superintendent continued a “seminary program” could be considered, but the proposed solution was seemingly non-committal as it did not provide clarification as to when or how they could address the concern (ibid.).

Since the board members relied heavily on the Administration’s educational expertise, they demonstrated confidence in their insight and recommendations; however, this also proved to be limiting as it meant that the board members often made their decisions based on a single perspective. Likewise, either due to their confidence in the Administration or the members’ own lack of educational expertise, or both, members rarely challenged or questioned the information the Administration shared with them.

However, this relationship faltered in cases where the board, or DCPS as a whole, received negative attention, such as from the press. The board would criticize the Administration for being unaware or negligent despite the members’ own unawareness of an issue. There were even instances where the Administration seemed to control what

was happening in the school system. When the Administration's own educational priorities did not align with those of the board, they reluctantly, if at all, addressed them. The board members would not always inquire or readdress such concerns that usually went ignored for a significant amount of time until an outside source prompted a follow-up inquiry.

### *Curricular and Academic Decisions*

Board members decided what information would be taught in schools, and these determinations were reflective of their own belief system. Curriculum-related decisions made by the appointed board illuminated members' own values and ideologies, particularly those relating to the traditional American dream of the mid-1900s – patriotism, or even ethnocentrism, self-sufficiency, assimilation, and generally, conservative ideas. Conservative American ideals guided the members' culturally-based curricular determinations. These values are reflected in the curricula and learning materials approved by the board.

One example of this was the board's education of their own political and economic systems in a way that portrayed them as superior to others, especially regarding those with which the United States already had weak ties. In designing and presenting a new social studies curriculum called *The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, the board members praised its comparative approach intended to highlight the positive elements of the United States' capitalistic democracy emphasizing freedom of religion, and the negative elements of communism in Soviet Russia and its need to be "combated" (DCPS

BOE Meeting Minutes 11/16/1960). Following the presentation of the curriculum's overview, the Superintendent assured the board that students would be left with "no doubt as to which is the preferential position" (ibid.). The curriculum was intended to steer students away from developing a fair understanding of the other country's political systems, rather than ensuring the teaching the objective facts of both (ibid.).

Another instance where the board advocated for their own beliefs was through the selection of social studies textbooks covering the different regions of the United States reflected the members' own perceptions of how students should be taught to understand the country. Upon reading about the series of textbooks proposed by the Superintendent, one board member drew special attention to one particular book in the series, the book on the South (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1959). The member was bothered the book was not written by a Southerner and believed the region was improperly recognized and unfairly portrayed compared to the northern regions. They continued by outlining comparative facts of the North and the South to illuminate the ways in which she believed the South "was ahead" of the other regions ultimately advocating to "give the Old South its due;" however, similar scrutiny was not paid to ensure a fair representation of the other geographic regions (ibid.).

Another instance of textbook approval was given by the board in 1965 when one board member referenced a particular called the *Bank-Street Readers* intended for "urban readers" suggesting an Administrator review them for their use in the schools. The member continued saying they were "needed in programs for culturally deprived children have been reviewed" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/21/1965). Through this decision,

the board demonstrated their authority to identify students as “culturally deprived” and determining the kind of information that would be taught to those students (ibid.). The selection of textbooks was one way through which the predominantly white appointed board instilled the dominant culture’s ideals in the education of the predominantly black school system as they advocated for the superiority of southern culture and strived to target students they perceived as culturally deprived.

Appointed members saw it as their responsibility to culturally assimilate their students to that of their own group transmitting their own dominant cultural beliefs to subordinate residents, or low-income black families, through public education programs which targeted. The migration of families from the South to the District of Columbia strongly shaped the city throughout the twentieth century, particularly through the 1940s and 1950s. In 1957, the idea of an “urbanization” school was discussed and encouraged for “rural Southern families” who were claimed to have received minimal education in order to adapt to the “long-established American way of life” (Hagemeyer 1957:B1).

It was suggested that school ministers would educate families on “the necessity of religion and church going in their lives; be told by a member of the police force about the...dangers of drug addiction and about the penalties for criminal conduct...by a doctor of the dangers of promiscuity and venereal disease...” (ibid.). Suggestions came from the assumption that the migrant families, who were largely black at this time, were unaccustomed to an urban way of life and, therefore, would exacerbate whatever the dominant group would have countered the board’s belief of what was un-American or immoral.

Aside from the urbanization school, the members also strived to educate these same families by teaching them skills they presumably lacked through television courses. The courses, provided to the public through partnership with the District of Columbia's local WTOP news station, were intended to improve the city's families' finance skills (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/15/1958). The courses were to be offered twice a week at 6:30 or 7:30 in the morning and intended to "contribute to the purposes of Washington's urban renewal and community rehabilitation programs" by improving families' "homemaking knowledge and skills" (ibid.). The Superintendent identified the lack of this knowledge as a significant contributor to the "problem," but did not clearly specify to what 'problem' he referred or which population was to be targeted by this academic offering (ibid.). The board was only interested in ensuring the "proper controls" were being exercised asking about examinations and credits (ibid.).

The discussion identified the intention of the offering was to "contribute to the purposes of Washington's urban renewal and community rehabilitation programs," which is now understood to have targeted low-income families. Considering the course's intended audience, the medium through which the courses were offered may not have been the most effective given that such families may not have owned televisions. The board not only arbitrarily identified a 'problem,' but also designated the skills they believed they were lacking and wanted to teach.

The board's decisions to offer certain programs stemmed from their personal perceptions of the role education should play in students' lives and, subsequently, the extent to which schools should support their students so that they are equipped to succeed

academically. The board was reluctant to support actions when they were perceived as controversial or beyond the scope of traditional education. One board member, for instance, expressed their opinion on the importance of providing students with a sexual education class (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/8/1956). He referenced an article in which the press criticized the school system for not offering sex education, then noted that he had requested a report from the Superintendent on the “instruction in personal hygiene and sex education” (ibid.).

Over a year later, when the request had still gone seemingly unaddressed, the member urged for its offering once again. The Superintendent assured the board that while they working to address the issue, “there [were] conflicting authorities and ideas” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 7/1/1957). Furthermore, even after having received public criticism on the issue, no other board member inquired about the progress of the curriculum’s development (ibid.). Together, these two factors suggest the Administration’s, and other members’, own reluctance or lack of prioritizing the curriculum out of their own personal agendas.

In another case, the board was presented an opportunity to apply for a program in partnership with multiple other District of Columbia municipal agencies to establish a program that would support approximately 125 pregnant students (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/19/1962). The program, having attracted “a good deal of controversy,” was intended to “[meet] the educational, social, physical, and mental health needs” of the students involved, which fell beyond the traditional, more academically limited, scope of the school systems’ responsibility (ibid.).

Following the presentation of a program overview, a member voiced strong opposition because the school system already faced inadequate funding for “fundamental objective in education” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/19/1962). They added the mission fell “beyond the purview of our educational program” and, therefore, did not consider it an educational program (ibid.). The board member leading the initiative shared how they initially held similar sentiments, but became more “accepting” of the program arguing it showed greater promise in improving those students’ “academic possibilities” than some other programs offered by DCPS (ibid.). For that reason, they argued it was the board’s responsibility to provide the program (ibid.).

A couple other members supported the board’s application to the program given the Urban League’s and Children’s Bureau’s support, along with the opportunity for cross-sector collaboration across the city (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/19/1962). In the end, the board’s decision to support the program’s application was primarily determined based on the endorsements from the public organizations and government agencies, not the program itself or their understanding of its impact (ibid.). Members seemed reluctant to support the program due to their own beliefs’ of the school system’s role, but seemed responsive to its association with other governmental and national organizations.

The appointed board pursued several system-wide achievement-based curriculum arrangements that would determine the academic trajectory of DCPS students by separating students into courses and course sequences based on their academic achievement. While many board members supported such approaches, others argued

against them because of their defiance against students' own capacity to determine their academic future. It was argued that they limited the possible range of subjects students could study that could help them determine their academic interests and career aspirations beyond high school making them too deterministic. The dissension mirrored members' support for democratic ideals, as well as the supposed skills-based segregation of students.

The homogenous reorganization of classes proposed by one member in 1956, for instance, was reportedly "for teaching purposes" in response to testing results from the previous year (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956). One member argued classrooms were "very heterogeneous" in terms of students' "intelligence quotients, academic attainment, intellectual potentials and social adjustment" claiming there was one case where students' IQs in a single classroom ranged from 49 to 149 (ibid.). He believed students would receive better instruction if they were grouped according to academic ability, particularly during a teacher shortage. Without citing evidence to justify his claim, the Superintendent proposed a set of variables to determine a more effective student grouping including students' test scores, age, maturity, "social development, mental age and class performance" and assured some degree of flexibility (ibid.).

In response, a different member questioned the need for the reorganization arguing, while he trusted thorough consideration had gone into the proposal, he contested problems within the school system actually "stem from the inability of the administrators to properly delegate authority and to exercise proper supervision," as well as the teacher shortage ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956). A second member voiced opposition

claiming students who were not excelling academically as quickly as others was partly due to having lived in an “underprivileged situation” for several years and couldn’t “educationally condone” the action saying the problem stems beyond student grouping:

I have talked to white teachers... I know what Negro teachers’ problems are... It is the fact that these people are worked to death.... I know parents whose children are in situations which are not even integrated to any great extent and they are distressed and disturbed. I mean integration hasn’t done this. Segregation has created this whole thing.  
(DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956)

The minutes did not indicate any evidence supporting the need for or reason for pursuing the homogenously grouping of students. The proposed method for determining groupings, along with the degree of flexibility retained by Administration, lacked detail. In fact, the variables proposed were arguably more culturally-based.

The Track System was another approach to student grouping that lacked a detailed explanation of the grouping method and also ensured the Administration a degree of flexibility. The Superintendent explained that there would need to be “knowledge of the physical and emotional ability of a student to do difficult work” in order for them to enroll in a more advanced track (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/30/1956). Again, both subjective and objective measures would be used to group students. One board member argued the approach was overly deterministic because there was no “testing device which can determine one’s fitness for his future life or vocation,” adding the plan was “inadequately developed” for placing too much emphasis on the students’ records; such an approach “could not possibly be handled with any degree of

accuracy” (ibid.). The Track System, which remained for nearly a decade later, was approved.

In discussions surrounding the abolishment of the Track System on April 22, 1965, one member voiced strong opposition for it claiming it was “in direct opposition to the American objective of...the democratic way of life” claiming it did not allow students to gain an appreciation for a variety subjects and that it fostered a “class society rather than a democratic society” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/22/1965). The Superintendent argued the system benefitted all students: students with learning or physical disabilities would receive whatever care and training available so that they can become citizens in their own capacity and all other students would be assigned to classes within major subject areas based on their individual aptitudes (ibid.).

Again, members voted in favor of the Track System, despite the lack of supporting evidence used to justify these claims, along with the reported lack of support from teachers themselves (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/22/1965). Appointed board members’ own beliefs of what, academically, was effective, was not supported with clear educational evidence. Rather, their decision-making was guided by projecting their own distinctions of students and goals for transmitting their own traditional, American ideals, such as cultural assimilation to the American urban way of life and democratic and capitalistic superiority. Members supported initiatives that encouraged cultural assimilation to the dominant group, the white upper-class, promoted the American Dream in a capitalistic society, and perceived educational inequalities as a result of students’ natural aptitude.

### *Acceptance of Laws*

Just as they proceeded reluctantly or cautiously with perceivably controversial curricular decisions, members were careful to remain compliant with controversial political matters. Board members were more likely to abide by laws, even if they reportedly disagreed with them. Members would either ignore them, or remain complacent on actions contradicting the law and did not willingly engage in legally controversial matters. They strived to abide by existing laws regardless of their impact on the education system. Members who did challenge existing laws were often silenced or went unacknowledged, and were encouraged to comply with the laws enforced by their own appointers. The board was even accused of maintaining a “do-nothing policy” and “drifting with the tide,” as opposed to actively addressing disparate educational opportunities (*Negro Pastor Says Board Does Nothing on Unequal Schools* 1954).

In 1950, the board was presented with an incident where black actors were not allowed into an all-white high school at which their play was performed. The members argued whether they supported that school principal’s decision to disallow the actors’ admittance into the building. Only two members, both of whom were black, openly contested the decision arguing the law did not apply to theatrical performances (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/20/1950). One member explained he was unaware of any "stated policy" supporting the decision and added that the discrimination of the actors would have a "hampering" impact on the presentation (ibid.). The other argued against the decision because the school system was supported by “taxpayers of every nationality and

every faith” and that the black children “were just as much effected by [the incident] as the while children” (ibid.).

On the other hand, one member justified their support for the principal saying “the board has nothing to do with segregation, we are merely carrying out the orders of Congress...” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950). Another encouraged the opposing members to accept the outcome of the situation adding, while “many” non-white members of the board in the past have disagreed with concept of segregation, they “recognized the fact that the law of the land had to be carried out, and that until it was changed, it was their obligation to support it” as appointed members (ibid.). Although several white members stated their opposition to the dual school system, they justified their support of the Superintendent based on the fact that a desegregated school system was illegal. Even in the absence of a policy defending the Administration’s decision, board members urged complacency among the two members who had opposed the outcome.

Similar to the board proceeding less expediently on actions which received greater public scrutiny, they may have reconsidered their actions when their legal or political position was questioned, but did so reluctantly. Following the board’s initial discussion of the incident regarding the segregated actors in the school play, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sent a telegram to the board president inquiring whether the Superintendent’s statement on the situation “was authorized by the board and requesting a public hearing on the Board’s policy” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950).

After additional discussion on the topic, the president appointed a three-person committee to “investigate” the situation and provide recommendations on how to cope with them in the future (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 10/4/1950). Without public pressure from the NAACP, no further action on the discriminatory incident, and subsequent policies, was indicated. Furthermore, the appointment of the three-person committee was questionable given that all three people initially supported the Superintendent’s decision meaning it more likely the committee’s outcome would not challenge laws or policies.

While members were responsible for developing policy for the DCPS school system, they did not challenge laws when they saw the inefficacies or inequalities they brought, rather they complacently followed them. At one meeting in 1953, one board member presented “conclusive evidence” citing numerous instances of disparate quality in facilities and services between the black and white schools she had after having read the Superintendent’s report from the past couple months requesting the Superintendent to reconcile them immediately (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/16/1953).

Another member added, “while he is in favor integration and against segregation,” it is the board’s responsibility to conduct the school system as a “dual system until the Supreme Court rules otherwise” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/16/1953). Well knowing the clear inequalities between the two school divisions, and its subsequent impact on the students’ education, the board did not utilize the data presented to them by the Administration to work towards more equitable educational opportunities but, instead, used it as justification for their complacency on the matter.

Members did not question the disparities presented to them through the Superintendent's reports from past meetings.

Even the members' appointments to the board, at times, reflected their desires to comply. For instance, Robert Faulkner, in 1952, reported he "didn't particularly care for the appointment" but accepted it out of "public duty" (*Didn't Want School Job, Appointee Says* 1952:n.p.). In fact, he claimed he did not "actively" seek an appointment due to his desire for "not doing more than he has to" (ibid.). Furthermore, he referred to his own knowledge of the public school system as "general," rather than "intimate" (ibid.).

Faulkner's sentiments suggest members who did not actively seek appointment may have accepted the office out of obligation to serve their civic duty, rather than choosing not to comply with the position offered by their appointer. Furthermore, members' own professional or political interests may have encouraged their acceptance of such appointments. Faulkner, for example, a lawyer, served on the "special counsel for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad," who may have experienced professional repercussions had he rejected the position (Olesen 1952:n.p.).

### *Conclusion*

The member-centric approach used to structure the appointed board's meetings transpired into the decisions they made. The board established meeting structures out of efficiency and convenience for themselves, which they used to normalize and justify their expedient decision-making. Expedient decision-making was a way for the board to seem

responsive and productive, and was rarely cautioned against. However, when members did warn against it, they did so out of cognizance of their own appointers because of the greater financial or legal implications they brought for the board. The expedient decision-making influenced the quality of decisions made by members limiting the information included or the amount of time allotted for members to understand and deliberate.

Members primarily considered the efficiency of their meetings, rather than the public's accessibility to them. They viewed the board as a business entity whose role was to responsively address matters that arose across the school system. Accordingly, appointed members placed less emphasis on the quality of information with which they were presented to make their decisions.

Complex information – such as that provided in reports, studies, or legislation – naturally required even more time for members to review and understand. In these instances, the board struggled to navigate processes for which they would review, understand, and utilize the information. The Administration was pivotal in providing their interpretations of and insights into such complex information; it was the Administration's insights that informed the members and, therefore, shaped the decisions they made. In order to maintain their efficiency and expediency, members often considered limited perspective when understanding educational matters.

Members used academic and curricular matters to distinguish between students and transmit their own cultural beliefs. The conservative American ideals board members promoted through courses and learning materials were also reflected in their narrower perception of the role education plays in their students' lives. More broadly, the members

promoted their own beliefs, legally, prioritizing the board's compliance to federal laws and their traditional educational standards. Members felt responsible for adhering to the laws and educational standards set by their appointers regardless of whether they claimed to believe in them or not.

Appointed members demonstrated strong accountability and obligation to their appointers by not challenging existing practices or educational ideologies and striving for their own operational efficiency. Limited consideration was given to the public and their access to the meetings despite being, legally, open to the public. Although they preached American, or democratic, principles, appointed members did not prioritize their actual practice in their meetings or decisions.

## ELECTED BOARD FINDINGS

Congress passed Public Law 90-292, the District of Columbia Elected Board of Education Act, on April 22, 1968. Supported by United States District Court judges, the President, and both House and Senate committee leaders, the law was to serve as an approach to self-government and “a key to revitalization” of DCPS (United States, Congress 1968). It identified schools as a “focal point of neighborhood and community activity” and the education of the community’s children a “primary and personal concern to the citizens of a community” (ibid.). For these reasons, it was decided that residents of the District of Columbia should have a “direct voice in the development and conduct of the public educational system” (ibid.).

Similar to the Act passed in 1906, the Board was required to hold at least one public meeting every month throughout the school year, and additional meetings as needed. In contrast, it gave the elected Board the authority to close meetings from the public, but could only make a “final policy decision” while open. The District of Columbia Elected Board of Education Act brought other changes as well to formalize the work of the Board by granting members a yearly stipend and changing the name of the body from “board of education” to “Board of Education” (United States, Congress 1968).

The elected Board differed from the appointed one in that it fostered a much greater emphasis on democracy which transpired into meeting structures and decisions. As elected representatives, these members exhibited a democratic responsibility to their constituents. They advocated for greater community participation and accessibility to meetings holding most of their meetings in public schools in different wards each month and exploring new opportunities through which the community could participate in the education system.

The elected Board, however, also served as a way for members to strengthen their own political careers. They favored matters that led to public-facing achievements, which, in turn, improved their public visibility and the public's perceived success of them. Curriculum and advocacy initiatives were two examples of how their roles as elected officials were reflected through their work on the Board. Even though the elected Board did not operate under the same expectation of expedient decision-making as the appointed board, members did maintain a broader focus on intended outcomes of public-facing matters. With this, members often lacked a detailed or clear understanding of education programs and the school system's operations, which were not primary considerations in their work.

### *New Pursuits*

Early on, elected members seemed to raise concerns because they possessed the authority to do so. The new Board brought a new perspective, along with their desire to take ownership of the reformed body. Members challenged the already established

organization and processes that were carried over from the appointed board; however, a purpose for these changes was not always clear.

By February 12, 1969, the elected Board was already discussing a reorganization. The concern was raised by one member's request for the Superintendent to develop a long-term plan of about five years defining "specific goals to be accomplished between today and the end of the 1969-70 school year" intended to transform DCPS into an institution of higher quality learning (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/12/1969). The member requested the Superintendent present a plan at the following meeting at which Board members would also be required to organize themselves into committees exclusive of the other committees, but "totally inclusive of the system" based on their own interests. It was suggested that committees include two Board members along with a non-Board member professional (*ibid.*).

Some members expressed their support for the reorganization eager to do something without much knowledge as to how it would impact their work, if at all. One member responded to the proposal with excitement to just "start work on the educational programs" and encouraged establishing the committees that night (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/12/1969). Not only was there an unclear purpose behind the proposal and how it could improve the Board's work, but there was also an unnecessary urgency to establish it (*ibid.*).

Opposition towards the motion was expressed, but not because of its lack of purpose or informed insight. A member urged against the immediate establishment of committees because, as proposed, they were not exhaustive. Another member opposed

the motion out of reluctance to pursuing initiatives that would seemingly detract from the members' own, and recently acquired, authority (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/12/1969). They argued it was "too early for the Board to start delegating its authority" by having non-Board members sit on the committee (ibid.). A third member voiced opposition saying the plan would set them back to where the appointed Board was approximately a year and a half ago prior to their abolishment of the standing committees (ibid.).

The minutes did not indicate the proposal had stemmed from an apparent need for improvement, but their concerns were more reflective of the members' desire to take ownership of their newly assumed positions and eagerness to do something. The elected Board had not even been in effect for a month by the time the first proposal to reorganize was made. The proposal was not raised from a place of understanding the existing processes with insight into how they could be improved. With their newly attained authority, it seemed members were eager to take action and make decisions because they could. Even so, members who expressed opposition towards the reorganization explained it was out of interest of preserving as much power as possible by avoiding its delegation, not in question of its legitimate need.

At other times, members challenged the Board's operation inquiring about traditional approaches followed by the appointed members. In another one of the elected Board's first few meetings, the Superintendent presented the Board with his recommended process for planning and approving budgets referring to it as an "innovative budgetary planning procedure" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/24/1969).

The process involved a budget committee comprised of a school administrator, two teachers, and four community members to represent each elementary and junior high school. Senior and vocational high schools budget committees would include two elected students selected by their ward representatives (ibid.). Committees were to help schools identify available resources, programs that should exist, and additional resources need to implement them. Each committee request was to be reviewed by one of the six Reviewing Committees, which were to be established by the Board (ibid.).

Following the presentation, one member questioned the rationale behind using “line-item” budgeting because it hindered the flexibility in how funds could be expended. The Superintendent answered it was a matter of tradition and he was unaware of any legal premise requiring it (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/24/1969). The Superintendent’s lack of knowledge behind the line-item approach suggests the previous board had never questioned it. New members brought a new perspective that allowed them to challenge existing practices that the appointed board had not challenged, but, rather, with which they complied.

In 1974, one member proposed regulations on the submission of Board meeting agenda items. So that members could act “intelligently” on matters at hand, it was requested that any items they wished to include in the agenda be submitted to the Board office “by 4:30 PM on the Friday preceding the Board meeting in order for it to be placed on the agenda” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 6/24/1974). Additionally, so the Board stay informed of “proposals as they are being developed,” the member also requested they be presented in public hearings as necessary (ibid.).

Submission guidelines would require members to submit information in a timely manner enabling members more time to review the items up for discussion and, accordingly, be more informed on the matter. The members recognized a clear need for more time to review materials and acted accordingly establishing a policy that would prevent similar concerns in the future. Elected members exercised their authority by challenging existing practices with new ones.

### *Community Participation*

A particularly prominent route through which elected Board members promoted change and new approaches, was through their support for increased community participation. Unlike the appointed board, the elected Board encouraged the provision of these opportunities, even when if it was not positive. The Board demonstrated an eagerness to incorporate community residents in the Board's decision-making by collecting feedback from the residents or intentionally convening a variety of residents who could offer different perspectives.

Greater democratic processes than what the appointed members had allowed was also reflected in the elected Board's new process for collecting and reviewing budget requests as it convened a variety of different stakeholder types throughout its various phases. The new, "innovative" budget planning and approval process adopted by the elected Board was intended to capture a variety of perspectives and improve community participation in the budgeting process by convening a variety of stakeholders in and outside of the schools (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/24/1969). The process – between

each school's committee and the six reviewing committees – introduced more stakeholders into the budget planning process to build a more comprehensive perspective of what is needed in order to benefit the schools.

Another example of greater community participation was Board meeting structure. In February 1970, the Board discussed hosting ward-based community meetings in order to “increase the opportunity for community participation,” as opposed to a single community meeting for the whole city, making it more likely for constituents to speak to the Board about their concerns (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). Opposition to the motion was only expressed out of concern it interfered with existing Board rules where one member wanted to ensure the Board – as a body elected by community residents – was not impeding on those same constituents' right to participate (ibid.).

Another member clarified the extra meetings, one in each ward as opposed to one for the whole city, would provide residents with more conveniently located meetings and, therefore, hopefully increase participation and allow the community the opportunity to speak with their respective Board representative. Another member supported the approach saying it was “better to hear several people from eight locations rather than to have a few people from one location” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). The Board believed the more locally hosted meetings would more effectively illuminate local-level concerns, as well as increase the community's accessibility to participating the meetings (ibid.).

Meeting minutes indicated that the agenda item of ward-based community meetings, was raised through an “informal session” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). While it was not mandatory for all Board meetings to be open, the reference brings into question what exactly an informal session was and the frequency at which they occurred. For a Board discussing the importance of increasing public participation, informal sessions may have detracted from this mission, if matters discussed there were pertinent enough to include in formal, open meetings.

A similar, localized approach was followed in 1978 when a list of nine proposed school closings was presented to the Board leaving members to deliberate on how many public hearings should be held, whether it be one in total or one in each affected ward (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/19/1978). One member expressed his desire for holding multiple meetings because there would not be enough time to hear from all community members who would have wanted to speak on any of the nine schools in a single meeting.

Another benefit to holding ward-based meetings, he added, was each member “does know the pulse of his community...the concerns...and can best deal with them individually” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/19/1978). Members supported individual ward meetings for their ability to improve the representation of their wards’ constituents. Another member added, if the Board were to hold a single meeting as rules permit, then it was the Board’s job, as elected officials, to hear all who want to be heard and warned against the repercussions of not affording everyone authorized to speak the opportunity to

do so: If you turn off a group of people who come out with their heart in their cause and you send them home frustrated they will not be likely to come back again (ibid.).

In response to the meetings on school closings, a third member did caution against previous instances when citizens not living within the respective boundaries of the school(s) in question participated in the public hearing, which was “illegal and against [the Board’s] rules” and, therefore, urged the members to create public hearing schedules “responsible to the needs of [the] community and the people of [the] City” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/19/1978). Through these schedules, it was his hope that citizens would know which meeting pertained to them and would only attend that one.

Ward-based meetings were provided in order to, not only improve constituents’ accessibility to them, but to ensure they were heard. Board members preferred the localized approach to community meetings as they provided better representation of their voters. The increased availability of meetings led to greater participation of all constituents, as well as a more specific focus on the ward’s constituents’ concerns affecting the school system. While intended to provide better representation, it also opened the door to the un-rightful participation of community members.

The opportunity for increased participation extended to students who were allowed to participate in meeting by addressing the Board with their concerns. At a meeting in February 1974, for instance, a high school student was given the opportunity to address the Board and, in doing so, candidly voiced her frustration with the Board urging them to “get out and see what’s going on instead of sitting in board meetings all of the time” (Wiggins 1974).

After a few years of being in power, the Board provided students with an opportunity for formal representation. In February 1972, the *Washington Post* reported president Barry's interest in establishing a student position on the Board so that students themselves could "be more involved in the running of the school system" by (Hailey 1972:C2). Student involvement on the Board allowed students to participate in a way that was previously off limits, but it also served as a learning opportunity offering them first-hand experience by either sitting on the Board or having their own representative.

While the Board strived to improve their constituents' participation, Board members did not prioritize the representation of those working within the school system to the same extent. In that same *Washington Post* article, Board President Barry also proposed introducing democratic practices in the determination of teacher salaries suggesting they be handled through a teacher evaluation process in which students and parents would be involved (Hailey 1972). While the approach allowed community residents a role in determining school faculty salaries, the school faculty themselves were not provided increased representation in the same process. Members supported democratic practices over the school system itself. The push for increased involvement, particularly regarding teacher evaluation, stemmed from a broader goal to increase democratic participation.

Board members advocated so strongly for democratic representation that they even did so in cases where it may have competed with the interest of DCPS students and/or faculty. For instance, as a result of a vacancy in the Ward 1 Board member's position in 1983, a member recommended a declaration of emergency and proposed a

change to the Board's rules in order to "expedite the process" of filling the position through an appointment of the Board (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983). The state of emergency was declared because "the welfare of the students residing and attending school in Ward 1 is impacted upon by the absence of a Ward 1 representative" on the Board (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/31/1983).

In response to this proposal, one member requested their remarks from the Committee of the Whole meeting be added to this meeting's minutes expressing opposition towards appointing a member calling it "a violation of the electoral process and there [was] nobody, legislative body, in this country...where a group of people sitting as elected folk, turn, around and decide who shall appoint them in that capacity," particularly in the case of the District of Columbia who was "seeking self-determination" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983). The member acknowledged an appointment would be more convenient or efficient than an election, but such factors should not be the determinants under which the Board makes its decisions because it would be contradictory to the democratic principles students studied in schools.

Another member added their Committee of the Whole comments as well saying "most people who get elected to policy making positions tend to owe some allegiance to those people who put them there" and appointing members does not allow the residents of Ward 1 a fair opportunity for representation (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983). The Board agreed that the welfare of students in Ward 1 was in danger, but there was dissent on whether democratic selection process should take precedence over an already established appointment process.

The selection process for vacant Board of Education positions, as outlined in the District of Columbia Code, was different than other agencies which held special elections allowing other municipal agencies to navigate the process for themselves. Without this capability, members debated on whether they would fill the vacancy through an appointment by the members, as stated in the District of Columbia code, or a special election, as allowed for other municipal agencies. Ultimately, the Board decided to appoint a member, but the deliberation demonstrated the members' competing priorities between democratic participation and students' welfare (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983).

The elected Board's emphasis on democratic participation, at times, outweighed their need for a clear understanding of how to achieve it. When the elected Board came into power, schools were experiencing increased incidences of student unrest. The acting Superintendent at one meeting in early 1970 attributed this school system-wide trend to students' lack of democratic involvement in their own schools stating:

A vertical line of authority, in which all power and decision-making, rests in the hands of the people at the top, produces disruption from the bottom... Participation in decision-making is both educational for the participants and productive for the system itself. Authoritarianism not only precludes these benefits, but destroys the system from within. (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970)

School administration believed the most effective way to address the problem was to engage students and provide them an opportunity to exercise their democratic voice. The issue and proposed approach were reflective of the District of Columbia itself where

protest was attributed to the lack of residents' democratic participation and representation in their own government (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970).

Accordingly, the Administration proposed hosting a two-day conference for high school students called Student Participation in the Educational Process where a Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities would be developed (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). The conference was presented as a first step to allowing student participation in the school system's decision-making, but further details on what the conference would entail, how the work would continue following the conference, or how the Bill of Rights would be applied afterwards were not provided.

The Board agreed to support the Administration by providing the Superintendent with "whatever authority" was needed to execute the conference and achieve the goals loosely outlined for the Board (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). Even though the concerns about students were serious ones, the Board did not inquire about the Administration's approach. In their own pursuit for supporting democratic participation and teaching democratic practices, the Board unquestionably supported the objective and the approach.

### *Politics and Advocacy*

Along with school board elections came the politicians. The elected Board members' increased support for democratic participation was not only reflective of their principles as Washingtonians striving for political autonomy, but also of their responsibility to their constituents. As elected officials, it was the Board members'

responsibility to represent their constituents. With their own political careers on the line, it served Board members well to ensure their constituents were fairly represented by providing them the capacity to participate. Members who satisfactorily represented their constituents meant they were effectively executing their job as a politician.

As an elected body, a position on the Board could serve as an option to building residents' political careers. In fact, this seemed to become apparent at the passing of the "Home Rule" Act Amendment to the D.C. Elections Act which left for the possibility of an overlap in terms between the Board of Education and other municipal terms of office (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/21/1974). The District of Columbia Elected Board of Education Act stated members' terms would commence at 12:00PM on the fourth Monday of the January proceeding the election. This created a possibility for a gap in a member's term on the Board if they filled positions through other agencies prior to the expiration of their term on the Board. Board members elected to a municipal office would begin their new term at noon on January 2 leaving a vacancy in their Board position until the next term began on the fourth Monday of January (ibid.).

The Board expressed their concerns regarding the discrepant terms (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/21/1974). The Board's Counsel suggested the most effective option to mitigating consequences resulting from the gap in terms was to draft legislation requiring a change in Board members' term expiration so they would expire at noon on January 2. The approach would allow members to move between offices without requiring resignations, special elections, appointments, or other means to fill vacancies (ibid.). The new legislation impeded Board members' ability to move more easily between an elected

position to another municipal agency and the members believed consequences from these discrepant terms would be prevalent enough that it would be worthwhile to address it, let alone through the lengthy and arduous process of drafting an amendment which was believed to be the most effective option.

Members were even faced with the competing interests of their own political careers and did not always prioritize their careers on the Board to their other political obligations, which resulted in their absences at meetings. Members' attendance was said to have suffered due to their political careers beyond the Board, such as political offices like the City Council, in addition to or instead of their membership on the Board. One member specifically attributed their absence at Board meetings to their "disenchantment" of the Board's work and its overly local focus on matters, instead of broader, school system-wide discussions (Butler 1974). For this reason, said member resigned and pursued a position on the City Council (ibid.). The Board was often seen as a political opportunity and, in 1985, was even described in *The Washington Post* as having "been used by several politicians as a training ground" (Sargent 1985:B1).

Out of elected Board members' interests in promoting their own political careers, they looked favorably upon opportunities that allowed for increased visibility of their work through public-facing achievements. Board members supported public-facing achievements – or work for which they received public recognition or was more visible to the public – resulting in tangible or exciting outcomes. Such outcomes were advantageous to members' positions on the Board, and even their political career overall, if constituents were aware of the work their representative(s) had accomplished.

Public-facing achievements were particularly prevalent through members' own political advocacy. Unlike the appointed board members who favored compliance with rulings and laws, the elected Board members used their positions to advocate for their own political priorities. Advocacy allowed the elected Board to support initiatives complimenting their own work while contributing to their public presence.

For instance, in response to Wilmington 10 – the highly controversial and wrongful imprisonment of black individuals involved in a “firebombing” incident during racial disturbances in Wilmington, North Carolina back in 1971 – the Board discussed signing a resolution in support of the issue it raised (*Wilmington 10 Decision* 1/23/1978:A6). One member stated she did not support it because, although it was a major concern for Civil Rights, it was also an issue which used the Board “as a forum” for the national issue, which she declared as “extraneous to the organized education effort of our city schools” and did not want the city’s residents to feel the Board was not prioritizing education-related issues. She had shared her opinion with her residents with one civic association who even voted to support her “effort to sway the Board to defeat this resolution” and, instead, encouraged those interested in Civil Rights matters to support them through other outlets (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1978).

Another member agreed such a position brought the Board farther from their designated role and felt the need to “draw a line somewhere” because spending funds in North Carolina was outside of their purview and the Board was not in a position to tell the President what position to take. Instead, the Board should focus on preventing future instances of Wilmington 10 (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1978). One member in

support of the resolution noted the “small amount of minority people that are elected officials” expressing a responsibility to use their positions as a forum to lobby for those who are oppressed because the matters of education and Civil Rights are not separable citing the contradiction of the Board “trying to educate [their] citizens...when [they] are allowing a white university to talk about law in the street in this system” (ibid.).

Another member supplemented these remarks quoting a presidential candidate from 1976 who said “In America we have both a race problem and a class problem and each makes the other worse. Racism is a central fact of American history and of human history for that matter. It is not a passing thing...” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1978). A third member argued she was “appalled” how members of the Board felt the issue was out of the scope of the Board due to its ties with democratic principles and political imprisonment (ibid.).

One of the supporting members called the matter one of human rights and expressed concerns with having people “who can’t understand the importance of it will be back in the classroom, will be back in the community and will be back talking to folks in this city that I have found more reactionary in their political thought” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/15/1978).

In the spring of 1979, a member informed the Board of a second Wilmington 10 Awareness Day held at Dunbar Senior High School involving an assembly attended by key political figures of the time, including the former Board president Marion Barry and president of the Washington Teachers’ Union (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/18/1979). The Board member encouraged more planning to occur for the next year, to which

another member asked if he was “hopeful” the assembly would not be necessary next year implying the individuals in question could be released by then. The presenting member explained the event extended beyond the sentencing of these specific individuals saying it illuminated the reality of racism in the country (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/18/1979).

Regardless whether a solution is reached or not by the time of next Awareness Day, the member argued the Board and community “can still be aware” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/18/1979). In that same meeting, following the member’s presentation on the Wilmington 10 event, he also advertised a rally at the Capitol protesting the draft and its message of “involuntary servitude” encouraging other members to attend and protest as well (ibid.).

That same spring, the same member proposed a Youth Employment Week and a Youth Rally for Jobs Day to be held in early April to shed light on the consequences that result from a reported one-half million people unemployed nationwide and their inability to “contribute to a stable, productive, and progressive society, and will produce conditions of insecurity, frustration, and despair for that group’s future” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/21/1979).

Another member, who supported the intent of the motion, argued youth unemployment issues are “so critical and complexed that the solutions to it go far beyond rallies and pep talks” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/21/1979). The member continued listing the tangible steps he had taken to work with his ward residents to address the issue – such as having met with high school students, hosted a youth fair, hired high school

students to work in his office for the summer, and goals of reforming the “Carnegie grading system” to include both work and school experience (ibid.).

Further, he recalled a resolution on the matter from the previous year where only himself and one other member attended while the rest of the Board voted to host a retreat that same day “to rediscover, explore and find itself and we were out there dealing with the impact of youth employment” ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/21/1979) He argued the numerous tangible steps he had taken were more impactful than the single, public-facing protest proposed by the original presenting member whose intentions were challenged for having opted to attend a Board retreat over a resolution intended to address the same concern his protest would (ibid.).

The opposing member continued to argue that such rallies would merely get students hyped about the issue without effective results and, instead, anyone truly concerned with unemployment would have done “their homework on what this system provides in terms of opportunities and then based on that observation look at how their resources can be brought to bear to strengthen or improve upon” rather than accusing the Board of not having done anything to help the cause (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/21/1979). He continued with an historical comparison of the public’s response to rallies between the 1960s and 1970s saying the public had moved away from “acknowledging the outcry of frustration” and have actually mobilized to resolve issues (ibid.).

One Board member expressed they did not believe there to be conflict between raising awareness and taking concrete steps to addressing the problem, to which the previous member disagreed (ibid.). Such instances show how the Board’s desire to

publicly display their support seemed to trump the actual impact their initiatives had prioritizing their level of visibility over their potential for producing lasting results.

Similar to the Board's desire to take political stances, the Board supported the residents' right to do so as well. Proceeding a teacher's strike, the Board decided it would not take action against those who participated in it "not intend to penalize in anyway any teacher who participated in the strike" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/6/1979). Another member suggested the Board release a "clear public statement" clarifying strike participants would not be punished unless they were involved in "acts of violence and acts of destruction" while doing so (ibid.).

As elected officials, Board members ascribed a status to their positions on the Board. While appointed board members may have pursued their positions on the board out of civic duty, elected members may have pursued their positions for their own political advancement. Members supported matters that seemed to have ascribed status to their political positions. At times, members even prioritized the status ascribed to their role as an elected official as much as, or more than, the school system's operational or fiscal efficiency. The elected Board supported ways through which they could publicly ascribe status to their positions on the Board.

At one meeting in 1977, a member presented a resolution requesting the Board ask the City Council to authorize the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide its members with special license plates. One member voiced opposition since the Board already had to "find \$40 million for FY '78" (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/18/1977). Two other members, on the other hand, expressed support comparing the Board's

authority to other legislative bodies saying the “City has not found this conflict with the Mayor, with the Congress, with the City Council, and we serve on this Board of Education more than just for ourselves during this particular time in which we sit.” One member equated the license plates to self-respect to request the same privilege as the other legislative bodies (ibid.). Having approved the item, the Board showed how the status they ascribed to their roles on the Board was at least as equally important as the education deficit. It was clear that members sought greater recognition from the public to reflect their strong self-perceptions of their roles on the Board.

Elected Board members established a public presence through their support of larger political issues. However, such efforts were not always the most effective or genuine, as members seemed to pursue them for the sake of increasing their own visibility to their constituents. As elected officials, Board members’ pursuits of their own political careers brought a higher status, which they maintained through license plates and salaries, even in the midst of deficits. Members’ emphasis on democratic principles benefited their own political careers as it was their responsibility to represent their constituents, and even supported it when it may have been counterproductive to students’ or teachers’ best interest.

Their focus on public-facing achievements seemingly detracted their attention to administrative and operational controls. Although the appointed board members’ ability to manage the DCPS budget was challenged too, the issue of fiscal management seemed particularly prevalent during the elected Board’s power due to economic circumstances during those years, such as a recession and continued white flight, in addition to overall

public scrutiny of the body. However, it was the elected Board that continued to prioritize their own political and public-facing initiatives over sustainably beneficial educational matters in light of increasingly scarce financial resources by funding non-educational matters.

### *Lack of Information*

As with the appointed, elected members made decisions with a lack of information. However, in the case of the elected Board, members focused on the broader objectives or intended outcomes of their decisions, but did not prioritize details, such as financial ones, as highly. Members supported items in the absence of such details, if they were new ideas or promoted members' public recognition. At a meeting in February 1970, a proposal to establish an advisory board to advise the Board in identifying direction and procedures in the members' work was introduced (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). The advisory board would be comprised "of top flight persons in touch with urban, social and educational problems of today" and convene stakeholders from various sectors at both the national and local levels (ibid.).

A member read a letter from Dr. Kenneth Clark who expressed interest in serving as the advisory board's Chair with the authority to appoint members. Dr. Kenneth Clark was a well-known psychologist of the time, particularly for his research on the effects of school segregation on students – which had served as a "powerful force behind the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision" – and his leadership in social justice and civil rights advocacy (Allen 1979:B1). The member explained the details of the project –

including duration of membership, funding, relationship with the Board, etc. – would be determined once the board had been fully appointed (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970).

Several members voiced support for the motion and the expertise it would incorporate into the Board’s work, since it would not come out of any “funds available to the Board” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). One member strongly supported the proposal and urged the Board not to “go slow” with its establishment (ibid.). Even in the absence of many details, the member was confident the advisory board showed “high promise of helping the students” and, for that reason, should not be delayed (ibid.). However, others expressed concerns with the approach due to the Board’s lack of knowledge of the funding needed and the nature in which Dr. Clark was being appointed without fair consideration of other candidates (ibid.).

A member voiced their reluctance to vote in favor of the item describing the approach as “putting the cart before the horse,” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/18/1970). Another member suggested the Board work with the Administration due to their “great wealth of talent” (ibid.). Ultimately, the Board voted to pursue an advisory board without having full details as to how the entity would be funded, who would serve on it, and other information regarding its operations and organization. The Board was eager to pursue the new advisory board, despite the lack of details in many aspects.

Similarly, in August 1971, a member presented the Board with a consultation offer the Administration had received for an external review of the school system’s testing services and test scores seeking “an unbiased analysis” and interpretation of the

results (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 8/12/1971). One member inquired about the cost of the services, but the Superintendent did not know. The Board member replied, while she understood the intention behind the motion, “as a citizen and a taxpayer in the District she was getting increasingly irritated with the number of consultants and there seemed to be no fair advertising or bid procedures which lists the scope of work and permits persons to apply” (ibid.).

The presenting member concluded with a request for a complete list of all consultants hired by DCPS for FY 1971 and the amount of money spent on their services. The member continued providing a cost estimate of less than \$500 for three days, which would come out of ESEA funds for reporting services (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 8/12/1971). The meeting minutes did not indicate whether the consultant’s services were offered independently or in response to a solicitation. The Board decided to hire the consultant despite their knowledge of the proposal’s details or why that specific consultant was selected.

The discussion illuminated the members’ willingness to secure services without full details and their general lack of understanding for the state of consultants in DCPS. More specifically, the Board voted to hire the consultant without clear knowledge as to the financial investment it would require. Financial information did not seem to be a top priority in the elected Board’s considerations as they did not have a thorough understanding of it before making a decision.

Proceeding the Administration’s presentation of the first financial statement in June 1971, one Board member voiced his appreciation for it saying it served as a

demonstration of how the school system was “beginning to get control over its financial resources” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 6/9/1971). The remark was followed with a request for the Committee on the Budget to determine why the statement reflected an “over-expenditure of some three million dollars in the category for administration, and under-expenditure of some 1.7 million dollars in Special Education” (ibid.).

Board members and the Superintendent discussed their concerns with the budget where one member hoped the information was just “inaccurate” and that the “news media would not alarm the public by publishing the statement that the School System was running close to three million dollars in the red” ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 6/9/1971). The member clarified he was not criticizing the Administration, rather commending them for bringing it up and, to his knowledge, it was the “first time a city agency had come up with a financial statement which would be available publicly on a monthly basis” (ibid.). He argued the Board could only solve its problems once they understood what they were (ibid.).

The Administrations’ and Board’s lack of insight into the deficit and why it existed suggested the need for increased consideration of financial aspects, and their implications on the school system’s broader financial state. The elected Board’s spending deficit reportedly “led to illegal bookkeeping transactions in the past” (*Barry’s Fresh Start* 1972). Elected members prioritized the provision of programs and services, over their financial capacity to do so, which did not seem to serve as a leading factor in their decision-making.

Another example of how financial matters and regulation were as high of a priority as other considerations arose when the Board decided to regulate the members' expenditures of their stipends. In the early 1980s, the Board discussed adding restrictions to members' usage of the funds allotted to their individual and committee accounts. The concern was raised after multiple members were accused of misusing funds for travel ventures, including one particular member's trip to Mexico despite the Board's policies, which forbade international travel, and another member who even "paid his wife's expenses" (*School Board Member Said to Have Charged Twice for Trip* 1980). Furthermore, the expenses were made when the school district already faced a \$26 million deficit and was considering "eliminating 700 teaching positions and cutting back on preschool and adult education programs" (ibid.).

At the time, members who were not continuing into a new term come January were still able to spend the funds designated for them. A couple members had raised concerns with this claiming former Board members had abused the allotment because they had taken trips with the money (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/18/1981). For this reason, it was proposed that restrictions be added so that any members who would no longer be with the Board in January would only be allowed to spend 50% of their accounts (ibid.).

The proposal was directed towards one particular Board member who was leaving on a trip the day following this meeting and, upset, argued he was rightfully entitled to it comparing his work to that of the other Board members – whom he claimed stayed busy by going to "court and responding about paper clips and telephone calls and international

task forces” – and also claimed, unlike most other members, he had learned and adhered to all of the Board rules throughout his term ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/18/1981).

The Board’s concern for the discontinuing members’ use of funds came after three members had already reportedly taken or planned to take trips showing their lack of urgency to correct the situation. Furthermore, aware of the negligent use of funds, members did not raise concerns or propose restrictions until the third instance was already set to occur (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/18/1981). In the introduction of the proposal, one member expressed trust in other members saying she had hoped such restrictions were not necessary with another member discouraged the trip of the member in question telling him to use “good judgment” (ibid.). Initially, the Board did not establish restrictions on use of funds hoping they would not be needed, but, in light of instances proving otherwise, the Board’s delayed action suggested their lack of concern regarding the matter. Such instances illuminate where greater attention to fiscal issues could have been paid.

In addition to a lack of information, the quality of the information that was provided was questioned. Upon the review of a list of proposed school closings in 1982, members noted several points of unclear or missing information from the report. First, one member questioned the reason behind the closings (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1982). The member explained how the Board was led to believe Congress wanted them to “[move] expeditiously to close some buildings to reflect some budget surpluses,” but such concerns were not reflected in his own conversations with the House or Senate (ibid.). The member even argued Congress was actually pleased with the Board’s use of

joint-occupancy agreements as an “innovative” way to retain under-used neighborhood schools (ibid.).

Secondly, another member, although in support of closing certain schools, claimed the Superintendent’s approach to identifying schools for closure was inconsistent. The member specifically called attention to instances where schools with an occupancy rate of 63% would be closed, but others with a rate of 29% would be left open arguing the Administration was turning the issue of school closings into a “very political” one ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1982). The concern went unaddressed and the Board voted to accept the Superintendent’s closure recommendations (ibid.). Deliberation on the matter continued and eventually turned into individual members requesting the removal of schools in their respective wards be removed from the proposed closings.

The members were unclear as to the reason behind the school closings and the rationale behind determining which ones would be affected, yet the Board still voted to support the proposal in the end. With the goal of representing their own constituents, some members supported the motion as long as schools in their wards went unaffected. The members’ concerns of the information quality resulted in their individual efforts to represent the interests of their own wards, rather than the school system as a whole.

The meeting minutes further suggest the lack of information impacted the members’ understanding of education programs. Through an overview presentation of school openings in 1984, one member noted the presence of asbestos in school buildings saying it consequently delayed the installment of computer laboratories and laboratory security (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/19/1984). Then, a discrepant understanding of

the computer program's goals emerged as another member questioned how the asbestos abatement impacted the computer program installation citing two years had already passed, yet it had not accomplished the installation of "over 700 personal computers" the program provided (ibid.).

The presenting member assured the Board the program was on schedule as the program's timeframe accounted for the installation period, whereas the other member had originally understood the five-year program as an "achievement plan" separate from the installation period (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/19/1984). Following the clarification, the member still expressed confusion as to how the asbestos actually prevented progress of the computer installment requesting a report from the Administration outlining a "school by school instance as to why the asbestos problem in a school stopped the installation of the computers" (ibid.).

The presenting member explained the computer installment funds were needed to pay for the asbestos abatement (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/19/1984). Without the question of asbestos, the Board's misunderstanding of the computer program may likely have persisted. The instance brings into question where other discrepancies in members' understanding may have lied, if they were not illuminated through similar circumstances. However, in attempt to understand the situation, the school-by-school inventory would allow members to see how the problem affected their respective wards. If decisions were regularly made with a lack of clarity or detail, it is no wonder how such a misunderstanding would have occurred.

In the elected Board's decisions, members maintained a stronger focus on the intended outcomes of the matters they discussed, rather than the details on how exactly they would be achieved, which led to common oversight of financial aspects and the approaches they pursued, such as when it came to hiring consultants or closing schools. Members generally supported items if they believed them to be generally beneficial, even in the absence of clear details for how said items would be executed. The elected members' lack of information in these decisions led to their misunderstanding of what education programs entailed or motives behind their work. The members' lack of knowledge detracted from their ability to advocate for the interest of DCPS as a whole and, instead, shifted their focus to ward-specific concerns.

### *Judicious*

Unlike the appointed board, the elected Board did not strive for urgent or expedient decision-making. Instead, members acted more judiciously in how they approached their work, particularly at the beginning of the Board's power, in that they requested additional time to consider decisions as they saw fit. As the city's first elected body, the newness of the Board brought a sense of novelty to the work, along with greater public attention. However, following the enactment of Home Rule, which led to the public's competing interest for other municipal elections, the novelty of the Board of Education's election drew less enthusiasm than it originally had bringing an increasingly lower voter turnout, one that was more typical of school board elections (Hochschild 2005).

The members' positions on the Board strengthened their own political careers and self-perceptions of their work, yet, despite their public presence, the District of Columbia's residents' views of DCPS and its Board of Education were still vulnerable to outside influences. The political climate surrounding the elections affected the public's faith in the democratic process serving as a notable factor in its voting turnout (Prince 1973). The Board of Education election in 1973 drew a low voter turnout with a reported approximate 5-6% of registered voters having participated and was attributed to a variety of factors, including "insufficient media coverage, the Watergate scandals and a lack of clear-cut issues dividing the candidates" (ibid.:C1).

The 1975 Board of Education election was described as having "hardly...captivated the attention of the electorate" as a result of politics within the school system itself (*Issues in the School Board Campaigns 1975*). The sentiment came on the heels of the Board's decision to fire Superintendent Sizemore causing an "apparent disenchantment" among voters' and their interest in the selection of their Board members (ibid.).

The declining enchantment of the school board elections occurred around the same time when the public began to question the education system and its ability to serve its students (Danzberger 1994). The trend of the Board members' requests for more time to deliberate and the consideration for involving stakeholders into their decision-making wore off as the public lost interest in voting for them and the Board of Education was no longer the only outlet through which District of Columbia residents could practice their democratic right to vote. While the elected Board still pursued slower decision-making

than their appointed counterparts, their motive behind it shifted to a more democratic emphasis.

For instance, shortly after having come into power, the elected Board was tasked with the establishment of a state advisory council as defined in the amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 passed on January 2, 1968. The council was intended to “be broadly representative of the cultural and educational resources of the State” which it served (United States, Congress 1968).

Following the presentation of potential individuals who could serve, another member suggested the Board did not take immediate action on the Council’s establishment and, instead, postpone the motion until “a wide selection of names from which to choose” was received (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 2/19/1969). A member then asked about the deadline by which the Council was to be established to which the Superintendent replied the following month by March 19 (ibid.). Being one of their first meetings, elected members recognized the scrutiny under which they operated and, the Board decided to postpone the selection of council members in order to provide more thoughtful recommendations.

In their third month of operation, the elected Board discussed ways through which they could operate more proactively and knowledgably. Board members proposed meeting with the City Council’s Education Committee so that the Board could receive “briefings on the Fiscal Year 1969 and Fiscal Year 1970” so that the Board could better understand the city’s “long-range construction plans” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/22/1969). Members discussed meeting with the City Council’s Education Committee,

another member requested a report covering “all construction projects planned in the Fiscal Year 1970 Budget to be broken down on a Ward basis” (ibid.).

One Board member even suggested ongoing meetings. The Council reciprocated “a willingness” to meet on the matter and the requested resource would provide the Board a more comprehensive overview to inform future construction-related matters (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 3/22/1969). Eager to incorporate the community into their decision-making, the Board members discussed opportunities for ongoing collaboration between the two agencies. The discussion item also demonstrated members' desire to strengthen their understanding of the matter and allow for a more proactive and thoughtful approach to planning for it.

As the newness of the elected Board wore off, decisions generally continued to be made more slowly compared to the appointed board; however, the reason for the slower process was not always for the sake of thoughtful consideration as it was in their beginning. The elected Board members consistently advocated for democratic approaches, which, by nature, was slower than the appointed board's approach that hinged on expediency. Instead of requesting additional time for deliberation, the elected Board invested their time in ensuring democratic practices were followed.

In 1983, for example, even though the Board voted against a slower, democratic approach to filling a Board vacancy, they did so with the intention of protecting students' welfare and the decision was not made without substantial debate on the importance of democratic principle first. Due to the apparent gravity of the situation where students' welfare appeared to be in question, the Board decided an expedient decision would be

best in selecting a Ward 1 Board member representative (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983). Board members who argued against it, however, largely favored it for the sake of supporting democratic process disregarding its potential implications on students.

Contrary to the appointed board's discussion of expedient operations, one member specifically favored a democratic approach explaining expediency and efficiency were not the goal of democracy, rather, it embodied dictatorial principles ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/18/1983). It was argued the elected Board's responsibility was to enforce and follow the democratic selection of its members versus pursuing solutions the quickest way. While the Board eventually decided to appoint a member themselves, they did question the role of expediency in an elected body, rather than merely accepting it, and its inhibition on citizen participation in the selection process of Board members.

Despite the members' reasons for approaching their decisions more slowly, they were, generally, nonetheless, approached without the intention of addressing them expediently. At the onset of the elected Board, members tended to opt for more judicious decision-making to provide thoughtful considerations or recommendations. As the novelty and uniqueness of the city's first or only elected body seemed to wane, Board members still operated more slowly in comparison to the previous body, but it was done for the sake of maintaining integrity to the democratic process.

### *Administrative Relationships and Collaboration*

Existing research on the history of the District of Columbia's school board showed that the elected Board frequently clashed with school administration (Henig et al.

1999). Meeting minutes from this Board's meetings showed the same. The school Administration was more directly, and consistently, involved with the school system than the Board members who usually held other professional positions in addition to their service on the Board, were not directly involved with the schools, and, in the case of most members, only represented one ward out of the entire school system. Accordingly, these two groups often held different perspectives and priorities.

In discussions leading up to the passing of the fiscal year (FY) 1973 budget, the Committee on the Budget urged the Board to wait on acting on it until they had received “information on the anticipated deficit and plans for absorbing it” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/19/1972). A member asked the Superintendent for his recommendation who, instead, urged the Board to act on the FY 1972 budget so as to avoid the Mayor using the pending 1972 budget for FY 1973 (ibid.). The Superintendent added the D.C. Council had a hearing scheduled for approximately one month later, for which he need a testimony if the Board did not take action (ibid.).

In response, a member suggested the Committee on Budget meet “expeditiously” to discuss FY 1972’s budget and it was decided the Board would delay action on the FY 1973 budget until it had all the information necessary, including FY 1972 budget ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/19/1972). The opposing recommendations from the Board and the Administration required urgent resolution in order to act quickly on the FY 1972 budget, rather than waiting to take action on the FY 1973 budget.

A more apparent opposition between the Administration and the Board emerged at a meeting in January 1974 when the Superintendent referenced the Board’s policy

preventing the photographing of students for identification purposes (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/16/1974). The Superintendent said it contradicted three memoranda the Administration had already released prior to its enactment and deemed it a matter for the administration, rather than the Board. The Superintendent continued expressing serious concern “about the attack on the reputation and character of a school officer who had implemented procedures,” which the Board had helped to endorse in a previous meeting back in May 1973 (ibid.).

The Superintendent then presented multiple recommendations for the Board, which included the declaration that members should not “publicly malign the character or reputation of anyone” without proper evidence, should review all “current precedents used as operating guidelines” to distinguish between Administrative issues and Board issues, would not make policy “precipitously” without recommendation from a committee or administration, and, finally, the Board comply with the DC Administrative Procedure Act of 1968 when making policy ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/16/1974).

The Board responded with a public apology and the Chair referred the Superintendent’s first two recommendations for consideration to the Committee on Internal Staff and Internal Board members, and the latter two to the Committee on Student Affairs (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/16/1974). Overall, the Administration perceived the matter as an example of how the Board regularly overstepped their boundaries by exercising “too much authority in administrative matters” in the “day-to-day administration” of the schools (*Student ID Card Idea Spurs Row* 1974). The Board acknowledged the discrepancy created by their policies. The exchange indicated a regular

over-stepping by the Board occurred with some frequency and the Board did not always create policy consistent with their own previous determinations where such contradictions impeded on the Administration's work and did not foster a constructive relationship between the two.

The Board received a proposal to develop policies and procedures regarding “health record confidentiality” that was presented to the Board in April 1978. In reviewing the Committee’s recommendations on how to approach the initiative, one Board member suggested the proposal and recommendations be sent to the Administration for their input as well (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/19/1978). Another member claimed the Administration had already seen it and assisted in the development of the recommendations. The other member questioned the validity of the statement saying they found it “highly unlikely” the Superintendent would approve recommendations requesting he be requested to do something (ibid.).

A couple members stated they did not recall having received the proposal at all, one being a member of the Committee from which the proposal had come and added he had a “serious problem with that” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 4/19/1978). Between the uncertain claims of the Superintendent having reviewed the proposal and not all members having received a copy, the Board voted to table the motion (ibid.). Skeptical of whether the Superintendent had or had not approved the recommendation, the instance reflected a distrust between members themselves because of their own awareness for the apprehensive relationship between the Board and the Administration.

When elected Board members recognized potential instances of invalid information presented to them by the Administration, they were comfortable challenging it. For example, the Board received a report from the Administration on a letter from the AFL-CIO which alleged “inequalities in the promotional procedures” of the school system’s transportation unit (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 1/20/1970). The Superintendent’s response to the allegations stated an investigation had been conducted, but did not reveal any evidence of such inequalities and the case would be considered closed. One member did not agree with the Superintendent’s results and, contrarily, believed the report had raised “very serious questions” (ibid.). Therefore, the member advised the Board hear the complaining parties’ response to the Superintendent’s report before taking action (ibid.).

Later, in 1982, at the Superintendent's presentation of proposed school closings, Board members questioned the validity of information presented to them – including an inconsistent logic for selecting the schools he did and unclear motive for the Superintendent's proposal at all (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/19/1982). For example, one member inquired as to why the Superintendent's plan proposed to close buildings with an occupancy rate of 63%, but not those with a rate as low as 29% (ibid.).

Meeting minutes indicated a challenging relationship between the Board and Administration. As most Board members only represented portions of the school system, but were not regularly involved themselves, they brought their own, and often different, perspectives than those of the Administration who worked much more intimately with the system. Members were comfortable challenging the Administration and, ultimately,

questioning the system, because it looked favorably upon them to ensure the work being conducted in their constituents' schools in their best interest, rather than complacently accepting the Administration's recommendations or policies.

### *Curricular and Academic Decisions*

Elected Board members were less involved in decisions directly related to curriculum. However, when the opportunity arose, they seemed to enjoy taking leadership in proposing new educational opportunities and felt confident in their ability to do so. Curricular decisions were another way for the elected Board to pursue outward-facing initiatives in the interest of their own political careers.

For instance, one Board member proposed two opportunities for DCPS students to learn about voter apathy in the District of Columbia. The first opportunity requested the Administration to schedule “frequent and regularly scheduled informational seminars” on self-government, which would be student-led and supervised by elementary school volunteers (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/19/1973). Students would discuss their local government’s history and “various proposals for change” over the years including the “current ‘Home Rule’ legislation” (ibid.). Proceeding the seminars, once students were familiar with the election process, DCPS and the D.C. Board of Elections would collaborate to provide another student-led program for voter registration within the high schools. Overall, the opportunities were intended to empower students to participate in the public official election process and the development of public policy.

The Superintendent agreed with the value in teaching students voter apathy and about government processes in D.C., but believed the proposal was “too limited” arguing seminars wouldn’t be enough and students would need more opportunity to explore and examine the environment they live in. Accordingly, the Superintendent requested “flexibility” in the Administration’s creation of a similar opportunity achieving equivalent goals (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 12/19/1973). The Superintendent would propose a program and program goals by the end of January (ibid.).

The decision to pursue a voter apathy curriculum reflected the elected Board’s principles in more than one way. First, the opportunity supported the inclusion of community participation by introducing a variety of municipal agency stakeholders to the process. Second, it emphasized the importance of teaching about democracy. As a democratically elected, municipal body itself, the Board pursued ways through which students could learn about and practice those very principles.

Other curriculum-related decisions came from a concern of prestige. Concerned about how DCPS compared to surrounding school districts, the elected Board debated heavily on the revision of graduation requirements (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/21/1980). One of the changes members discussed involved increasing the number of total Carnegie Units required for students to graduate from 17.5 to 20.5. A Board member explained the change would move DCPS from the lowest rank at 17.5 units, where it had been for several years, to the highest in the metropolitan area (ibid.).

In addition, it would make DCPS the only school to require one full year of foreign language. Another member proposed adding another half-Carnegie unit of D.C.

Government so that the total requirement would be a whole number, rather than end with half a unit (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/21/1980). The presenting member answered “an enormous amount of time” had already been spent on discussing the item and was decided half a unit was sufficient (ibid.). The presenting member added they believed the Board was too “parochial” in its view believing their “students are not going to go anywhere but the District of Columbia” and that adding a half-unit of D.C. Government would be unnecessary (ibid.).

The member added that by keeping the requirement at 20.5, rather than 21, it allowed students a greater opportunity for taking electives. They advocated for electives saying since students did not always “know what they are going to do necessarily with their lives,” electives serve an important purpose by allowing them to try and learn new things which could help them determine as much and the Board should “keep all those doors open for them” ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 5/21/1980). Another member supported the greater emphasis on U.S. Government than the District of Columbia saying it would empower students to learn about issues on their own, rather than having to rely on “less than complete resources of the local newspapers” as their only source of information (ibid.).

Yet another member added, as a former social studies teacher, she opposed increasing the requirement of D.C. Government for curriculum-related reasons because it would merely stretch a semester-long curriculum into an entire year. One member noted the issue of changing the number of Carnegie Units for D.C. Government from 0.5 to 1 was an arbitrary one, for the sake of it being a whole number (ibid.).

The change came about following several years of DCPS high school seniors having “placed lower on the standardized college entrance exams” than students at nearby high schools (Valente 1980:B2). The new requirements were consistently presented in a comparison context showing how DCPS had the highest requirement than any other school district in the area. For this reason, it could be assumed that members saw the change in requirements as another opportunity for public recognition as indicated by the members’ constant comparison of DCPS to other school districts, noting they required the highest total number of credits and were the only district to require a full year of foreign language. The change seemed to paint DCPS in an academically superior light, which, in turn, would look favorably upon the members themselves.

The change echoed similar sentiments of education evaluation at that time, which emphasized student performance. The Superintendent presented a new curriculum that would hold students to higher academic standards by shifting the focus from the school system itself, or the Board and the Administration, to the students, students’ parents, and even teachers (Bredemeier 1980). The Superintendent declared the “sole burden of bettering education cannot [be] on the school itself” and stated the “blame” should be placed upon students, as well as teachers and parents (Olive 1980).

The competency-based curriculum would raise student test scores by setting the teachers’ expectations of them and encouraging the students’ parents to involve themselves by learning about their children’s courses (Olive 1980). Similar to existing research on the trends of education research, the approach excluded the direct

involvement of the Board by placing responsibility almost entirely on the schools and their families.

Similar to the members' focus on the objectives or intentions, and lack of understanding of details, of their decisions in general, the elected Board supported programs for the sake of offering new or different educational opportunities despite knowing how they would be sustained when funding was questionable. For instance, the Administration was left to pool financial resources from local businesses in order to cover the cost of the driver's education program for a school year.

The Administration had been meeting with two Vice Presidents of Geico to discuss alternative funding opportunities, one being the provision of driver's education through the lens of drug education, but other insurance companies would be needed to fund the consultants who would develop the program (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/28/1981). Potential back-up funders being considered were distillers and pharmaceutical companies. The goal was to fund driver's education for the remainder of the year, or at least the semester if funding did not emerge. The motion was to extend the program – either through private funders or reallocation of funds if funding was not secured – but, a member raised issue with voting to extend a program without knowledge as to how it would be funded (ibid.).

Another member expressed concern with voting to continue providing driver's education as it could lead to the Board "backing into a lot of decisions here" because they already "get heat from everybody including our corporate donors when we don't handle our budget responsibly," but recommended sticking with the Superintendent's

recommendation anyways ( DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/28/1981). One member shared her “grave concerns” with the Administration prioritizing driver’s education over other subjects. The Board voted to extend through October 31 with hopes that additional funding sources would emerge (ibid.).

Choosing to pursue funding opportunities from within their own community, rather than discontinue the course, put students’ learning experiences at risk as they would have been integrated into other elective courses one month into the school year in the event that such partnerships did not materialize (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 9/28/1981). The Board approved the action hopeful the necessary funds would emerge despite the potential academic disruption for the affected students. Again, the Board did not seem to prioritize the financial factor in their decision, even in the midst of public pressure to administer their funding more judiciously.

A similar instance occurred again towards the end of the 1985 calendar year when the Board was faced with the decision whether to fund the Young Audiences Program – a program which “takes theatrical performers and artists into the public schools” (Sargent 1985:B6). One member voiced strong opposition saying DCPS should not fund an external program when its own programs were “starved to death” referencing a lack of teachers, supplies, and other resources (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/20/1985).

As a result, he argued, funding the program would show the public the Board would fund any program they believe to be good enough, “stand in line and [they] will fund it,” even though they reportedly could not even afford “clay” for their own performing arts school (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/20/1985). The member further

questioned the system's capacity to fund the program given they were already trying to determine how they would support their special needs students.

A member asked about the Superintendent's recommendation to which the Finance Committee replied one was not considered. To this point, the member strongly advised the Board to avoid operating without the Administration's recommendations and insight. He believed the "prestigious" people behind the program should be able to fund it themselves (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 11/20/1985). The Finance Committee argued there was no other program that would serve all students across the District adding, the Board should not "hide behind...the recommendation of the Superintendent" and that there were "times where [the Board] must stand up and be counted in terms of what [their] responsibilities are and what [their] role is as members of this policy making body" (ibid.).

Struggling to support the system's existing programs and students with special needs, the Board still voted to fund the Young Audiences Program without recommendation from the Administration. The situation was reflective of the challenging relationship between the Administration and the Board, as well as the Board's desire to offer an array of educational programs without insight into their sustainability. The Board supported the offering of a variety of programs, but paid less attention to their implications in the event they were discontinued or the public's wishes to fund them more judiciously.

In 1971, the Superintendent alleged that the agency who tested their students had leaked the results, which were low, to the press. In response, the Administration proposed

receiving a second opinion from a third-party evaluator for “an unbiased analysis of what was received and what the test meant” (DCPS BOE Meeting Minutes 8/12/1971). Since 1971 was not the first year DCPS students had low-ranking test scores, therefore, the Board should have been aware of the school system’s less than desirable performance based on the years leading up to 1971. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider whether the Board would have considered an external evaluation of the results had the test scores not been publicly released (ibid.).

### *Conclusion*

The elected Board advocated for democratic process by providing more opportunities for District of Columbia’s residents’ participation in meetings, including their meeting structure, and other decision-making opportunities, such as budget reviews. They encouraged the education of democratic principles, as well as the practice of democracy, in schools and established more opportunities for students and their parents to practice their democratic participation. Along with their advocacy for democratic ways came advocacy for their own political careers and even an ascribed status to their positions on the Board. Accordingly, members supported matters that allowed them greater public recognition, as seen in through their push for new or innovative practices.

With their democratically earned authority, members enjoyed exercising their power as it provided them with greater opportunity for public recognition and would even use it as an educational goal or method for conflict resolution. Members excitedly used their position on the Board to lead advocacy initiatives and exercise authority. Even

though service on the Board was often secondary to members' own larger political pursuits, it still elicited sentiments of entitlement leading them to seek a status similar to that of other prominent governing bodies.

In contrast to the appointed board, which valued business-like operations and operated under an expedient norm, the elected Board functioned more judiciously requesting additional time or information for deliberation, and even associating quick solutions to anti-democratic practices. Members prioritized their consideration of broader, intended outcomes in their decisions, rather than more specific factors such as cost or rationale for selection. With less obligation to work well with the rest of the school system, members challenged the information presented to them by the Administration and spoke up for the best interest of their constituents instead of complacently accepting information.

## CONCLUSION

Given that both appointed and elected school boards are prevalent governance structures today, it is important to understand either type's decision-making processes and how they might be improved so that they can improve the educational opportunities offered within them. These governance structures have been studied by other scholars, but this research offers insight into how the factors and perceptions considered by each board type differ. Knowledge of each board type's approach to policymaking can be used to develop a single approach with a common focus of providing equitable opportunities to all students by incorporates each board's assets . Results from the analysis identified the themes of each board's decision-making, which have then been used to develop a framework for how to incorporate each one's assets to guide future school board decision-making.

### *Summary of Findings*

The study has concluded each board type operated in response to the stakeholders who selected them for their positions. The thematic considerations that informed each Board's decision-making and the perceptions held by their members reflected the different values and principles held by each one. The appointed board members

supported the values and work of their own federal appointers demonstrating limited responsibility to the city's residents. The elected Board, on the other hand, served their constituents, as well as their own political careers. While forces beyond the immediate DCPS system have undoubtedly impacted the Boards' operations and decision-making, the results from this research are still informative of the implications of each selection method as long as education systems continue to operate within a social world.

Appointed board members upheld established practices, regardless of their implications on students' learning. Selected by federal judges, members promoted law-abiding practices and avoided challenging the system under which they worked. Even in instances where members allegedly did not support a practice, they encouraged compliance from the board citing it as their responsibility to uphold the laws set forth for them. The compliance led to complacency where members accepted the discrepant realities of the school system and would not challenge them unless there were significant legal or financial consequences at stake, which would have led to the involvement of their appointers anyways.

The appointed board viewed their efficacy through expediency. Unless decisions posed the potential for significant legal or financial consequences, members knowingly made decisions expediently and accepted it as an inevitable, yet standard practice. The expedient approach, however, led to cases of excluded information. The goal of making a decision, rather than what is included in the decision, led to members' minimal interest in delaying motions for the sake of gathering or considering additional information.

Expediency was one way through which the board maintained efficient operations of their meeting. The meeting structure was dictated by members' own convenience. Held during the standard business day in their own Administration building, the board was most concerned about their own members' preferences, even when such preferences were second to their own professional commitments outside of the board.

Limited involvement of the public led to limited information and perspectives for members to consider in their decision-making as members became reliant on a primary source, the Administration. The appointed members, in comparison to the elected Board, had a more constructive relationship with the Administration and trusted the Administration approached their work diligently and effectively. They also relied on the Superintendent's guidance as they struggled to understand and utilize complex information themselves. The Administration's insight served as a strong guiding force in the decisions members made. The board would question or criticize the Administration only if the public had done so first. Otherwise, without the public's pressure, such concerns were generally not raised.

Appointed members supported curriculum reflecting their own values, regardless of how they aligned with students' and their families' values. Curricular decisions were strong indicators of the members' own beliefs of the role education should play in the community or students' lives. Accordingly, appointed members, predominantly from society's dominant group, the white and upper-class District of Columbia residents, believed in upholding existing ways and traditional American values, members supported curriculum that did just that. As with other matters, members did not challenge the

Administration on curricular matters unless they had already been questioned elsewhere, such as through the media.

More responsive to their federal appointers than the city's residents, the appointed board of education largely operated between themselves and the Administration. The decisions they made were largely reflective of their own personal beliefs, rather than those served by DCPS, due to the seemingly limited accountability to their community. The direct transfer of information between the board and the Administration rarely considered other groups – such as the students, their families, or teachers – in their decisions. Not only were these members less engaged with the parties affected by their work, but the racial imbalance between the board, and Administration, and the rest of the school system narrowed its capacity to effectively serve its students and provide them with equitable educational opportunities.

Elected members improved and advocated for democratic participation. The elected Board members whose members' careers were contingent on their constituents' support, served with democratic representation and opportunity as the cornerstone for how they approached their work. Hosting their meetings in public schools in different wards across the city, the members maintained a meeting structure that improved the public's accessibility to their meetings and, therefore, bettered their opportunity for participation. Members believed, not only in the practice of democracy, but the teaching of it as well providing students with opportunities to study it in school and participate in it alongside their community.

Members supported new ideas, especially those that would bolster their own political careers. Along with their support for democracy, elected members eagerly supported matters for their innovation, such as curricular decisions, rather than their sustainability or practicality. Ideas resulting in public-facing achievements or recognitions were particularly of interest to the Board as it increased members' visibility to the public and allowed them to use their position as a political platform, in turn, benefitting their career as a whole. The advancement of their political careers ultimately improved their status as a politician.

The elected Board valued less expedient decision-making viewing it as organic byproduct of democratic processes. Members saw it as their responsibility to represent the interests of their constituents, as well as preserve their constituents' democratic rights to participate in education policymaking and would challenge matters that seemingly infringed on these rights. Further, due to the public scrutiny as the city's first elected body or their association of democracy with slower process, members practiced more judicious decision-making than the appointed members by requesting additional information or time before voting on an item. Their judicious consideration led to an apprehensive relationship between the Administration and Board compared to the appointed board who complacently accepted the Superintendent's information.

As representatives to their constituents, Board members fought for democratic participation and representation, and explored new ways for this to happen; however, the democratic approaches also proved to inhibit the Board's responsiveness. Building their constituents' capacity and offering public-facing achievements looked favorably upon

their own political careers. Members' goal of improving their own public presence and political pursuits sometimes took high of precedence and interfered with their consideration of other impactful factors. The Board served as a political opportunity where the capacity to debate and contest educational issues seemed greater than the actual capacity to address and resolve them.

In addition to their responsibility for preserving their constituents' rights, the elected Board's emphasis on maintaining and exercising democratic principles could also be largely attributed to black residents' history of being denied the right to participate in governance and representation of their own communities. To avoid further misrepresentation or exclusion from such bodies, the elected Board's insistence on maintaining democratic opportunities and channels served as a way to avoid the gross negligence of the city's majority population by the dominant group.

Between the two Boards, one of the more evident differences was their opposite perceptions of the community's role in the decision-making. The appointed board's member-centric structure revealed how the community was not intended to be highly involved, whereas community participation was pivotal to the elected Board's meetings. The community's involvement in the selection of the Board members transpired into their ability to participate in the decision-making. The degree to which the community participated in meetings also influenced the information presented there and, in turn, the extent to which members learned of and considered issues through a variety of perspectives.

The speed at which the Boards conducted their work was another notable difference in how the two operated differently. The elected Board accepted slower decision-making as a part of their structure, while the appointed members routinely practiced quicker approaches so long as the potential for significant implications was minimal. The impact of members' decisions on their selectors impacted the amount of time they spent on a matter. Appointed members' decisions for DCPS would usually not directly impact their appointers allowing them to make quicker determinations as those who were directly affected would not determine their career on the board. Elected members, on the other hand, opted for slower processes careful not to misrepresent their constituents who would impact their political careers.

The selection of the Boards impacted the curriculums and, therefore, the values, taught by the schools. The appointed members taught the values of their own dominant group, the upper-class white residents of the city, to the city's subordinate group, its black residents. Appointed members complacently pursued curricular matters viewed as controversial or outside of members' own values. In contrast, if elected Board members supported curriculum with which their constituents disagreed, they would have had greater capacity to address their concerns as opposed to just receiving or accepting it. Elected members used curriculum to teach students democratic principles, which also served as a tool for members' own political promotion.

Both Boards made decisions with a lack of information, but the elected Board seemed more likely to question the quality of information. The appointed board's lack of information largely resulted from their expedient decision-making. Eager to address

items or needing to do so urgently, members were left with minimal opportunity for clarification on the information presented to them. Elected members overlooked the details of their decisions out of their eagerness to provide new ideas and promote themselves focusing on the goals of an item, rather than a decision in its entirety. However, they were not shy about challenging information presented to them by the Administration, or even fellow members.

Regardless of a board's selection method, it is easy to see how striking a balance is pivotal and how neglecting aspects that may not come as naturally to one board type could lead to an array of negative consequences and, more broadly, seriously inequitable educational opportunities. As demonstrated by this research, failure to optimize their decision-making could lead to misallocated resources, misunderstanding of education programs, ill-informed approaches, inability to support all student groups, or unclear expectations of school faculty and administrators, for instance.

As an example, democracy and the role it plays in school board operations is one way school board members can work to achieve this balance. Appointed board members, although not selected through a democratic process, should also support decision-making that provides a variety of perspectives and allows constituents an opportunity to access these decision-making processes so that they can maintain a stake in the education system serving them. On the other hand, as a democratically selected body, elected board members are responsible for upholding the democratic right of their constituents, but should be conscientious of over-prioritizing it to the point where it becomes an obstacle and detracts from its ability to execute its work and fulfill their broader goals.

This research considers effective education governance through school boards as their ability to provide the capacity to support education policy, which can be practiced from two directions. First, effective school boards can work at the local-level to offer support and capacity to a school district's implementation and execution of education policy. Second, effective school boards can mobilize to work with higher-level policymakers or other officials to inform the policy they develop. The various attributes of each board, as identified through this research, have been paired with corresponding attributes from another to form an outline of principles that aim to help school boards strike a balance in achieving effective governance:

1. Maintaining fair access to public meetings and representatives;
2. Considering the students' needs over board members' own personal, value-driven preferences;
3. Asking critical questions and challenging the information presented to them by the school administration while maintaining constructive working relationships;
4. Prioritizing considerations as they relate to the school boards' vision or objectives, rather than members' aligning them to fill political obligations;
5. Acting responsively, but not expediently, particularly on time-sensitive matters; and,
6. Making decisions only after having received a reasonable amount of time to review and consider information.

By promoting effective governance in this way, school boards can optimize the implementation of educational initiatives introduced by higher-level policymakers and

advocate for more equitable opportunities. In addition, they are more apt to hear the concerns of local community residents. As a governing body uniquely positioned between higher- and local-level policymakers, school boards have the potential to provide effective governance that could help to promote equitable educational opportunities by making policy decisions that are inclusive of all students. Mobilizing and informing the policy developed at higher levels, as well as hearing and integrating the community's voice into their own decision-making, school boards can provide effective governance from a variety of angles. If effective governance can provide equitable educational opportunities, then school boards, on a larger scale, might even begin to reduce the divisiveness inherently curated through the cultural reproduction of educational systems.

As discussed previously, school boards themselves are not the answer to addressing barriers that cause inequitable educational opportunities. However, they have the potential to serve as either a roadblock or a catalyst to the approaches that affect schools and their students' learning more directly. The influence and capacity of school boards must first be recognized and, once this is better understood, they could be mobilized to support the improvement of education governance and policy. If school boards were to, as recommended by the existing research, establish a vision and goals to which they could align their work, then they could work towards a common a direction under the principles of effective governance.

### *Significance*

From these results, it is evident the selection method of a school board's members influence their meetings and decisions. The considerations and perceptions used in school

board members' decision-making are what shape their work and the school systems they govern. In light of current education conditions preventing students from equitable educational attainment, it is important to promote effective decision-making processes so that school boards can provide the capacity necessary to implement and execute approaches or solutions to address such existing pervasive barriers. Creating a governance structure in which schools, along with their faculty and administration, and facilitate decisions that offer effective, sustainable solutions to future issues.

Bourdieu (1984) described how social systems serve as a means for cultural reproduction through the dominant group, and school districts are no exception. School board members would represent the dominant group of a society shaping the education systems through which culture is reproduced. More specifically, the members' decision-making makes up the governance structure in which a school district functions. Therefore, a school district's ability to serve its students and provide equitable educational opportunities is only as effective or inclusive as the decisions made by its board. If school boards' decision-making is not inclusive of all groups, it greatly limits its capacity to serve the public as a whole.

An important distinction to be made is the difference between the dominant and the majority group, particularly in the case of the District of Columbia and its public school system where the dominant group governing the school system was not consistently representative of the city's majority group. The majority group of a social system cannot be neglected from the system's reform, if effective and sustainable change is desired. The need to incorporate the school board in education evaluation is especially

prevalent as their role in the school district and broader policymaking is evolving. If school boards become increasingly informative and impactful on the development of policy, as some research suggests, improving members' decision-making is even more beneficial as such decisions inform broader and more expansive policy. For school boards unrepresentative of the school district they govern, members must be particularly mindful of their decision-making in order to ensure their inclusivity of subordinate groups.

Excluding the majority group from such work otherwise leads to temporary and superficial change as the principles and objectives of the dominant group governing the system in which the change has occurred would supersede whatever change has been made. The conflicting efforts would merely strain the system by using up the system's resources without producing lasting impact. Without complete inclusion of the school system, school boards may risk hampering the degree to which changes are executed or implemented. For this reason, school boards need to be included in the system's change.

School board members need to exercise decision-making practices that accommodates their assets, yet are mindful of its less advantageous qualities, based on their selection method. Each board type brings advantageous qualities to their decision-making when practiced in moderation. For instance, it is easy to understand how some level of operational efficiency and expediency would ensure some degree of responsiveness to issues. Likewise, the willingness to revise established practices, as necessary, for newer, improved ones could encourage the board's adaptability to its evolving role in education reform and policy.

### *Future Research*

Future historical analyses of the DCPS BOE could narrow the range of topics included in the sample. As opposed to covering any substantive agenda item, future studies could focus on designated topics in order to more thoroughly understand how members' selection influence specific areas of the education system. For example, how does the selection method influence members' decision-making regarding the curriculum implemented in the schools?

In addition, further research can be done to understand the school board beyond the school district itself and in a broader context. Looking into the budgeting process, for instance, shows how the DCPS BOE interacts and operates relative to Congress. Research on public school boards outside of the District of Columbia could look into how they work with their own respective higher-level governing bodies that play equivalent roles in their budgeting process. Such analyses could provide insight into whether different board types lead to different relationships with the higher-level bodies through which budgets are determined, and the outcomes of these processes. The outcomes could include the amounts requested by the different boards, the actual amounts appropriated, amount of time it spent approving a budget, and so on.

### *Conclusion*

No one can perfectly predict the consequences of a policy before it is enacted or implemented, which is why thorough concern and deliberation should be given before it affects the system. Accordingly, more analyses of this kind should be pursued to improve the decision-making processes followed by our policymakers, and even translated across

a variety of policy areas. If all decisions have consequences, then steps to ensuring optimal outcomes must be taken.

The inequities in today's education system are apparent and leave educators and policymakers with the question of how to effectively and sustainably address them so that all students have equitable opportunities. Instead of investing in approaches that would seem to provide quick or accountability-driven change – such as increasing students' test scores – why not address the issues at their source, the governing bodies that shape the systems in which they exist?

In 1967, a system-wide evaluation of DCPS known informally as the *Passow Report* recalled how the District of Columbia was to be “a model for urban school systems...of how America's goals and values for equal opportunity can be attained in the metropolitan setting” (Columbia University 1967:1). However, approximately half a century later, similar questions are still being asked. School districts nationwide are faced with the issue of how to provide equitable education opportunities to their students and the question calls the need to revisit the foundation of public school systems by challenging those who laid it.

## APPENDIX I

<b>1950-1961<sup>4</sup></b>	
B	3
W	6

<b>1962</b>	
Carl C. Smuck	W
Col. West A. Hamilton	B
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Gloria K. Roberts	W
Irving B. Yochelson	W
Louise S. Steele	W
Mordecai W. Johnson	B
Preston A. McLendon	W
Wesley S. Williams	B

<b>1963</b>	
Carl C. Smuck	W
Col. West A. Hamilton	B
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Gloria K. Roberts	W
Irving B. Yochelson	W
Louise S. Steele	W
Mordecai W. Johnson	B
Preston A. McLendon	W
Wesley S. Williams	B

<b>1964</b>	
Carl C. Smuck	W
Col. West A. Hamilton	B
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Gloria K. Roberts	W
Irving B. Yochelson	W
Louise S. Steele	W
Mordecai W. Johnson	B
Preston A. McLendon	W
Wesley S. Williams	B

<b>1965</b>	
Carl C. Smuck	W
Col. West A. Hamilton	B
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Gloria K. Roberts	W
Irving B. Yochelson	W
Louise S. Steele	W
Mordecai W. Johnson	B
Preston A. McLendon	W
Wesley S. Williams	B

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, The Washingtoniana Collection, Board of Education, Folder 1960-1964. 1962, "Negro Seats on Board of Education Increased to Four." *Southern School News*, Jul.

<b>1966</b>	
Carl C. Smuck	W
Col. West A. Hamilton	B
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Everett A. Hewlett	B
Gloria K. Roberts	W
Irving B. Yochelson	W
Louise S. Steele	W
Preston A. McLendon	W
Wesley S. Williams	B

<b>1967</b>	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Anita Ford Allen	B
Ann Hayne Stults	W
Benjamin H. Alexander	B
Carl C. Smuck	W
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Everett A. Hewlett	B
John A. Sessions	W
Julian R. Dugas	B

<b>1968</b>	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Anita Ford Allen	B
Ann Hayne Stults	W
Benjamin H. Alexander	B
Carl C. Smuck	W
Euphemia L. Haynes	B
Everett A. Hewlett	B
John A. Sessions	W
Julian R. Dugas	B

<b>1969</b>	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Anita Ford Allen	B
Edward L. Hancock	B
James E. Coates	B
John A. Sessions	W
John H. Treanor, Jr.	W
Julius W. Hobson	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Muriel M. Alexander	W
Nelson C. Roots	B

<b>1970</b>	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Anita Ford Allen	B
Bardyl R. Tirana	W
Charles I. Cassell	B
Edward L. Hancock	B
Evie M. Washington	B
James E. Coates	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Muriel M. Alexander	W
Nelson C. Roots	B

<b>1971</b>	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Anita Ford Allen	B
Bardyl R. Tirana	W
Charles I. Cassell	B
Edward L. Hancock	B
Evie M. Washington	B
James E. Coates	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Muriel M. Alexander	W
Nelson C. Roots	B

1972	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Bardyl R. Tirana	W
Charles I. Cassell	B
Delores E. Pryde	B
Evie M. Washington	B
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
James E. Coates	B
Marion Barry, Jr.	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Raymond B. Kemp	W

1973	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Bardyl R. Tirana	W
Charles I. Cassell	B
Delores E. Pryde	B
Evie M. Washington	B
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
James E. Coates	B
Marion Barry, Jr.	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Raymond B. Kemp	W

1974	
Albert A. Rosenfield	W
Barbara L. Simmons	B
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
Julius Hobson, Jr.	B
Marion Barry, Jr.	B
Martha S. Swaim	W
Mattie G. Taylor	B
Raymond B. Kemp	W
Therman Evans	B
Virginia Morris	B
William Treanor	W

1975	
Barbara L. Simmons	B
Bettie G. Benjamin	B
Carol L. Schwartz	W
Elizabeth Evans	B
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
John E. Warren	B
Julius Hobson, Jr.	B
Raymond B. Kemp	W
Therman E. Evans	B
Virginia Morris	B
William W. Treanor	W

1976	
Barbara L. Simmons	B
Bettie G. Benjamin	B
Carol L. Schwartz	W
Conrad P. Smith	B
Elizabeth Kane	W
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
James S. Featherstone, Jr.	B
John E. Warren	B
Julius Hobson, Jr.	B
Therman E. Evans	B
William W. Treanor	W

1977	
Barbara L. Simmons	B
Bettie G. Benjamin	B
Carol L. Schwartz	W
Conrad P. Smith	B
Elizabeth Kane	W
Hilda Howland M. Mason	B
John E. Warren	B
Julius Hobson, Jr.	B
Minnie Woodson	B
Therman E. Evans	B
William W. Treanor	W

1978	
Alaire Rieffel	W
Barbara Lett Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Carol L. Schwartz	W
Conrad Smith	B
Elizabeth Kane	W
Frank Shaffer-Corona	H
John E. Warren	B
Minnie Woodson	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
Victoria Street	B

1979	
Alaire Rieffel	W
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Carol Schwartz	W
Conrad Smith	B
Elizabeth Kane	W
Frank Shaffer-Corona	H
John Warren	B
Minnie Woodson	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
Victoria Street	B

1980	
Alaire Rieffel	W
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Carol Schwartz	W
Eugene Kinlow	B
Frank Shaffer-Corona	H
Frank Smith, Jr.	B
John E. Warren	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nathaniel Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B

1981	
Alaire Rieffel	W
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Carol L. Schwartz	W
Eugene Kinlow	B
Frank Shaffer-Corona	H
Frank Smith, Jr.	B
John E. Warren	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nathaniel Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B

1982	
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
David Eaton	B
David Hall	B
Eugene Kinlow	B
Frank Smith, Jr.	B
John Warren	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nate Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
Wanda Washburn	W

1983	
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie G. Benjamin	B
David Eaton	B
Edna Frazier-Cromwell	B
Eugene Kinlow	B
John Warren	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nate Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
R. David Hall	B
Wanda Washburn	W

1984	
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Bob Boyd	W
David Eaton	B
Edna Frazier-Cromwell	B
Eugene Kilow	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nate Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
R. David Hall	B
Wanda Washburn	W

1985	
Barbara Simmons	B
Bettie Benjamin	B
Bob Boyd	W
David Eaton	B
David Hall	B
Edna Frazier-Cromwell	B
Eugene Kilow	B
Linda Cropp	B
Nathaniel Bush	B
R. Calvin Lockridge	B
Wanda Washburn	W

APPENDIX II

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Source Used to Identify Member's Race</b>
Alaire Rieffel	W	Feinberg, Lawrence. 1977. "D.C. School Board Races." <i>The Washington Post</i> , Oct 20, ( <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1977/10/20/dc-school-board-races/c7dd89eb-b24e-46af-b88f-0521ed470875/?utm_term=.a11d3ec6056b">https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1977/10/20/dc-school-board-races/c7dd89eb-b24e-46af-b88f-0521ed470875/?utm_term=.a11d3ec6056b</a> ).
Albert A. Rosenfield	W	Franklin, Ben. 1967. "Suits Would Bar D.C. School Head." <i>New York Times</i> , Nov 2, p. 52. ( <a href="https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117771296/EF99B45FA5B946D8PQ/1?accountid=14541">https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117771296/EF99B45FA5B946D8PQ/1?accountid=14541</a> ).[context]
Anita Ford Allen	B	Franklin, Ben. 1967. "Suits Would Bar D.C. School Head." <i>New York Times</i> , Nov 2, p. 52. ( <a href="https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117771296/EF99B45FA5B946D8PQ/1?accountid=14541">https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117771296/EF99B45FA5B946D8PQ/1?accountid=14541</a> ).
Ann Hayne Stults	W	Cronk, Sue. 1966. "Profiles of Candidates for 3 School Board Vacancies." <i>The Washington Post, Times Herald</i> , Jun 2, p. F14.
Barbara L. Simmons	B	"United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch ( <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQYM-KBC">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQYM-KBC</a> : accessed 9 February 2018), Barbara J Lett in household of Benjamin H Lett, Battle Creek, Calhoun, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 10, sheet 3A, line 24, family 51, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 978; FHL microfilm 2,340,713.
Bardyl R. Tirana	W	Feinberg, Lawrence. 1970. "Board Acts to Keep Police in Schools." <i>The Washington Post, Times Herald</i> , Feb 15, p. A1. ( <a href="https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/147890294/BA0E889768774D80PQ/1?accountid=14541">https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/147890294/BA0E889768774D80PQ/1?accountid=14541</a> ).

Benjamin H. Alexander	B	Franklin, Ben. 1967. "A White Chosen School Head in Capital, Negroes Disrupt Meeting: Negroes Protest D.C. School Head." <i>New York Times</i> , Oct 28, p. 1. ( <a href="https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117388433/FE79E6C521244312PQ/1?accountid=14541">https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/117388433/FE79E6C521244312PQ/1?accountid=14541</a> ).
Bettie G. Benjamin	B	Valente, Judith. 1981. "Driver Education Program In D.C. Lacks Funding: Driver Ed Program In D.C. Lacks Funding." <i>The Washington Post</i> , Sep 2, p. C1. ( <a href="https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/147270016/8DE25BDD6D9A4D6CPQ/1?accountid=14541">https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/147270016/8DE25BDD6D9A4D6CPQ/1?accountid=14541</a> ).
Bob Boyd	W	Booker, Simeon. 1983. "Ticker Tape U.S.A." <i>Jet</i> , Dec 5, pp. 10-18.
Carl C. Smuck	W	Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, The Washingtoniana Collection, Board of Education, Folder 1960-1964. 1962, "Negro Seats on Board of Education Increased to Four." <i>Southern School News</i> , Jul.
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APPENDIX III

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Date Passed</b>	<b>Education Appropriation</b>	<b>Ed. App. adjusted for '85 inflation</b>
1950	6/29/1949	\$ 23,270,710.00	\$ 105,207,075.46
1951	7/18/1950	\$ 28,116,747.00	\$ 125,533,692.00
1952	8/3/1951	\$ 29,604,750.00	\$ 122,518,119.23
1953	7/5/1952	\$ 25,787,200.00	\$ 104,705,763.02
1954	7/31/1953	\$ 28,336,400.00	\$ 114,194,630.71
1955	7/1/1954	\$ 27,626,570.00	\$ 110,506,280.00
1956	7/5/1955	\$ 28,130,000.00	\$ 112,939,850.75
1957	6/29/1956	\$ 32,515,750.00	\$ 128,628,481.62
1958	6/27/1957	\$ 37,246,050.00	\$ 142,621,885.41
1959	8/6/1958	\$ 39,948,000.00	\$ 148,733,730.10
1960	6/23/1959	\$ 46,882,000.00	\$ 173,350,625.43
1961	4/8/1960	\$ 49,232,700.00	\$ 178,967,517.57
1962	9/21/1961	\$ 54,016,210.00	\$ 194,386,093.51
1963	10/23/1962	\$ 57,248,400.00	\$ 203,971,120.53
1964	12/30/1963	\$ 63,860,593.00	\$ 224,555,549.24
1965	8/22/1964	\$ 68,051,000.00	\$ 236,202,825.81
1966	7/16/1965	\$ 75,457,600.00	\$ 257,753,579.68
1967	11/2/1966	\$ 80,832,000.00	\$ 268,442,074.07
1968	11/13/1967	\$ 97,331,900.00	\$ 313,560,252.69
1969	8/10/1968	\$ 108,676,000.00	\$ 336,021,195.40
1970	12/24/1969	\$ 140,386,000.00	\$ 411,594,920.98
1971	7/16/1970	\$ 146,353,000.00	\$ 405,865,536.08
1972	12/18/1971	\$ 171,517,000.00	\$ 455,684,671.60
1973	7/10/1972	\$ 179,607,000.00	\$ 462,337,636.36
1974	8/14/1973	\$ 198,029,000.00	\$ 479,908,117.12
1975	8/31/1974	\$ 207,748,800.00	\$ 453,423,344.42
1976	6/30/1976	\$ 237,325,900.00	\$ 448,792,035.85
1977	10/1/1976	\$ 245,287,700.00	\$ 463,848,093.50
1978	6/5/1978	\$ 264,679,200.00	\$ 436,801,869.94

1979	9/18/1978	\$ 283,605,400.00	\$ 468,035,905.52
1980	10/30/1979	\$ 312,493,500.00	\$ 463,144,636.36
1981	12/15/1980	\$ 393,956,500.00	\$ 514,438,342.23
1982	12/4/1981	\$ 377,921,300.00	\$ 447,352,385.92
1983	12/22/1982	\$ 438,724,200.00	\$ 489,188,848.91
1984	10/13/1983	\$ 483,532,900.00	\$ 522,370,883.94

APPENDIX IV

<b>District of Columbia Population, Percentage of Residents <sup>5</sup></b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Percent of Black Residents <sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Percent of White Residents</b>
1950	802,178	35%	65%
1960	763,956	54%	45%
1970	756,510	71%	28%
1980	638,333	70%	27%
1990	606,900	66%	30%

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<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau. n.d. "Table 9. District of Columbia - Race and Hispanic Origin for Selected Large Cities and Other Places: Earliest Census to 1990."

(<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/DCtab.pdf>)

<sup>6</sup> Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

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