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“OUR DUTY IS TO FURNISH SUCH EDUCATION:”
BLACK CHILDREN AND SCHOOLING IN
BALTIMORE CITY, 1828 – 1900

By

Lisa Rose Lamson, B.A., M.A., M.Ed

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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ABSTRACT
“OUR DUTY IS TO FURNISH SUCH EDUCATION:”
BLACK CHILDREN AND SCHOOLING IN
BALTIMORE CITY, 1828 – 1900

Lisa Rose Lamson, B.A., M.A., M.Ed

Marquette University, 2021

This dissertation focuses on the ways Baltimore City’s public school system developed in the nineteenth century as it was shaped by Black Baltimorean’s expectations of their children’s schooling. From the beginning of the city’s public school system, established in 1828, Black Baltimoreans advocated for their children’s futures by demanding access to universal, state sponsored education. Black Baltimoreans declared that children had a right to an education that was in sufficient buildings, had appropriate graded curricular choices that would benefit their futures, and were taught by black teachers or those “in sympathy” with them. This dissertation argues that for Black Baltimoreans, schooling was always part of their understanding of civic rights, and they demanded access to it for their children *because* education was a fundamental right. Beyond training children for their future labor needs, black children would be citizens, and it would be this belief, that justified Black Baltimorean advocacy in the face of Board of School Commissioner inertia.

The first two chapters of this dissertation chronicle early black advocacy in the city before the Civil War and the immediate aftermath of the war on the city’s public education system. The remaining three chapters follow the demands made in a series of formal petitions to Baltimore City’s City Council and the Board of School Commissioners. By focusing on these petitions, I center Black Baltimoreans as active/agents/something that shaping the city’s educational systems, rather than merely reactive to Board of School Commissioner choices. Centering the conversation around black educational advocacy proposes an intersection/highlighting of the ways parents envisioned a child’s future beyond their labor capacities. Black and white Baltimoreans made choices that supported the imagined or perceived future black children had in ways that intersected and diverged throughout the nineteenth century.

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Lisa Rose Lamson, B.A., M.A., M.Ed

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Introduction: “In Education Lies the Hope of Any People:” Black Schooling in Baltimore

In 1915, Howard E. Young, a black pharmacist, published a series of articles in the *Afro American* chronicling the origin of Baltimore’s Colored Public Schools. The four articles both celebrated and lamented the nature of the separate school system for black children in the city. “In education” he wrote, “lies the hope of any people.” Progress towards universal education in the city had not been a straight line, according to Young, but had “sometimes been in a forward direction, sometimes zigzag, and almost as frequently it has been backward.”¹ The black schools in Baltimore had progressed rapidly after their incorporation into the city’s school system in 1867. However, that advancement was due to black parental and community advocacy on behalf of their community’s children rather than benevolence or a desire to improve the schools on the part of the all-white school board and its administrators. This dissertation traces the constant forward, zigzag, and backward movements of black popular and private education in Baltimore. It argues that the city’s educational system was shaped by two different visions of the future for black children, one created by black parents and on by white school, city, and state officials. The “hope of any people,” according to Black Baltimoreans, equated education with their understanding of citizenship. For them, education was a childhood right. To administrators, on the other hand, education was a privilege. The fundamental belief that childhood educational access was a right shaped Black Baltimorean advocates’ vision of their children’s future and the demands they made for improving their city’s schools.

¹ Howard E. Young, “Colored Schools in Maryland: their Origins and their needs,” *The Afro-American*, September 4, 1915

“‘Our duty is to furnish such education:’ Black Childhood and Schooling in Baltimore City, 1828-1900” uses Baltimore City’s educational institutions as a case study of the intersections of race, gender, class, and age in nineteenth century America. It offers debates over the funding, curriculum, and resources devoted to public education as a means to study the development of the idea that a child’s future should lie beyond their capacity for manual labor. Black and white Baltimoreans made choices that supported their understandings of what black children would or would not become in ways that intersected and diverged throughout the nineteenth century.

Schooling instructed children from a young age on what society expected of them as they matured and entered adulthood, often re-enforcing the limitations placed on them because of their race, class, and gender. Although this project discusses both male and female children, care has been taken to focus on the female experience. In part, girls were the focus of St. Frances’ Academy, the school run by the Oblate Sisters of Providence. The academy was the most stable black private school in Baltimore (they would open a school for boys in 1865). Additionally, throughout the nineteenth century, an increasing number of girls would attend the city’s Colored Public Schools (CPS). Girls were expected to fulfil specific roles in 19th century society that centered them around the home as wives, mothers, and domestic servants.

Schooling reinforced the expectation of hierarchy but also provided a means to break the hierarchy. Thus, it provides spaces for historians to see how Black Baltimoreans created and maintained their own sense and understanding of their identities. For this dissertation’s purposes, schooling and educational advocacy in the city became a means to highlight how different interpretations of the purpose of education

supported Black Baltimorean understanding of their futures. For example, examining St. Frances' Academy, when a girl entered the Oblate Sisters of Providence, as a handful of students did in the antebellum period, she could become a professional educator in Baltimore, a city that demanded and emphasized her racial and gendered inferiority. These students-turned-sisters who became educators were educating girls like themselves. In the public school system, several petitions by black community members to the Board and City Council in the post-bellum period would demand employment for black teachers, several of whom were female. Children's right to a decent education required good school buildings, good curriculum, and good black teachers.

As evidenced by the formal petitions to the school board and the city council, Black Baltimoreans envisioned that their children's education would function in a specific way, one that would set their children's future as a participating member of Baltimorean society. These children's futures were not tied to any specific labor, although curricular choices administrators made would attempt to narrow children's future choices. Rather, Black Baltimoreans argued, education would prepare them for a wide range of positions in society. In the post-bellum period, what Black Baltimoreans wanted for their children aligned with what white administrators and teachers nominally said they thought black children educational needs would be. Black private education in the city provided an alternative to the city's public educational offerings and acted as a constant throughout the nineteenth century. Unlike other Southern cities, the presence of a stable private institutionalized system of education in the city for black children complicates the general understanding of how Southern black education developed.

Baltimore city provides a more nuanced version of what historians of education assume about white and black education in the South. It is generally understood that universal education did not develop in the South until after the Civil War. As James D. Anderson showed in 1988, it was the organizational efforts and drive of formerly enslaved peoples that fundamentally shaped public education through the post-bellum south. In *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935*, Anderson argued that, while formerly enslaved persons were attempting to develop a liberatory educational system, the socio-economic interests of both white southerners and northern philanthropists hampered the efforts of the newly freed peoples to establish their own educational system. Rather, white southern and northern philanthropists worked together to reinforce the “caste economy” of the south. Anderson identified two strains of educational thought in the country during the post-bellum period. One emphasized black Americans’ “struggle to fashion a system of formal education that prefigured their liberation from peasantry” and emphasized education as the means to “defend and extend their emancipation” to “restructure and control their lives.” The second strain created a “second class education” for black children, in which educational offerings were an outgrowth of the prevailing social ideology that was “designed to adjust black southern to racially qualified forms of political and economic subordination.”² In Baltimore City, there was no overt, explicitly racialized attempt to create a “second class education” for black children. Yet their curricular choices would eventually do just that. In their public responses to Black Baltimorean petitions, the Board emphasized that their administrative

² James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 3, 145

choices supported pupils that attended and participated in their schooling in the ways the Board wanted them to.

Like other historians, Anderson reclaimed black teachers as historic actors shaping the development of Southern education rather than merely subject to the whims of Northern missionary movements.³ Yet he did not address children's experiences—even abstractly—focusing instead on the black community rather than a previous generation's emphasis on the role of white northern teachers and missionaries in developing African American schools in the south.

Historians of education have emphasized schooling's ability to assert authority and order over individuals. The association of schooling with order and by extension “civil cohesion” and “good citizens” has been made by both educational historians and childhood historians. In *Seeking Common Ground: Public Schools in a Diverse Society*, David Tyack argued that the eventual acceptance of a state-sponsored state common school system created civil cohesion throughout education. “Good” schooling, as defined by Tyack, was education that molded “good citizens according to a similar moral and civic pattern” that reinforced the dominance of the prevailing Protestant culture. Children

³ Although not a comprehensive list, please see: Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865 – 1873* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862 – 1875* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980) and *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861 – 1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Hilary Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South: 1865 – 1890* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); Joan Malczewski, *Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Joe Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861 – 1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986) and with Maxine Deloris Jones *Education for Liberation: The American Missionary Association and African Americans, 1890 – Civil Rights* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015); Heather Andrea Williams, *Self Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Ward M. McAfee, *Religion, Race, and Reconstruction: The Public School in the Politics of the 1870s*

recreated society.⁴ Education, irrespective of the child, focused on assimilating him or her into political, economic, and cultural institutions. In Baltimore City, curricular choices made by school administrators categorized children into groups structured around when a child was anticipated to leave their education, which would be caused by material concerns that were outside the control of the Board. Black Baltimoreans demanded education that supported *their* understanding of the racial, gendered, and social hierarchy of the city rather than white administrators' point of view.

Many of the contemporary arguments regarding the education of black children hinge on a contested notion of black citizenship centered around political participation and claims of belonging, making a clear working definition of citizenship essential for an analysis of this topic. For my project, I narrowly define citizenship around education as Black Baltimoreans believed the two concepts were. The parents' citizenship and their children's future citizenship and social participation justified the parents' educational advocacy. White school officials, however, did not see citizenship and education as linked. One could be educated but not a citizen. A school commissioner made that distinction clear in 1865 when he argued that while state sponsored education would be offered to the black community's children, the education would not "fit" black children for citizenship, which included voting and holding political appointments. It was believed that black community members would not, and should not, participate so therefore, education was not required to prepare black boys for active political participation. The

⁴ Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983)x-xi; David Tyack, *Seeking Common Ground: Public Schools in a Diverse Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 2-4

relationship between citizenship, understood as voting, and education was, as one school commissioner put it, “happily inapplicable in Maryland to the colored race.”⁵

The duplication of the racial contours of American society in education have been the focus of several histories of black education. Donald Spivey continued Anderson’s examination of a two-tiered system of education as black education, particularly industrial education, developed in the aftermath of the Civil War. Black children were funneled into industrial education in the aftermath of Hampton Institutes’ success, Spivey argued, because of a concerted effort between Northern industrialists, Southern planters, and black leaders to address Southern labor needs. As a result, the relationship between Northern and Southern interests maintained the social order in the aftermath of the Civil War.⁶ While Baltimore City had a dual system of education, the first few decades of the Colored Public Schools did not emphasize manual or industrial education. Manual instruction was offered in the Baltimore Association Schools, but when the city incorporated and re-organized the schools, the sewing instruction was dropped in favor of aligning the course offerings with the white primary schools.⁷

⁵ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore* (Baltimore: John Cox, City Printer, corner of Gay and Lombard Streets) 1868. BRG31, Baltimore City Archives, Baltimore, Maryland. For the purposes of clarification, the Board of School Commissioners’ annual reports will be referred to as “Annual Report.”

⁶ Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007) introduction, 77. For more associations of curricular choices and future work for children see: Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946* (New York City: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1999); Harvey Kantor and David B. Tyack, eds, *Work, Youth, and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 1977);

⁷ There are multiple names for the organization depending on who is reporting. The Sun refers to the org as the Baltimore Association for the Education of the Colored People, The Baltimore Association for the Moral and Mental Improvement of Colored Peoples, and The Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored people. The Board: The Baltimore Association for the education of children of colored parents.

This dissertation is structured around Black Baltimoreans' belief that education was a right rather than a privilege, which took the form of advocacy for better buildings, forward-looking curricula, and the hiring of black teachers or white teachers "in sympathy" with the Black community. Through their educational advocacy, Black Baltimoreans shared a vision of Black childhood based on material conditions as well as on their possible futures.

"Our duty is to furnish such education:' Black Childhood and Schooling in Baltimore City, 1828-1900" engaged three primary "buckets of historiography:" the histories of childhood, of education, and of the intersection of race and gender. When introducing the origins of Baltimore City's Colored Schools, Howard E. Young noted that their development was not unlike those of other urban centers. He wrote, "the story of popular education in Maryland is much the same as the story of popular education in other American commonwealths."⁸ While Young was not incorrect in his evaluation of the development of black education in Baltimore in comparison to other cities, the demographics of the city created a space for black educational advocacy to influence the development of universal education throughout the entirety of the nineteenth century, rather than only after the Civil War. Previously, historians of black education have noted that other southern cities developed their own systems of universal state-sponsored education for both white and black children in the aftermath of the Civil War. Southern cities relied upon a system of private schools and tutors to educate their elite children and a system of informal educational spaces for everyone else before the Civil War. Comparatively, Baltimore City, as Hilary Moss has noted, had more educational access

⁸ Howard E. Young, "Colored Schools in Maryland: their Origins and their needs," *The Afro-American*, September 4, 1915

than other slaveholding cities for both white and black children but less than most northern cities.⁹

In 1828 the city established its public school system for white children; in the same year the city's first black private school was established. Almost immediately, Black Baltimoreans protested their children's exclusion from the public school system and their organized advocacy throughout the nineteenth century in the city provides a unique counterpoint to the development of southern education and white understandings of black childhood. Black Baltimorean advocacy clearly focused on the development of the community, but it also sought to establish "the improvement and happiness of the present and future generations."¹⁰ The city's demographics allowed for Black Baltimoreans to articulate and advocate for their "improvement and happiness" for future generations. In the post – Revolutionary war period, the wide scale manumissions in the state created the largest free black population of any state, and on the eve of the Civil War, almost an equal number of free persons of color and enslaved people. By 1820, free people outnumbered enslaved peoples in the city. There were 10,326 free people compared to the 4,357 enslaved peoples in the city and the difference would only widen as the antebellum period continued.¹¹ Demographics unique to the city during the antebellum period provided space for advocacy that predated the war and would continue throughout the nineteenth century, extending the periodization of black education into the antebellum period.

⁹ Hilary Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 68-70; Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780- 1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) chapters four, five.

¹⁰ As qtd in Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 165

¹¹ Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 37, 60

The uniqueness of Baltimore's demographics justifying or at least explaining community development is not a new explanation of the city's institutional growth. Both Christopher Phillips in his broader study of antebellum free black communities in the city, Hilary Green's examination of education in early Baltimore, and Seth Rockman's study of the working poor all emphasize the city's demographics as one explanation for the uniqueness of the city.¹² Phillips noted that the demographic makeup allowed for family structure, gender roles, occupations, and social constructs to be particularly Baltimorean in nature and contributed to the "internal" community of the city during the antebellum period. Phillips defined the "internal" community as the social structures that helped define how the community saw itself and created a community, that despite its multipartite nature and potential for internal division, to rally and coalesce in the face of external challenges. This early antebellum development allowed for what Phillips calls a "mature community" that fostered communal organization and group solidarity.¹³

The specter of enslavement, even in face of such a large free population of color, limited black advancement in the city. Hilary Moss has argued that Black Baltimorean literacy gains were tempered by the city's relationship to enslavement and how it

¹² Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). For more information regarding Maryland's "middle ground" status, or between both Northern and Southern community relations, please see: Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press and Maryland Historical Society, 1988); Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Max Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason-Dixon Line, 1790-1860* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011). A note about demographics, while several historians have noted that the city's black population was nominally free in comparison to the enslaved population in both the state and the nation, the system was incredibly fluid, and individuals regularly moved in and out of legal, "period" or "wage" enslavement as their economic needs required it.

¹³ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 3.

maintained the racial order. Slavery's ongoing presence and the series of restrictions passed by both the city and state limited Black Baltimoreans' ability to advance socioeconomically. Slavery also tempered white working-class Baltimorean fears of being replaced with an educated black labor force as these groups competed for the same low – wage positions in the city. White support of black education in the antebellum period, therefore, was justified by enslavement and how it limited black advancement. Education, no matter how much an individual received, would not change the overall status of black community members and an educated, enslaved, or working poor population produced better workers.

Black community members “valued vocational and literacy instruction both for the social status they signified and for the economic benefit they might provide to themselves and their children.”¹⁴ While it is unknown if there were internal distinctions between free, newly or temporarily free, or enslaved populations of African descendant persons in the city, their presentation to white administrators was seemingly unified. No distinction was present. This solidarity created a space where Black Baltimoreans, unlike Black residents of other Southern cities, were able to rally behind their children's education far faster and far earlier than in other communities. Again, in the post-bellum period, no distinction between free and newly freed were made when approaching the Board and City Council for childhood educational access. Although the composition of the communities were different, much of the post-bellum advocacy was an extension of antebellum work.¹⁵ Irrespective of the child or their family's previous status, no distinction was made when approaching white administrators. The black community

¹⁴ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 69.

¹⁵ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 3.

would be unified. Despite the decreasing political representation that marked the post-bellum period in Baltimore, Black Baltimoreans were able to advocate for their community's children. In addition to articulating how citizenship should be framed for their children, Black Baltimoreans claimed an action of citizenship themselves in petitioning the City Council and Board of School Commissioners.

Black childhood historians of the nineteenth century have focused on the extent black children had a childhood, uncovering the material conditions of their childhood, and the larger symbolism of black children. Enslaved children have been the focus of several works, as historians have attempted to recreate the material conditions of their lives and the ways children resisted their enslavement. These scholars have argued that while childhood for black enslaved children was limited due to their enslavement, generational trauma enacted upon them due to the plantation system, and from being enmeshed in multiple worlds, these children did have some sort of childhood.¹⁶ Children learned how to navigate and negotiate the dual roles children had to play in both white and black spaces or what Schwartz describes as a “twoness” of black consciousness.¹⁷ This dissertation builds Schwartz's concept by tracking the “twoness” of conflicting understandings of black children. How did white and black community members envision the “imagined futures” of a child's life? The envisioning of a child's future, which

¹⁶ *Child Slavery before and after Emancipation: An Argument for Child Centered Slavery Studies*, eds. Anna Mae Duane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Anna Mae Duane, *Suffering Childhood in Early America: Violence, Race, and the Making of the Child Victim* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995) and *African American Childhoods: Historical Perspectives from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005); Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000)

¹⁷ Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) 9

included a child's future labor and their potential "fitness" in society, dictated and justified many of the choices Black and White Baltimoreans made on children's behalf.

Historic research on the lives of free black children during the antebellum period is scant and often focuses on Northern states. Crystal Lynn Webster argued that historians should focus on a "child centered framework" that emphasizes the material conditions of the child, rather than on the "future *potential* of Black children who might who grow up to be significant influences on society."¹⁸ The children's presence and response to their schooling, according to Webster, informed their later participation in abolitionist and reform movements. While she described the material conditions of children in her work, she limited her research to Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City and did not speak to the southern urban experience. Antebellum school desegregation is the focus of Kabria Baumgartner's *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America*. She argues that in Boston, black girls and women were able to articulate their own understanding of educational privileges in their pursuit of equal educational opportunities. These women created petition drives and mobilized community activism to agitate for equal public-school admission for girls who were less likely to drop out of school.¹⁹

In Baltimore City, however, black community members made no gendered distinction in their educational advocacy nor was it tied to a specific set of children. Much like white administrators, Black Baltimoreans were interested in the abstract "child." This "absent – present child," as proposed by Elisabeth Lefebvre in her work on

¹⁸ Crystal Lynn Webster, *Beyond the Boundaries of Childhood: African American Children in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021) 3

¹⁹ Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019)

twentieth century Uganda colonial education, is a means for historians to interrogate the ways children are spoken about and considered by adults without the benefit of child-produced sources. According to Lefebvre, the “absent – present child” informed colonial educational systems.²⁰ This dissertation builds on this concept to examine how Black Baltimoreans envisioned the future of these “absent – present children” to agitate for their children’s educational opportunities. Much like the black child in literary works, the Black children discussed by African American activists and white administrators represented *all* of the city’s black children rather than specific groups.²¹

The dissertation begins in 1828 and continues until 1900, extending the periodization traditionally used in educational history, which is often bifurcated by the Civil War. It does so to track the ongoing educational advocacy Black Baltimoreans did on behalf of their children. While different in focus, the antebellum educational petitions, advocating for access, nevertheless informed the post-bellum petitions. The parents and community members, in advocating for better institutions for their children, crafted an understanding of their children’s futures that was rooted in racial uplift and citizenship. Schooling was placed in the center of this conversation. The black understanding of their children’s futures, irrespective of their future labor, ran parallel and occasionally intersected with white administrative understanding of what a child needed to learn.

²⁰ Elisabeth E. Lefebvre, “Searching for the Child in Colonial Uganda’s Educational Archives,” *Children and Youth as Subjects, Objects, and Agents: Innovative Approaches to Research Across Space and Time* (Camden: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021): 121-139

²¹ For more information on black children as symbols in literature, please see: Nazera Sadiq Wright, *Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Katharine Capshaw and Anna Mae Duane eds, *Who Writes for Black Children: African American Children’s Literature before 1900* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017)

Parents made decisions based on an envisioned future for black children, and those decisions shaped their interaction with the School Board.

The first two chapters are structured chronologically, beginning in 1828 when the Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) and the School for Colored Girls, now known as St. Frances Academy, were founded. The chapter is centered around a series of educational petitions Black Baltimoreans brought forth to the Board of School Commissioners and the City Council. Although these petitions were unsuccessful in convincing the Board and City Council to open the city's public school system to black children, the presence of the petitions demonstrated an intersection of citizenship, childhood, and the future as articulated by the black community, rather than one dictated to them by white city administrators.

The second chapter continues this narrative through the Civil War, specifically the years 1864 to 1868. During this four-year period, a private organization, the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People, created the foundation of what became the city's Colored Public Schools (CPS). Through state and local debates around funding, jurisdiction, and administration, Baltimore City officials articulated the purpose of education and a child's educational needs. City officials' understanding of education as a privilege rather than a right tied to their parents' citizenship and the child's future citizenship, would create tension with the city's black community. Immediately after the city reorganized and assumed administration of CPS, black parents petitioned for several reforms that would create access for children. The Board and the city's invalidation of the black community's criticism and the partial fulfillment of Black Baltimorean petitioner requests shaped the four years the chapter

covers. This period also created the foundation of not only the Board's response to petitioner requests but also how Black Baltimoreans would approach and structure their advocacy.

The remaining three chapters highlight the three primary goals presented by Black Baltimoreans during the remainder of the nineteenth century: improved physical plants, increased curricular access, and the employment of black teachers. All three were first articulated in a petition presented by Black Baltimoreans in 1868. While black educational advocacy for all three complaints continued throughout nineteenth century, each chapter presents an illustrative moment where white and black understandings of the future, educational privileges and rights, and what a child needed to learn intersected.

Chapter three discusses school buildings, particularly petitions for the opening of Colored School No. 9 in the late 1880s. Both white and black Baltimoreans wanted children to be physically present in the schools but for vastly different reasons. Student attendance was used to support the development of CPS or, conversely, to minimize the importance of black education and undermine complaints. White administrators pointed to the steady—but relatively low—attendance rates of CPS as a justification for *not* instituting improvements that went beyond focusing on a school's appearance and location. Black Baltimoreans also focused on location, but to argue that children had a right to a community school and to be taught by their own community members. Increasing the physical capacity of CPS would increase the number of students who could attend and would intertwine material conditions and the ideals of what a child needed to make education viable.

Throughout the post bellum period, Baltimore City school officials sorted children into two categories – one in which the minority of Black children would complete the entire course of study from grades one through high school and the majority who might leave school at any time. These categories would inform curricular decisions that the Board, who dictated not only the curriculum but textbook selection for every school in the school system, would make throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. The purpose of education, which is discussed at length in this chapter, remained an ongoing conversation for the Board. Chapter Four highlights those moments when the Board’s discussions intersected with the Black Baltimorean community – the grade reorganization in the early 1880s and the drive to open a black high school. The Board’s decisions were not explicitly racialized and gendered when they reorganized the course of study and grades one through eight, but they would become so. For much of the nineteenth century, black children were limited to primary education and could only access the next phase—grammar school instruction—if a teacher deemed the child sufficiently advanced. Through no fault of their own, black children were consistently funneled into the second category of children and the material conditions – lack of adequate school buildings, course materials, and class offerings – would limit black children’s educational gains. Black community members, through the educational advocacy of the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty, would agitate for a black high school.

One of the most contentious reforms, the employment of black teachers, is the focus of Chapter five. When in 1867 the city took over the Baltimore Association schools, which had an integrated teacher corps, all black educators lost their positions.

Much like the advocacy done for increasing physical conditions of the school buildings, the advocacy for the employment for black teachers dominated Black Baltimorean efforts in the post-bellum period. The employment of black teachers, many of whom were female, supported the emerging ideas of uplift and community support. Rather than a desire to support all students, black community members focused explicitly on black children as a means of ensuring their community's future.

A constant throughout the period was the Oblate Sisters of Providence's School for Colored Girls, now known as St. Frances Academy. This institution provided an alternative for Black Baltimoreans when, or if, they believed the public offerings did not support their envisioning of black education. Although it is unknown if children moved between the public and private school systems in the city; both systems were drawing from the same black community. Previous educational historians have separated the development of private, religiously affiliated institutions and the rise of state-sponsored and funded institutions.²² The inclusion of St. Frances Academy in this dissertation proposes a way in which scholars of both private and public education can place the seemingly disparate institutions in conversation with one another.²³ Although more research is needed to see if there was active conversation and movement between the public and private institutions, they were at least *aware* of one another – as demonstrated

²² Although not an exhaustive list on black religious instruction during the nineteenth century, please see: Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828 – 1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993);

²³ While Baltimore City was a predominate Catholic city given the state's history; Black Baptist and AME congregations also ran church sponsored schools. Several of the leaders of the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty were reverends in the AME churches. Due to the shutdowns related to COVID – 19, I was unable to make it out to Baltimore City to see these records. Future research plans to expand the project include these archival materials at currently housed at Lovely Lane Archives, St. Mary's Seminary, and Goucher University in Baltimore City.

by the discussion in Chapter Four of white administrators comparing their educational offerings to private schools— and drew from the same communities.

“‘Our duty is to furnish such education:’ Black Childhood and Schooling in Baltimore City, 1828-1900” argues that black parental advocacy envisioned a future for their community’s children and attempted to enact that vision through their petitioning throughout the nineteenth century. Focusing on Baltimore City, with its stable private Black educational system, and black community advocacy, it emphasizes what Black Baltimoreans, not white administrators, believed children needed to learn. They structured their arguments around the right of education, but beyond that, the right to learn in good physical facilities, with a curriculum—taught by black teachers—that supported both their future labor and the acquisition of knowledge. Black Baltimorean’s visions of their children’s futures often competed with the vision of white administrators, who ultimately had final say in the development of education in the city. However, Black Baltimoreans were successful in articulating their understanding of a future, one that centered education as a right for their children due to their future citizenship, in a period of increasing limitation.

Chapter One: “Great Good May Proceed From the Education of These Poor Colored Children:” Antebellum Antecedents to Black Education

After failing to convince the City Council to support black education in 1839, a group of Black Baltimoreans approached the Mayor and City Council in January 1844. Their petition asked the City Council to exempt black property owners from paying the school tax. Their request was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. In February, *The Baltimore Sun* noted that a petition “of many colored persons,” requested that the portion of the school tax paid black property owners be collected and appropriated “to the support of two schools established by that class of the population.” In other words, black property taxes would be used to support black schools, whose community-based funding was inconsistent and whose students often could not pay tuition. The petition was referred to the Committee on Education.¹ The Committee on Ways and Means gave the petition an “unfavorable” report, and both petitions would be tabled. *The Sun* reported no other details, but clearly the City Council and the Board of School Commissioners considered the matter settled.

In May 1844, Black Baltimoreans made the same request of the Mayor and City Council and were again rejected.² Another petition would stall in 1850 and a school bill in 1852 would not pass when presented for a citywide vote. Public education would not open to the city’s children of color until 1867, when the city incorporated a pre-existing network of private schools operated by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and

¹ “Proceedings of the City Council, First Branch,” *the Baltimore Sun*, February 2, 1844, 1.

² Petition of Donnie Kilbourne and others relative to Coloured Schools (City Council Records) May 30, 1844, Series 1: Administrative Files, 1797-1923 box 72, item 448, BCA, BRG 16-1-75-7. Further research into the early records of the Board of School Commissioner Records is needed to trace continued conversations.

Educational Improvement of the Colored People. Despite the failure to convince the white administrators and policy makers to provide financial support for black education the presence of the petitions to the City Council demonstrates an intersection of citizenship, childhood, and the future as articulated by the black community. It also shows how Black Baltimoreans were forced to turn to private education if, or when, they found the public offerings lacking. The future, as Black Baltimoreans envisioned it, fundamentally depended upon educational access and “reform” for the city’s black children.

Baltimore’s Freed Population of Color

Because of certain societal and economic factors, the black population in Baltimore City was able to pursue successful, if limited, advocacy during the antebellum period. The economic transformation of Baltimore in particular and Maryland in general was one reason. Since the 1750s, tobacco had been steadily declining as a cash crop for many Maryland planters and by the time of the Revolution, many planters had begun to manumit some of their enslaved people. Unlike in Virginia, there was no law that required immediate removal from the state after manumission, although they would need to obtain travel papers from the Committee on the Free Colored Population if they left the state and wanted to re-enter.³ The Committee on the Free Colored Population was a statewide collation of individuals, mostly from the southern counties, that reported to the House of Delegates. They were tasked with tracking the state’s demographics of both free and enslaved black populations and were one of the loudest supporters of the colonization

³ Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 92-95.

efforts of the state.⁴ Despite the lack of a formal law requiring freed people of color to leave the state upon manumission, several attempts to pass such a law occurred, most notably during the 1850-51 constitutional convention, and many of the city's white citizens were members of the American Colonization Society, which was very vibrant in the antebellum period.⁵

Other individuals fled from their enslavement on the Eastern shore to the city, where the city's fluid system of wage slavery made it easier for individuals to be subsumed into the city's "quasi freedom" and "quasi slavery."⁶ The city's total population doubled between 1790 and 1820, with approximately 27 percent of the population identified as freed people of color, and then again in the 1840s, with 40 percent so identified. Throughout the antebellum period, freed people of color outnumbered enslaved persons in the city. Several historians have noted that the size of the freed population of color relative to both the city's total population *and* its population of enslaved peoples provided space for black Baltimoreans to focus on institution building and community advocacy.⁷

⁴ *Report of the Committee on Colored Population to the House of Delegates* April 19, 1852, Maryland Center for History and Culture, PAM 369; Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 93-96

⁵ Andrew K. Diemer, *The Politics of Black Citizenship: Free African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Borderland, 1817-1863* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016) 12 - 16

⁶ Philips, *Freedom's Port*, 56-58; Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009)

⁷ Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 34; Christopher Philips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790 - 1860*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 30-57; Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018) chapter one; Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) part two; Max Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason - Dixon Line, 1790 - 1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011) chapter four; Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Andrew K. Diemer, *The Politics of Black Citizenship: Free African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Borderland, 1817-1863* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016); Jennifer Hull Dorsey, *Hirelings: African American Workers and Free Labor in Early Maryland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011)

Another situation that gave African Americans some room for community development was the fact that the state of Maryland never explicitly legally restricted black access to education for either the freed and enslaved population of the state, although this lack of a legal prohibition did not mean that the city or the state were actively supporting black educational access. But it did mean that Black Baltimoreans who wanted “the improvement and happiness of present and future generations” and had the necessary funding could create educational access either through formal or informal institutions. Formally, the city’s black religious communities created their own network of faith-based schools that provided basic educations. Informally, the city sustained a network of itinerant teachers who would operate out of community member’s homes or in rented buildings.⁸

Establishment of Baltimore City Public Schools

Situated between North and South, Baltimore City offered more educational opportunities than other Southern communities but less opportunities than some Northern communities – boasting approximately eighty public schools for white children and a network of private faith affiliated schools for black children by 1860.⁹ In 1825, Maryland’s state government passed, “*An Act for the Establishment and Support of Public Schools*,” which authorized the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City to create a “liberal system of Free Public Schools” to “educate its children in such manner as will best qualify them to perform the duties of citizen in after life.” Although the act granted Baltimore City the ability to establish schools, it did not provide a means of

⁸ *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 6 June 1805, as quoted in Berlin’s *Slaves without Masters* 75.

⁹Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 96.

funding them and, in fact, exempted the city from the provisions of the 1825 Act if it established its own public education system by 1830. Three years later, in 1828, a supplemental law was passed to provide a stable means of funding through the “free school fund,” monies that were generated by taxing the renewal of bank charters and the interest on Maryland’s share of surplus federal revenue. Despite Baltimore City’s exemption in the 1825 act, their schools would receive a portion of this federal revenue.¹⁰

The money from the state to support Baltimore’s schools was supplemented by a property tax levied against all citizen-owned property.¹¹ The intention of the schools was to embody “free” in all definitions of the word – free in cost and open to all eligible students, regardless of social and economic standing. Originally the schools were intended to be completely tuition free with a charge for books and stationery for student use. Rather than charge for books and stationery, the city opted to charge one dollar in tuition per quarter. The tuition cost would also cover the student’s book and stationary use, unless the student was exempted from payment. The city was divided into six districts, each with one school; each school would have separate male and female departments. No child above ten years of age was admitted.¹² In January 1829, two boys’ schools enrolled 235 and one girls’ school enrolled thirty-four students for the first three-month term.¹³

¹⁰ Chapter 79, Acts of 1812; Chapter 285, Acts of 1837. Half of this amount was to be distributed according to the proposition of the white population. The other half was to be divided into twenty one equal parts – one for each county and Baltimore City to fund free schooling.

¹¹ Chapter 250, Acts of 1816; Chapter 162, Acts of 1825

¹² *50th Annual Report, 1879*, vi-vii.

¹³ Sheller, “The Origins of Public Education in Baltimore,” 37; Vavrina, “History of Public Education in the City of Baltimore.” *Twenty Second Annual Report of the Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council* (Baltimore: James Lucas, 1851) 11-13.

No reference to race appears in the conversation around the necessity for public schooling – either publicly in newspapers or in the Board minutes.¹⁴ However, it was assumed by the Board and by the white community of Baltimore, that the city’s educational system would be for white children only. The admission requirements restricted enrollment to children of taxable persons who were registered voters, over 21, and householders. While some black property owners did have the right to vote in the eighteenth century, an 1810 amendment to the state constitution had eliminated black suffrage.¹⁵ Much like other cities, Baltimore City’s common schools would provide a moral education for the benefit of the larger community and according to republican principals. The focus of schooling, then, was to provide certain white children with the skills necessary to become the community’s political and social leadership. Society would benefit from universal mass schooling as it would stabilize the community and advance collective goals, particularly ones that decreased crime.¹⁶ In Baltimore, there was no explicit reference to race, but given the restrictions placed on who could attend the city’s schools, it was assumed the students would be white.

Because there would never be a law explicitly prohibiting the education of either free or enslaved black people, church-affiliated schools for African Americans could openly advertise their services in newspapers and solicit funds from community members through drives and fairs. The state and city, however, would not direct funds to these

¹⁴ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 98; Philips, *Freedom’s Port*, 166

¹⁵ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 73

¹⁶ Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780 – 1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) ix – xii, 33-35. Kaestle differentiates between common and free school throughout his work. He defines a ‘common school’ as an elementary school intended to serve all children in an area. Charity or tuition-based schools opened to any child who could afford the tuition would not be a common school but rather, “common pay schools.” A “free school” is one that does not charge tuition or a fee for supplies and often served children of the poor. The Baltimore City school officials did not make this distinction in their materials, considering their system “free public education.”

schools' operations nor provide staff, materials, or buildings. Additionally, the city's white religious institutions often did not provide support for the black run and operated schools. Unlike in other cities where black education was legal, there were few protests and no violence directed toward the private black schools in Baltimore.

The Board wanted the schools' admission policies to reflect very explicitly the purpose of their schools and the futures they represented. When the all-boys high school, Baltimore City College, opened in 1839, it expanded the educational offerings beyond primary to a small contingent of children. The first cohort contained forty-six boys. Indeed, admission to the new boys' high school would be "the reward of merit; the children of the poor and the rich meet here on equal terms; they enjoy the same privileges; are governed by the same laws and reap the same benefits."¹⁷ The board intended to make no distinction between economic classes and educational attainment. All children would be taught the same once admitted. They would use the same materials, pay the same fees, and follow the same course of instruction.¹⁸

Baltimore's public schools, then, were to mix the rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic, to create a white community of literate citizens all acting in the best interests of all, placing the responsibility for education in the city almost entirely on the common schools. The common school movement of the era argued that education and schooling would benefit both the individual *and* the community.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Twenty Second Annual Report*, (1851) 14.

¹⁸ *Annual report* 1873

¹⁹ For more information on the common school movement, please see: Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980). Although the "common school revival" of the nineteenth was credited and often periodized around the appointment of Horace Mann to Massachusetts' State Board of Education in 1837, the inclusion of both moral, often nonsectarian Christian morality and values, and

In their efforts to treat all white children the same, the Board mandated that all schools would follow the Lancasterian, or monitorial, system of instruction. Consistently increasing attendance justified the institutional cost and the necessity of “public” education rather than using the private educational systems that dominated other southern states. This pedagogy had originated in England and by the early nineteenth century had spread to the emerging school systems in the United States. It required a “master,” or a teacher, who would call upon advanced students called “monitors” or “monitor generals,” to assist in observing the lessons, distributing supplies, hearing recitations, and maintaining order for upwards of hundreds of students. Each “desk,” which was a long table that could seat up to twelve students, would be a “class.” Several classes would be present in a large room and the master would circulate the room. Students would compete for advancement within their class. Joseph Lancaster believed that this method of instruction would “create motives in the minds of youth, and induce them to exert their powers” as students would strive to become monitors themselves.²⁰

The Lancasterian method largely relied upon individual recitation as its primary method of instruction. Rather than focus on the relationship between the master and individual students, monitors were tasked with leading their class at designated times.²¹ The city’s School Commissioners were staunch supporters of this means of instruction and, despite some teachers protesting its “mechanical methods ... [and] very limited

intellectual pursuits in schooling predate his appointment. Scholars have called identified this intersection as being the “Protestant- Republican ideology” as education was explicitly linked to good citizenship.

²⁰ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education as it Respects the Industrious classes of the community 3rd ed* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1805) – reprinted (Clifton, NJ: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973) 38

²¹ Joseph Lancaster, *The Lancasterian System of Education, with improvements by its founder, Joseph Lancaster, of the Lancasterian Institute, Baltimore* (Baltimore: Joseph Lancaster, 1821); Lancaster, *Improvements in Education*, 38-43.

range instruction,” entire school buildings were built with the Lancasterian method in mind.²² Male and Female No. 1, 2, and 4 and Male No. 3 were conceived and built to support Lancasterian methods. These rooms were to be open, contain large tables for each class, and have sloped floors so both the “master” and “monitors” could always observe students and foster orderly conduct.²³ Peter E Kurtze suggests that the Commissioners’ support of the Lancasterian method was in part due to Lancaster briefly living in Baltimore and establishing the Lancasterian Institute in the city to train teachers during the establishment of the school system. No explicit reference to either the institute or Lancaster living in Baltimore appeared in the Board’s official materials. It is more likely that the Baltimore school commissioners were adhering to “best practices” in education as the Boston, New York, and the Philadelphia school systems all followed the Lancasterian model and Lancaster was a well-known and well-regarded educational advocate.

Educational access, however, was not guaranteed nor was it universal for white children despite the rhetoric.²⁴ An attempt to exempt orphans from tuition would fail in 1837. Many families could not afford the lost wages of the child’s labor and cost of education. If the child was not exempted from the tuition cost, families were forced choose between the immediate cost of tuition and their child’s future potential, a

²² *Ninth Annual Report of the Board of School Commissioners to the Mayor and Council of Baltimore* (Baltimore: 1838) 38 as quoted in Peter E. Kurtze, “‘A Schoolhouse well arranged:’ Baltimore Public School Buildings on the Lancasterian Plan, 1829-1839” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* vol 5 (1995), 75. Dell Upton, “Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55, no 3 (Sept. 1996): 238-253. John Franklin Reigart, “The Lancasterian System of Instruction in the Schools of New York City,” (Ph.D diss, Teachers College Columbia University, 1916), 1-17.

²³ Kurtze, “‘A Schoolhouse well arranged,” 73-74

²⁴ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 102. John C. Eastman, “When did Education Become a Civil Right? An Assessment of State Constitutional Provisions for Education, 1766-1900,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 42, no 1 (Jan. 1999), 1-34.

calculation that often-frustrated Board members that decried inconsistent student attendance. Although not the intended outcome, the tuition cost would highlight a discrepancy between the Board's rhetoric about "free" education and policies. They emphasized their egalitarian roots but maintained the barriers, in this case tuition cost, that limited student participation. Lastly, the number of children who *wanted* to attend outpaced the capacity of the schools.²⁵ In his 1850 report to the Mayor and City Council, the President of the School Commissioners, John F. Monmonier, noted that in their first decade, the actual rate of increase in school attendance did not match expectations. By 1837, 814 students attended the city's schools and the total number would not reach a thousand students until 1840.²⁶

Ten years after the school's founding, the schools were organized into separate Primary and Grammar grades, additional schools were opened, and the board was increased in size from six to thirteen members. The Board's authority also expanded to include the appointment and compensation of teachers, to "prescribe the course of study and books to be used," to purchase and manage lots and buildings, and "generally to make all rules for the management of schools that they might deem expedient."²⁷ Increasing attendance – both in terms of the number of students officially enrolled and in terms of daily attendance– was a primary concern for board. Throughout the nineteenth century, schooling was not compulsory for Baltimore children, and the institutions did not capture as many students as the Board would have liked.

²⁵ *Fiftieth Annual Report* (1879) x.

²⁶ *Twenty Second Annual Report* (1851) 11-13.

²⁷ *Fiftieth Annual Report* (1879) x

Despite their initial and enthusiastic support of the Lancasterian system, when Baltimore opened its first high school for boys in 1839, the Monitorial system was abandoned as an instructional method. The same occurred in the lower level. By 1848, Primary schools were established, and the grades were readjusted to introduce “suitable studies” into the institutions.²⁸ The new method of instruction blended simultaneous recitation, when an entire group of students responded to their teachers’ prompts at once, and removed student monitors. In addition, Baltimore began the process of bureaucratically organizing their hierarchical classrooms by age, using the teacher-focused methods that would emerge in classrooms in the latter half of nineteenth century.²⁹ Decreasing the classroom reliance on monitorial instruction would, the Board hoped, increase student attendance and “remove some of the objections” by community members. It was unclear how the instructional changes would “remove some of the objections,” as the board did not explicitly name the objections nor explain how the change would address them. No specific curriculum method was identified as replacing the Lancasterian method, but historian William R. Johnson has tracked the use of simultaneous recitation in Baltimore throughout the nineteenth century and found that Baltimore’s teachers employed their own classroom methods.³⁰ This switch from the Monitorial plan increased the hiring of adult assistant teachers and would begin the process of age-graded classes, rather than the physical “class” of the Monitorial system. The use of simultaneous recitation had the added benefit of blunting the competition and

²⁸ *Twenty Second Annual Report* (1851) 18

²⁹ Barabara Finkelstein, “Dollars and Dreams: Classrooms as Fictitious Message Systems, 1790-1930” *History Of Education Quarterly* 31 (Winter 1991): 472.

³⁰ *Twenty Second Annual Report* (1851) 13-15; William R. Johnson, “‘Chanting Choristers:’ Simultaneous Recitation in Baltimore’s Nineteenth -Century Primary Schools,” *History of Education Quarterly* 34, no 1 (Spring 1994): 4-5.

hierarchy inherent in the Monitorial system and aligning itself with the stated purpose of Baltimore's schools – making no distinction between classes of children.

Despite paying property taxes, children of Baltimore's substantial freed population were barred from attending Baltimore's public schools. As a result, this issue became the subject of Black Baltimoreans attempt to increase their children's access to the rapidly institutionalizing school system in the city. Baptist Reverend Noah Davis, in his narrative *The Life of Rev. Noah Davis, a Colored Man, written by himself at the Age of Fifty Four*, notes that the thirty or forty thousand African decedent people in Baltimore were "left entirely to themselves for any education they may obtain."³¹ Throughout the city, a network of religiously affiliated institutions emerged to take advantage of the city's lack of a prohibition against black education and provide literacy skills.

Religious Instruction in Baltimore City

The city's black churches became the social, political, educational, and cultural centers of the Black communities in antebellum Baltimore – operating schools, and providing economic assistance and political organization. The signers of the 1844 petition that opened this chapter were the city's religious leaders. All of the major American denominations – Baptist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Presbyterian – had a black presence in the city and provided educational opportunities for the city's black population. Charles Varle's *Complete View of Baltimore*, published in 1833, identified

³¹ Tina H. Sheller, "The Origins of Public Education in Baltimore," *History of Education Quarterly* 22, no 1 (Spring, 1982), 22-34. Other school bills for Baltimore City were proposed in 1812 and 1816 to establish the Board of School Commissioners and institute a system of tolled turnpikes to fund the schools. It was not until 1827 that the primary school bill and the authorization of Baltimore's schools would pass. The first four schools in Baltimore City's Public Schools (BCPS) would not open until 1829, and in 1830, the tax was 12.5 cents on every hundred dollars of accessible property. Christopher Philips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 101. Davis, *A Narrative of the Life of Rev. Noah Davis, a Colored Man*; Moss, "Education's Enclave."

four “African Schools” – located at Bethel, Sharp Street, Saratoga street, and Richmond street.³² Methodism provided some of the earliest educational experiences, but black Catholic institutions would be the most stable throughout the nineteenth century. Long before public, state-sponsored education was available to black children, private, religious institutions educated the city’s children and illiterate adults.

Among the first schools opened was the Baltimore African Academy for the Children of Freed Negroes. Established in 1797, it floundered until Daniel Coker became its principal teacher in 1809. Coker’s curriculum included classical education, history, and an emphasis on anti-slavery and a developing racial consciousness. The African Academy, as the institution would be known, would become the most celebrated of the schools in the city – boasting a day, night, and Sabbath school with a total of 150 students. While there is not much historical documentation regarding the actual administration and management of the school itself, parental motivation, or the response of the children to their education, the presence and success of the school was an indication of the importance placed on education by the Black Baltimorean community.³³

A former student, William Watkins Jr., succeeded Coker as the school’s teacher after the latter’s emigration to Liberia in 1820 (Watkins himself would migrate to Canada and then Haiti after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act). William Watkins would merge Coker’s school with the Sharp Street School, creating the Watkins Academy for Negro Youth sometime between 1820 and 1828. Operating for just over two decades, at its height, the academy enrolled approximately fifty black boys and fifty black girls. In

³² Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, ” 73

³³ Philips, *Freedom’s Port*, 131-138

1815, black Methodists established the African Methodist Bethel Church Society, commonly referred to as Bethel, which was home to a successful Sabbath School.³⁴

Literacy was fundamental to advancement within the community. Although, according to Christopher Phillips in *Freedom's Port*, it is difficult to ascertain the literacy rates of enslaved peoples or freed people of color prior to the 1850s, there was a notable increase of literacy rates towards the later decades of the antebellum period. The largest literate age group was from ages thirteen to twenty-nine, with a total literacy rate of 69.9%. This increased literacy demonstrates the importance of the city's schools to the development of the city's freed community.³⁵

Black Catholics and the Establishment of St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls

Throughout the nineteenth century, the St. Frances Academy quietly educated girls of color. While other religious institutions only operated a few years or a few decades, the Oblate Sisters of Providence's institution remained a stable option for Black Baltimoreans' daughters. Although not a public school, The St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls offers an example of the kind of education sought by Black Baltimoreans. The school, originally called the School for Colored Girls, was founded by the Oblate Sisters of Providence (OSP), the first successful black female Catholic order in the United States, in 1828. The same year the city's public schools would open to white children, St. Frances opened its doors to the city's black girls. The institution was an outgrowth of the work of two of the founders, Elizabeth Lange, later Mother Mary Lange, and Maria Balas, who had been running a small free school for girls out of their

³⁴ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 160-166; Bettye J. Gardner, "William Watkins: Antebellum Black Teacher and Anti-Slavery Writer," *Negro History Bulletin* 39, no 6 (September/October 1976) 623.

³⁵ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 167.

home for “a number of years.”³⁶ Father Jobert, the Sulpician sponsor, was introduced to the women when he proposed the creation of a school for girls of color to the Baltimore archdiocese. He explicitly tied the education of black girls to the purpose of the order, stating the order would protect the school’s solvency and not rely on one or two individuals to maintain both the order and the school. Protecting the order meant that the school was protected, since they were so closely intertwined. The sister’s official documentation echoed the explicit connection between the order and education of girls of color, as it is noted that this religious community of colored women devoted themselves “to the Christian education of colored girls.”³⁷

St. Frances taught only girls of color, who were either affluent enough to afford the school’s tuition or were day scholars, who were often homeless and orphaned. By 1850, the “School for Colored Girls” had ninety-four students who attended the institution anywhere between one term to more than three years.³⁸ The girls who attended the school on tuition were from all over the United States and the Atlantic world, with students from Canada, the British and Spanish Caribbean, and South America. The day scholars were from the surrounding cities: Baltimore proper, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Washington City, District of Columbia. Despite the class differences of the girls who attended St. Frances Academy – the day scholars, the orphans, and the boarding students

³⁶ Motherhouse Annals 1828-1842, p1. For clarity, I will be referring to the school as St. Frances Academy for Colored Girls, the name the school would go by in the post-bellum period. The school would be renamed in the 1870s from the School for Colored Girls.

³⁷ Administration, Box 1, folder 19. Mother Mary Theresa Catherine Willigman (secular name Sarah Willigman) “Memories of Sister Theresa Duchmin, one of the four who established the Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, Maryland” pg 1. The Original Rule and Constitutions of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, English manuscript copy, Archives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, MD.

³⁸ Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 108.

– each girl had access to the same common school curriculum and were taught “values, skills, and ideals beyond those ascribed for black women by white society.”³⁹ The founding of the order was explicitly tied to the education of girls of color. Their constitution and rules state that “the Oblates renounce the world to consecrate themselves to God, and to the Christian education of young girls of color.” The “object of their institute is one of great importance, greater, indeed than might at first appear,” as these girls “will either become mothers of families, or be introduced, as servants, into decent houses.”⁴⁰

Between 1828 to 1834, the school educated ninety-four students to follow the order’s mission for the school – to be trained to be mothers or servants. Twenty-nine of the students were boarding students, living with the sisters as they received their education and fifty were day students, traveling to and from the school. While the boarding students came from a variety of geographic locations, day students almost exclusively came from the city. Twelve students would transition between day and boarding throughout their tenure at the school as their economic situation would permit. Payments were made by family members, including immediate family – parents and siblings – and extended family – aunts and uncles, grandparents - but also guardians. Some individuals could pay entire bills in quarterly or semi-annual installments but many parents struggled to pay the quarterly tuition charge for their boarding students and often

³⁹ Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 90

⁴⁰ J.M.J “The Original Rule of the Oblate Sisters of Providence as Drawn up by the Founder the Revernd James Hector Nicholas Joubert in Conjunction with his Superior the Reverend John Mary Tessier. Both of them Being Members of the Society of Saint Sulpice,” Administration Record Group, Box 29, folder 2. Administration, Box 1, folder 19. Mother Mary Theresa Catherine Willigman (secular name Sarah Willigman) “Memories of Sister Theresa Duchmin, one of the four who established the Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, Maryland” pg 1. The Original Rule and Constitutions of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, English manuscript copy, Archives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, Baltimore, MD.

parents of day scholars were unable to pay their fees.⁴¹ In response, the school instituted scholarship programs that would keep the girls in school and in Baltimore for their education. However, student mobility was often temporary, as it depended on available funds and capacity, and these girls were at times forced to return home after finishing their education or funding concerns forced them to leave the academy. The Catholic church in Baltimore passively acknowledged the sisters but did not provide actual support for either the order or the school. The OSP never received the same financial support as the white orders, and their associated schools, in Baltimore.⁴²

The OSP's connections to international and domestic communities of religious persons allowed the order to continue their work educating children despite the Baltimore archdiocese's neglect and active support. The OSP connected to other black Catholic communities in different states through their mission work and as girls were sent to the OSP for consideration for entering the novitiate.⁴³ While there were many references to potential novitiates throughout the *Annals* from 1828 – 1842, an illustrative example from 1834 highlights the connection between the order and the broader community. In December of that year, Athanaise Dumourier was proposed for admission. Previously, she had lived with Madame Noel of Wilmington, Delaware. Madame Noel and her daughters would all become sisters of the order and be instrumental in raising funds when the order required additional financial support.⁴⁴ Through their founders, particularly Father Joubert and Mother Mary Lange, the OSP were connected to the broader black

⁴¹ Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 110

⁴² Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 102; Motherhouse Box 2, folder 31. Ledger translation 1828-1830

⁴³ Motherhouse, *Annals 1828-1842*. There were many examples of girls traveling from outside of the state for novitiate consideration. Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, chapter ten and eleven.

⁴⁴ Motherhouse, *Annals 1828-1842*, December 27, 1834

Caribbean Catholic community in both Baltimore City. In addition to these connections, the sisters would take in domestic work from other orders and begging to financially support the school. The connection between the school's relative stability throughout the antebellum in comparison to other religiously affiliated schools in the city and the community can be seen in who paid for some of the girls' tuition.

St. Frances' Academy has always benefited from the support of the surrounding San Domingan immigrant community, which had become well established in the Fells Point area of Baltimore by the 1830s. Early benefactors include the Chartard family, a family of physicians who attended the school until well into the middle of the 20th century, and the Ducatel family, both of whom were members of the white San Domingan immigrant population that eventually settled in Baltimore. Wealthy black San Domingan immigrants also assisted the school during the early period. They included Madame Elizabeth Charles Arieu, "a wealthy, free mullatto woman of some consequence within the black San Domingan immigrant community of Baltimore."⁴⁵ Madame Charles, as she is noted in the Annals and the financial records, subsidized the education of four students, which unclear ties between her and the students, between 1829 – 1831 for a total of 53 dollars.⁴⁶ At least one student, Josephone L'Eville, had her tuition paid by Father Tessier of the St. Mary Seminary.⁴⁷ Although the black Catholic population of the city was largely self-contained, these community members occupied the same spaces and communities as the member of the petition signers as propertied, economically self-sufficient black Baltimoreans. The education of the girls was paramount; the community

⁴⁵ Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 103

⁴⁶ Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 102- 104

⁴⁷ Motherhouse Box 2, folder 31. Ledger translation 1828-1830

rallied behind the sisters, in small but significant ways to ensure the continued education of black girls.

According to the 1834 national Catholic directory, the Oblate curriculum offered courses in “English, French, Cyphering and Writing, Sewing in all its branches, Embroidery, Washing and Ironing.”⁴⁸ By 1853, boarding students were charged \$6 dollars per month , while day students paid \$1.30 per month. Diane Batts Morrow believes that the omission of liberal education – history, geography, moral and natural philosophy, astronomy, and chemistry – which were common in white religious instruction for girls, potentially indicates an acknowledgement of race and class in the course offerings. The OSP sisters were limited by what they could teach and had previous experience in. Although the sisters often came from more affluent backgrounds, they were limited by the expectations of their race. The students of color who attended the school received the same curriculum stipulated for poor white girls from the Sisters of Charity with the exception of OSP’s inclusion of French and embroidery instruction.⁴⁹

Although Morrow has noted that the education received at the OSP’s school was not as comprehensive as other religious schools for white girls in the area, the sisters were instructed to instill in their pupils principles and virtue “becoming of their situation.” In addition, the sisters were to instill “the love of labor and of orde” and “a careful attention to avoid the frequentation of persons of a different sex, that innocent bashfulness which is the principal ornament of their sex, and their exterior modesty which is the surest preservation of virtue.”⁵⁰ An 1853 article in *The Catholic Mirror*

⁴⁸ *Laity’s directory* (lucas 1834) 65-71, Original Rule

⁴⁹ Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 87-90

⁵⁰ Administration, box 29, folder 2 “The Original Rule of the Oblate Sisters of Providence as Drawn up by the Founder the Reverend James Hector Nicholas Joubert in Conjunctino with his superior the

stated that there “was no education of greater importance to females than the cultivation of habits of industry, in fact, there is not an act of their lives, which is not improved by it.”⁵¹ James Whitfield, the Archbishop of Baltimore, stated that the school would be “so useful an institution which promises to be very beneficial to religion and to the community at large” in 1829.⁵² Moreover, an undated letter in the Motherhouse record group states that the school, “prepares students who help make up the bulk and backbone of the nation and who will influence significantly many who like themselves are ordinary, overlooked, and underestimated.”⁵³

Education was necessary for the future community leaders. Women were fundamental to the development of a core of leaders in ways that were particular to their gender – not only did they teach their own children, but they could also potentially teach others as teachers or domestic servants, and they were at the core of the moral institutions of communities of color throughout the 19th century, a fact acknowledged not only by the sisters, through their Constitution and Rules, but also by the larger Catholic Community.

An entry in the *Catholic Almanac* stated that:

these girls will either become mothers of families or household servants. In the first case, the solid virtues, the religious and moral principles which they acquired, when in this school, will be carefully transferred as a legacy to their children. Instances of the happy influence, which the example of virtuous parents has on their remotest lineage, in this humble and naturally dutiful class of society, are numerous. As to such as are to be employed as servants, they will be instructed in domestic concerns, and the care of young children. How important then, will it not be, that these girls should have imbued religious principles, and have trained to habits of modesty, honesty, and integrity. The habits of solid virtue, and the exact observance of piety and correct principles of morality.⁵⁴

Reverend John Mary Tessier Both of them Being Members of the Society of Saint Sulpice” Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious*, 90

⁵¹ The Catholic Mirror, November 19, 1853. No 46 “The value of female industry”

⁵² “5 June 1829” Annals, 1828-1842. P8

⁵³ undated letter, Motherhouse Box 1, folder 1

⁵⁴ Oblate Sisters of Providence, The United States Catholic Almanac, 167-170. Motherhouse Box 14, Folder 8. A.G. Davis. Newspaper clipping from Washington DC. July 8, 1893. “St. Frances’ Academy:

Though the sample size of students is quite small, only ninety-four total in the first few years of the school's operation, literacy was recognized as a means of subverting the white institutional belief that black girls had no right to access notions of domestic femininity and womanhood, creating their own version of white Republican Motherhood without labeling it as such. The educational focus on racial uplift, according to the documents justifying the curriculum and education at the OSP's school, was not an attempt to mimic white middle-class values, as it has been previously understood by scholars, but to situate black women and girls as moral and respectable pillars of their own communities.

Private education, however, only supported a small population of the children of color and by petitioning the City Council, Black Baltimoreans articulated a desire for increasing the educational offerings available to their children. Exemption from the school property tax or a diversion of their property taxes to the black-run schools would increase the pool of children able to attend as one financial concern, the cost of consistently attending school, would be decreased. Morrison has argued that the primary focus of black run and supported education in the city was a "shared and common purpose of providing future generations with academic tools for survival" but beyond teaching a child to read, write, and do basic math, Black Baltimoreans articulated a future in which their children were educated. Therefore, these children could obtain some semblance of citizenship in the future, underscoring the importance of decision making now for a child's education rather than waiting. William Watkins, the principal teacher of

the Watkins Academy for Negro Youth in Baltimore City, stated during a speech to Philadelphia's Moral Reform Society in 1836:

Give the rising generation a good education and you instruct them in and qualify them for all the duties of life ... give them a good education, and then when liberty, in the full sense of the term, shall be conferred upon them, they will thoroughly understand its nature, duly appreciate its value, and contribute efficiently to its ... preservation.⁵⁵

Education was explicitly linked with “the duties of life” – including political, social, and economic lives. Not coincidentally, this echoed the rationale the Board gave in justifying the increasing expansion and expense of the city's public school system. Despite “liberty” not being conferred in the present moment, it eventually would be, and children needed to be ready for when this moment occurred. Funding was one step towards realizing greater access to education for children of color.

Black Baltimoreans recognized the injustice of being forced to pay school taxes that supported white only schools. Black Baltimoreans paid property tax on property appraised at approximately \$150,000 in 1847. In 1860, the amount of tax paid would equate to paying approximately a total of \$500 a year in property tax on top of what black Baltimoreans were paying in private tuition costs.⁵⁶ Hilary Moss noted that requesting exemption “displayed their [black Baltimoreans'] willingness to abstain from two activities that personified good citizenship: paying taxes and attending public schools.” At the same time, according to Martha Jones, the very act of petitioning and

⁵⁵ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 169. Watkins, *Address Delivered before the Moral Reform Society in PA*, 14 quoted in Garner, “Antebellum Black Education in Baltimore,” 360.

⁵⁶ Baum, *Brown in Baltimore*, 25-26. Gardner, “Ante-Bellum Black Education in Baltimore.” Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 117

thinking about community belonging by articulating a relationship with their government was “comporting themselves like citizens.”⁵⁷

Returning to the 1844 petition, the only one for which a complete text survives, “a portion of the colored population and property holders” requested that “as much of the next proceeds of the school tax [may become] due or collected hereafter from coloured property holders be appropriated to the use of the two aforementioned schools . . . for the benefit of colored children . . . especially to the education of those whose circumstances prevent them from paying a high rate of tuition.”⁵⁸ The petition did not specify which schools it referenced but it could have been the St. Frances Academy or one of the four schools Varle’s *Complete View of Baltimore* identified in 1833 – located at Bethel, Sharp Street, Saratoga street, and Richmond street.⁵⁹ Just as the school board sought to provide educations for all white students, rich and poor, students in African American schools were to come from all social classes to create a community of educated citizens. Unlike the board, however, Black Baltimoreans sought to remove barriers that would make the calculation between lost wages and cost of tuition favor labor rather than education. The biggest difference between the 1839 petition and the 1844 petition was that, while the former requested exemption from the school tax entire, the latter requested diversion of taxes to black public schools. Unlike in other cities, these petitions were not met with any known violence – in fact, coverage of the petitions, opinion pieces for and against the

⁵⁷ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 117. Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 10.

⁵⁸ Petition of Donnie Kilbourne and others relative to Coloured Schools (City Council Records) May 30, 1844, Series 1: Administrative Files, 1797-1923 box 72, item 448, BCA, BRG 16-1-75

⁵⁹ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, ” 73

petitions, and city council deliberations ran openly in local papers.⁶⁰ The 1844 petition would fail as the city did not release Black Baltimoreans from the double tax of funding both white and black schools. Six years later, in 1850, a petition requesting the establishment of publicly funded schools for their children would fail, despite a supportive petition from over one hundred white men. A school bill, introduced by the chairman of the Maryland Assembly's Committee on Education, proposing to exempt Black property owners from taxation, would also fail in 1852.

In support of the 1850 petition, the white petitioners articulated the general support of black education as being one of economic concern – literate workers made for better workers. “[T]he true interest of the white population, as well as the colored,” they observed, “will be promoted by the instruction of the children of the latter, in such elements of learning as many prepare the community to which they are confined by the necessities of their condition.”⁶¹ “Confined by the necessities of their condition” was a reference to the inability of even the city’s free population to escape the shadow of the city and state’s continued enslavement of Black Marylanders. Enslavement fundamentally disconnected them from the rights and privileges of citizenship *and* allied working-class white fears that their place in the city’s hierarchy would be threatened by educated freed people of color. Moss suggests that while there was economic competition between working class whites and the city’s freed population, white elites enjoyed the

⁶⁰ Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 118. See also: “Proceedings of the City Council,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 2, 1844; “Proceedings of the City Council,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 16, 20, and 24, 1844; and “Public Schools for Colored Children” *Baltimore Sun*, February 16, 1850.

⁶¹ “Memorial of Jas. Wilson and others in favor of the establishment of Public Schools by the colored population,” as quoted in Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 120. The 1850 petition is missing from the Baltimore City Archives but *Baltimore Sun* articles summarize the content of the petition. “Public Schools for Colored Children,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 16, 1850 and “Proceedings of the City Council,” *Baltimore Sun*, February 20, 1850.

economic freedom a wider pool of labor provided them more than explicitly dictating racial segregation.⁶²

The 1852 Kerney Bill

During the 1852 debate around black citizenship educational reforms were proposed by Martin J. Kerney, the Democratic chairman of the Maryland Assembly's Committee on Education. Seemingly, these reforms would address whether or not black children would have access to state sponsored and financed education. One of the sections of the proposed "Kerney Bill," officially called the bill for "Establishing a Uniform System of Instruction in the Public Schools of this State," would exempt black property owners from supporting the white city schools, seemingly answering the demands of the previous 1839, 1844, and 1850 Black Baltimorean petitions.

The failure of the Kerney bill had less to do with the provision exempting black property owners from the school tax and more to do with the bill's Section 27, which sought to divert funds from public schools to private institutions. Hilary Moss notes that Kerney conflated one known injustice – the taxing of black property owners for a service unavailable to them – with another—the taxation of Catholics for support of public schools they would never use. Despite initial community support, including endorsement by the Baltimore City Council, tensions between Protestants and Catholics erupted, resulting in mass meetings to protest the the bill, public debates, and anti-Catholic rioting during 1852-1853.⁶⁵ The proposed exemption for black property owners became secondary to the proposed diversion of public funds to Catholic schools. When M. J. Kerney, the bill's sponsor, wrote to *the Baltimore Sun* defending his bill, he used the

⁶² Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 73, 93.

unfairness of Black Baltimoreans paying into the school fund without having access to the schools it supported to support his plan to divert \money to the Catholic Schools .”⁶⁶ Although the bill intended to support the city’s Catholic schools from the public school fund, Kerney and others were not referring to St. Frances Academy, which was usually ignored by the larger Catholic community. As a result of the protests around the Kerney Bill and sweeping anti-Catholic sentiment, the Know – Nothing Party would become established in the City. Under Samuel Hinks, it would control the city from 1854-1860, with a majority of the members in both branches of the City Council and the Police Commissioner, Sheriff, and many members of the police force belonging to the party.

Sectionalism and Educational Advocacy

For more than a decade after the controversy over the Kerney Bill, Black Baltimoreans did not openly agitate for increased educational access for their children. *The Sun* and the official record of the Board reports no reference to black educational advocacy from 1853 to 1860, as the increasing sectional conflict created social upheaval for both white and black Baltimoreans. Instead, Black Baltimore focused on explicit declarations of their citizenship in the face of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, the increasing nativist sentiment in Baltimore, and the attempts to re-enslave free blacks by white politicians. Baltimore’s proximity to the Maryland – Pennsylvania border, a total of 115 miles away, gave the debate about black citizenship an immediacy that was not present in other border states. As Adam Malka notes, in Maryland the racial restrictions typically associated with Southern enslavement overlapped with the “liberal coercion”

associated with the North.⁶³ “Liberal coercion,” according to Malka, explains the intersection between policing and state control of the north as rights-centered legal culture dominated the antebellum period.

In the aftermath of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which increased federal and free-state responsibility for the recovery of fugitive enslaved peoples, efforts to control the movement of both enslaved and freed Black Marylanders increased. Barbara Fields notes that this proximity, the overall decline of the enslaved population while increasing the population of freed persons in the state, made the proponents of enslavement, both materially and ideologically, very defensive.⁶⁴ The proximity, however, made the debates around black citizenship particularly salient as threats of kidnapping, real and imagined, loomed over the free black population of the city.

The Kerney bill failed, in part, due to its association with Catholic education and the increasing nativist sentiment in the city. Prior to the 1840s, the Democratic and Whig parties dominated city politics but fell out of favor with several constituencies as they were unable to protect the city’s white working class from the Bank Panic and subsequent bank riot in 1834. Beginning in the 1820s, Baltimore had decades of uneven economic growth and few periods of general prosperity. During this period, Maryland invested heavily in internal infrastructure development and improvements. One of these improvements would be used to support the school fund. While everyone in the city was impacted by the economic depressions, the city’s freed black population were particularly

⁶³ Adam Malka, *The Men of Mobtown: Policing Baltimore in the Age of Slavery and Emancipation*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018) 11 - 15

⁶⁴ Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 85-87.

hard hit. Due to the instability of their work, few had adequate savings and many lost their jobs, requiring an increase in alms house requests.⁶⁵

The economic depression in the aftermath of the panic and riot led to the emergence of the Know Nothing Party as the Democratic and Whig parties were unable to provide relief, aid strikers, and stop immigration to the city.⁶⁶ In addition to majority control of Baltimore City, Barbara Field notes that the Know Nothings were present throughout the state, sweeping municipal elections in Hagerstown, Cumberland, Baltimore County, Annapolis, and Williamsport. These elections and the support of some Whig senators gave the Know Nothing party control of the state's General Assembly in 1856.⁶⁷ While white slave holders and politicians were worried about the Know Nothings' attack on slavery, many in Baltimore city were more concerned with violence that marked the city's elections and rising level of general street violence.⁶⁸ Riding the anger of working-class white men, nativist politicians won several city elections, notably the mayor's office and a majority of city council, promising to give their supporters jobs and to restrict immigration to the city. In Baltimore, that meant protecting the city's institutions from Catholic influence and addressing "free Negro-ism."⁶⁹ Conflicts between the city's white immigrants and free black laborers would continue throughout

⁶⁵ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 178 -180; Seth Rockman, *Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 198-219.

⁶⁶ Malka, *The Men of Mobtown*, 61-63

⁶⁷ Adam Malka, *The Men of Mobtown*, 9; Graham, *Baltimore* and L. Curry *Free Black in urban America 250-51*

⁶⁸ Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 58-60

⁶⁹ Malka, *The Men of Mobtown*, 61-63; Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 81. Andrew K. Diemer, *The Politics of Black Citizenship: Free African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Borderland, 1817-1863* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2016) 174-6; William W. Freehling, *The Road of Disunion, Vol 2: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 193-5

the 1850s, resulting in a “drive” in 1858 to remove black workers from Baltimore’s docks and brickyards.⁷⁰

One of the ways the government of Maryland sought to address both the slavery question and the status of the free black population was to attempt to re-enslave freed Black Marylanders. Baltimore City, as the state’s population and economic center, had always drawn the suspicion of the state’s rural occupants. The decline in the city’s enslaved population after 1830 was dramatic, yet not unique, as other Southern cities saw a similar decline in their enslaved populations.⁷¹ In 1850, state delegates gathered in Annapolis to rewrite the state constitution and finally settle the status of the state’s freed black population and to protect the institution of enslavement. The Committee on the Freed Negro Population, led by the state’s slave owners, was tasked with drafting recommendations for the new state constitution. Curtis W. Jacobs, a radical pro-slavery delegate at the 1850 constitutional convention and eventual chairman of the Committee, proposed that the “only” solution to addressing the fear of a free black uprising in Maryland was re-enslavement. It was unclear if there was any active fear of a black enslaved uprising or if Jacobs was using the historic memory of previous uprisings in neighboring states, most likely Nat Turner’s Southampton rebellion, to emphasize the exigency of his plan. Through the Committee on the Freed Negro Population, Jacobs presented recommendations that would create a registry of all free African Americans before removing them from the state, bar them from holding “real property,” void manumissions if formerly enslaved persons did not leave the state within thirty days, and

⁷⁰ Phillips, *Freedom’s Port*, 201-2.

⁷¹ Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 51.

prevent any free black person from entering the state. None of these ideas were adopted, although the 1851 constitution prohibited abolition in Maryland.⁷²

In response to the new constitution, Black Baltimoreans called a Free Colored People's Convention. Despite the failure of the policies promoted by the Committee on the Freed Negro Population, many free black Marylanders took the new state constitution as proof that the state government would ultimately demand their removal. The Free Colored People's Convention would reconsider colonization and make recommendations to the state's free black population. Although many black Marylanders would disdain colonization, which always had financial support from the Maryland legislature, black leaders wanted to reconsider a potential method of making their lives better. The meeting faced an enormous amount of violence from what *the Sun* called "outsiders" and "rowdies" that prevented several of the black delegates from even entering the hall. Ultimately the violence would halt the proceedings. While much of the violence Black Baltimoreans faced in the city was perpetrated by white Baltimoreans, the convention's proceedings were halted by other Black Baltimoreans opposed to colonization.⁷³ The physical threat of re-enslavement and the loss of their livelihood was more pressing and important for black community leaders of the state, rather than attempts to expand educational access. While important, the material conditions of the now outweighed the future.

Throughout the 1850s, restrictions would tighten around Black Marylanders, although enforcement would be haphazard and inconsistent, especially in Baltimore.

⁷² Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 92-4.

⁷³ C. Christopher Brown, "Maryland's First Political Convention by and for its Colored People," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 88, no 3 (October 1993): 297-325; Jones, *Birthright Citizens*, 94-97.

Although traditionally exempt from restrictions on their mobility and assembly, Black Baltimoreans did not have complete agency over their lives. While exempted from restrictions limiting participant numbers at religious services and requiring white clergymen, Baltimore often shut down black run events by ten o'clock at night.⁷⁴ The tensions wrought by the economic crises and the colonization sentiment were compounded by the Supreme Court *Dred Scott* decision. These tensions meant that educational advocacy, while still important, was less so when livelihoods and lives were threatened.

In the immediate aftermath of the establishment of Baltimore City's Public School system, Black Baltimoreans petitioned for their children to have access to schooling. They argued, as taxpayers, that they had the right for their children to either attend school or to be exempt from paying for a service from which they were restricted.

⁷⁴ Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 192-195.

Chapter Two: “The Advantages of Educating Them are Great:” Post-Bellum Educational Access and Advocacy

A year after the city’s Board of School Commissioners assumed authority for the Colored Public Schools (CPS), a petition was presented to the City Council signed by several members of the Black Baltimorean community. The petition was born out of a series of meetings by Black Baltimoreans in 1868 to protest the Board’s exclusion of the black teacher corps in the aftermath of the Board’s reorganization of the school managed by the Baltimore Association of the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People. The Baltimore Association employed both white and black teachers, but when the Board assumed control of their schools, only white teachers had their contracts renewed. At the July 1, 1868, meeting of concerned black community members, a committee of five men was appointed to bring their “resolutions” forward to the Board and City Council. The broader black community, through these men, appealed the Board to reconsider its action towards black teachers.¹ A July 2nd article noted that these requests had been “embodied in a petition addressed some weeks ago by colored teachers to the Board.” When these resolutions were presented to the Board on July 9th, *The Baltimore Sun* noted, the petition was read but no further action was taken before the board adjourned to their secret meeting.²

The petition’s requests, although only partially fulfilled in 1868, would foreshadow black educational advocacy throughout the nineteenth century. They requested three things: instruction beyond primary grades, “greater facilities,” and hiring

¹ “Local Matters,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1868, pg 1

² “The Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 1868, pg 2. Secret meetings were administrative in nature and often dealt with the appointment and salary of teachers.

black teachers.³ While under the authority of the Baltimore Association, schools for black adults and children followed a course of instruction that included basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as manual instruction in sewing and knitting.⁴ In 1866 a normal school would operate in the city under the direction of Henry T. Hartwell, a white man, at the same location as School no. 1. The normal school would fall under the authority of the state's Board of Education in 1908.⁵ When the city assumed governance of the Association schools, they were reorganized to accommodate three thousand black students "as the Primary Schools for white children now are," at the cost of \$55,000 for ten schools.⁶ The parents argued that the reorganization did not accommodate their present educational needs, as their children were beyond primary education.

The Baltimore Association schools occupied rented rooms in church and community buildings, as they were unable to secure purpose-built schoolhouses. The Board, during the reorganization, continued this practice and moved the schools into other rented rooms and buildings rather than providing a specific schoolhouse for black students. Parents wanted specific buildings for their children's education, rather than the ad hoc system the Board relied upon.⁷ Although the Baltimore Association's employed both white and black teachers, in their *Fortieth Annual Report* the Board noted that "very material changes in the corps of teachers were made" as they declined to renew black

³ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) xxiv, BRG 31-1-2-5, BCA.

⁴ John T. Graham, *First Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B. Rose and Co, 1865) 4, 30-31.

⁵ This school continues to operate as Bowie State University, after its name change in 1963. The institution moved from Baltimore City to Prince George's County in 1911. Hartwell was listed as teaching the Normal school in the Second Annual Report of the Association. *Second Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B. Rose and Co, 1866) 17.

⁶ "Schools for Colored Children," *Thirty Ninth Annual Report* (1867) 7-8, BRG 31-1-2-5, BCA.

⁷ *Thirty Ninth Annual Report* (1867) 70-71

teacher contracts.⁸ The Baltimore Association, with the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau, would continue to operate schools in Maryland counties until the Association shuttered in 1870 with white and black teachers.

The Board's inaction or unwillingness to address or even partially fulfill complaints brought forth by Black Baltimoreans highlighted the tensions between the white and black understanding of the purposes of education. The city referred the request to the Board for "consideration and action." The request for black teachers was immediately refused as the board "prefer[ed] to have the schools conducted by those who had already been appointed," although they agreed to consider the other requests. The Board took umbrage with the request for instruction beyond the primary grades, as they believed the petitions' declaration of "unfair discrimination against them [the black children]" was "untrue."⁹ In the *Fortieth Annual Report*, however, the Board noted that that schools were "very similar" to the white Primary schools and if "it should be found desirable" students could receive instruction in "some of the branches of study pursued in our Grammar Schools" if a teacher deemed it necessary for the child's advancement.¹⁰ Therefore, if a student demonstrated an ability beyond primary instruction and a principal teacher was so inclined, that child could receive instruction in "some" of the grammar subjects--although the Board made no reference to what these subjects would be and implied it would be up to the principal teacher's discretion. The Board made no reference to what these subjects would be and implied it would be up to the principal teacher's discretion; however, if a child did not receive any grammar instruction, the Board

⁸*Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 5-6.

⁹*Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) xxiv.

¹⁰*Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 5-6.

understood it not as a systemic failure or limitation of the schools but rather as the failure of the individual.

Partially fulfilling the petitioner's requests was a concession by the Board to appease Black Baltimoreans. As an attempt to address "all" complaints, the Board instructed the thirteen CPS schools to teach grammar studies – "thus affording the colored children equal facilities with the white pupils our schools."¹¹ The Board seemingly ignored the material request behind the Black Baltimorean's appeal for "greater facilities," rather interpreting it as an intangible request that would ignore the very real physical limitations to the rented rooms and buildings. The schools would be limited to 3000 children, the number the Board identified in 1867 as potential attendants. The Board's annual report to the Mayor and City Council discussed the petition and the Board's response, and noted that the actual number of black children attending CPS did not match the projected number of students. WM. R. Creery, the Superintendent, placed the blame for this disparity between the 3,000 students projected to attend school and the actual attendance of 1312 on those who wanted to delegitimize public education in the city and the "necessary evil" of attendance issues. While the Board lamented the unevenness of attendance, the commissioners acknowledged that it was an issue that would never be solved due to the conflicts between education and labor. The "necessary evil," according to the Board, was how often the need for a child's labor to help maintain their family's economic stability took precedence over placing the child in school.¹²

More concerning than the attendance issues to the Board were the "few designing persons who do not wish the colored people to patronize the public schools." The Board

¹¹ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) xxiv,

¹² *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) 22.

interpreted the lack of attendance to those actively encouraging Black Baltimoreans to not attend the city sponsored schools. No specific groups were ever identified; rather, the Board used an undefined ‘them’ to minimize complaints. This undefined group of individuals who were not interested in supporting the city’s schools meant that the complaints, however valid and necessary, were not made in good faith, and therefore, could be ignored. The protests against the all-white teacher’s corps in the aftermath of the reorganization of the Baltimore Association schools were the result of this impulse, as individuals pointed out that an all-white teaching corps meant that “the schools are not in the hands of those who will do the best for them.”¹³ Creery’s statement did two things – first, it explicitly stated that the complaints about the teacher’s corps were partisan in nature, and, second constituted an illegitimate criticism.

Claims of partisanship to deflect criticism were common by the Board. “Partisan,” often paired with “demagogue,” implied that the criticism was motivated not by a policy concern but rather, those unwilling to compromise with a political opponent by virtue of their different political party affiliation. The Board, Creery contended, had the best interests of the newly freed persons in mind. The unnamed persons agitating against public education in the city wanted to see the schools fail and, see education for black children fail. It is unclear if Creery’s comments were specific to all students or if the presence of the newly freed children added a dimension to universal education in the city. Given that many of the political debates in the city centered around the newly freed, it can be argued that Creery was focused on the newly freed children in the city and grouped the antebellum free children with this population of children. Secondly, Creery

¹³ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) 22.

articulated a stance the Board would take in the face of criticism throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Reform would not occur and criticism would not be considered legitimate until they believed that black children were “fully appreciate[ing] the facilities offered to them.”¹⁴ Until more students increased their attendance and participation with CPS, no further reorganization or reform was necessary.¹⁵ The invalidation of criticism, the partial fulfillment of Black Baltimorean petitioner requests, and a widening understanding of education as a privilege rather than as a right would mark the beginning and early years of Baltimore’s Colored Public Schools, as different groups articulated competing understandings of children’s educational needs. The 1868 petition became a pivotal moment in the city’s advocacy, establishing the key issues that would structure post-bellum advocacy.

Baltimore’s Public Schools During the Civil War

Education in Baltimore city for white and black children continued largely uninterrupted throughout the Civil War. The city’s Board of Commissioners continued to oversee the city’s approximately eighty schools and presented annual reports throughout the conflict.¹⁶ Between 1861 and 1865, the Board noted a steady increase in student attendance, even accounting for the number of students who only attended part of the academic year. In 1861 the total number of students instructed, including those who

¹⁴ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) xxiv

¹⁵ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) 22.

¹⁶ Throughout the Civil War, the specific number of institutions would fluctuate between eighty-nine and eighty-one. The Board noted the 1861 school breakdown as such: one male high school, two female high schools, one floating school, one normal school, thirteen male and fifteen female grammar schools, and twenty male and twenty-eight female primary schools. In 1861, the Board oversaw six evening schools but in 1862 deemed it “inadvisable” to continue with the evening classes. No explicit reasoning was given for the shuttering of these institutions. *Thirty – Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore* (Baltimore: King Brother and Armiger, City Printers, 1862) 20, BRG 31-1-2-1, BCA.

withdrew, was 22,124 students. The “whole number of students,” or those who stayed on the rolls for most of the school year, was 14,367.¹⁷ In 1863, the total number of students instructed, including those withdrawn, was 23,588 and the whole number was 15,661. The Board consistently reported that even in “adverse circumstances,” the number of enrolled pupils was increasing each year. There was a decrease in the overall number of children educated in the public schools due to the conflict as an increasing number of students left to pursue employment or struggled to pay the \$1 tuition fee. According to statistics compiled by Vernon Vavrina, the number of boys, age six to twenty- one, in the public schools reached a high of 6,929 in 1861, but dropped a year later by 832 boys. The decrease in students, however, was not out of line with annual fluctuations from before the war. The number of female students attending BCPS institutions would rise steadily throughout the war.¹⁸

The number of students withdrawn during an academic year did not seem to alarm the Board in their reports to the Mayor and City Council. The Board noted that children of the “less favored classes” left because of housing changes due to parents’ employment and the student’s employment. As parents and families were unable to afford rents, they frequently moved and cycled in and out of school. In addition to the frequent moving due to housing insecurity, children also left and entered schooling as their employment needs demanded it. Despite the lost of income the “less favored classes” of children, tuition dollars were recouped by former private school children. These children who moved between private and public education in the city addressed the loss in tuition dollars from

¹⁷ *Thirty – Third Annual Report* (1862)

¹⁸ Vernon Varina, “The History of Public Education in the City of Baltimore, 1829-1956” (PhD thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1958) 93

withdrawing students – making up the almost \$4,000 dollars loss in tuition revenue for BCPS. The Board believed that the inclusion of children from wealthier families into the public schools increased the base of support for public education in the city and considered the enrollment of these students as more of a benefit to common education than those from the “less favored classes.” A proposed compulsory education bill was introduced in 1863 to minimize stress on the prisons as “a preventive service in the preservation of public order and the diminution of crime,” but the suggestion was never acted upon.¹⁹

The decrease in students was due more to the overall decline in economic conditions rather than a mass exodus from the city. Near the end of the war, the Board did mention that overall enrollment in the all-boys Central High School had decreased, as those between the ages of twelve and fifteen were filling jobs left vacant by men going into the army. This decrease was limited to the high school rather than the primary and grammar grades.²⁰ While Baltimore City schools remained relatively stable, county schools were less so. The Patapsco Female Institute in Howard county and Mount Washington Female College in Baltimore county shuttered due to decreased southern enrollment, while others, like St. John’s College, the Female collegiate Institute, and the United States Naval Academy, all in Annapolis, temporarily closed or relocated to prevent students from having increased contact with soldiers, parental desires to keep

¹⁹ *Thirty – Third Annual Report* (1862) 25; Richard R. Ducan, “The Impact of the Civil War on Education in Maryland,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 61, no 1 (Spring 1966) 37-52

²⁰ Ducan, “The Impact of the Civil War,” 46.

their children closer to home, or, as in the case of the Naval Academy, their grounds were co-opted by military personnel.²¹

Although Maryland did not secede from the Union and education in the city ran with minimal interruption, the Civil War and the partisan conflicts between Unionists and Secessionists did alter the course of development of the educational institutions throughout the city and state.²² At the onset of the war, the Board very explicitly stated their determination to keep the schools away from making political declarations for or against the war.

It will be the sedulous effort of the Board to confine the operations of the schools to their proper purposes – to keep them free from any bias of sect or party – to shut out all outside controversy and excitement, and to distribute their benefits to all alike, without regard to creed, nativity or condition. No manifestations of prejudice or partiality are encouraged or permitted for any side in sect or party, nor is any act allowed which is in conflict with the rights of any of the pupils. As educational institutions established for the benefit of all classes of the community, the Public Schools must be kept aloof from all partisan influences and strictly confined to their well understood objects and prescribed limits.²³

Since the founding of the public education system in Baltimore, the Board had consistently stated that the schools were above both partisan and religious influence. The Board held to their belief that schools were supported for the benefit of the entire white

²¹ Richard R. Duncan, “The Impact of the Civil War on Education in Maryland,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 61, no 1 (Spring 1966) 37-39

²² James Marten, *The Children’s Civil War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998) and *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children’s Magazines* (Wilmington, DE: 1999); Emmy E. Werner, *Reluctant Witness: Children’s Voices from the Civil War* (Boulder, 1998); and Peter W. Bradaglio “The Children of Jubilee: African – American Childhood in Wartime” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* eds. Catherine Clinton and Nine Silber (New York, 1992) and “On the Border: White Children and the Politics of War in Maryland,” in *The War was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*, eds. Joan E. Cashin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

²³ *Thirty – Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore* (Baltimore: King Brother and Armiger, City Printers, 1862) 25-26, BRG 31-1-2-1, BCA.

community and would continue maintaining their commitment to remaining non-partisan, despite the rising tensions between pro-Union and pro-slavery groups in the city.²⁴

Despite the school board's efforts to remain above the fray, tensions between pro-Union and pro-slavery groups in the city would affect the schools as individuals questioned the loyalties of teachers. Accusations of treason and of "trampling ... constitutional liberties" were common in the aftermath of the Pratt Street Riot in 1861, the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, and the stationing of Union troops on Federal Hill, which overlooked "the Basin"—the modern-day Inner Harbor and Fort McHenry.²⁵ To prevent partisan influence in the city's schools, the City Council's First Branch passed a resolution compelling the Board to identify teachers who were "disloyal" or who expressed sentiments against the government in January of 1862. If a teacher was identified as "disloyal," their contract would not be renewed, and the vacancy filled with a teacher deemed "loyal." The Second Branch, however, wanted to soften the loyalty requirements, and instead recommended a committee of five individuals that would investigate any disloyalty accusations. Both the committee and the Second Branch encouraged teachers to teach "patriotic materials."²⁶ Later in 1862, both branches of the City Council passed an ordinance that required all city employees, including teachers, to take an oath of allegiance to the Union. To maintain their employment, the teachers, most of whom were male, were required to swear allegiance to

²⁴ Peter W. Bardaglio, "On the Border: White Children and the Politics of War in Maryland," in *The War was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*, eds. Joan E. Cashin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) 314

²⁵ Peter W. Bardaglio, "On the Border: White Children and the Politics of War in Maryland," in *The War was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War*, eds. Joan E. Cashin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) 314; For more information on the occupation of Baltimore and Baltimore in the Civil War, please see: LIST OF SECONDARY SOURCES

²⁶ *Baltimore American*, January 25, 1862 and February 21, 1862.

the Union by signing a certified copy of the oath with the City Comptroller. Their employment would be considered void for the upcoming academic year if they did not submit their oaths within a thirty-day window after their appointment. When they refused to take the oath, twenty-six teachers and two principals lost their positions.²⁷ It is unclear if these individuals resigned out of principle or if these individuals lost their positions due to actual overt disloyalty to the union. In addition to these twenty-eight individuals, the real demographic shift in the teacher corps was along gender lines. During the Civil War, BCPS' teaching corps would become predominately female. Many male teachers left or were compelled into military service during the conflict. In 1861, there were fifty-seven male teachers and at the end of the 1865 calendar year, only forty-two were employed by BCPS. In comparison, the number of female teachers increased from 258 in 1861 to 335 in 1865.²⁸

The Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Expansion of Black Catholic Education

While Black Baltimoreans petitioned City Council to expand educational access for their children and combatted threats to their physical safety during the 1840s and 50s, the Oblate Sisters of Providence's St. Frances Academy continued to operate, largely outside of the purview of both city and state governments. Their school would not be identified as a location for black education in the city when the Baltimore Association surveyed available options in the city and the City Council makes no reference to the school's existence. Support for St. Frances' Academy largely came from private

²⁷ Vernon Varina, "The History of Public Education in the City of Baltimore, 1829-1956" (PhD thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1958) 93; Duncan, "The Impact of the Civil War" 50-51; *Rules of the Order of the Board of Commissioners and the Regulations of the Public Schools in the City of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1863), 83-87. *The Baltimore American*, August 1, 1863 and August 15, 1863

²⁸ *Thirty – Third Annual Report* (1862) 10; *Thirty Seventh Annual Report* (1866) 28. Vernon Varina, "The History of Public Education in the City of Baltimore, 1829-1956" (PhD thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1958) 93

donation, doweries brought by novates, sale of the student's needlework, tuition dollars, and fundraising efforts. The surrounding Catholic community supported the school through the Civil War period. Grace Sherwood, in her retrospective of the first one hundred years of the OSP, argues that the school had become so successful due to the strength of the teacher's instruction and young women traveled from all over the country to receive their education.²⁹

The post-war period saw the expansion of the OSP's educational offerings both in the city and in different states. Outside of the city, the OSP established schools in Philadelphia in 1863 and in New Orleans in 1866. From the request to establish a school in Philadelphia, the OSP allotted three weeks to gather materials and open the institution. In Baltimore City, the sisters opened a free school for black girls run by two sisters. In it's first year, sixty pupils enrolled. They would also open an orphan asylum in 1866 to address the disruption felt by black families during the war.³⁰ To assist in funding their endeavors, particularly in the material costs and teacher salaries, they did petition the Freedman's Bureau but received no assistance³¹

Constitutional Education – State Debates

State sponsored and financed schools for black children would not emerge until Maryland's state constitution allowed it. The failure of the 1850 petition by Black Baltimoreans to convince the City Council to support black education in the city financially was justified by a lack of a constitutional mandate. The Joint Committee on

²⁹ Grace H. Sherwood, *The Oblates' Hundred and One Years* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931) 114.

³⁰ *Annals*, March 1, 1865, October 25, 1864, and November 10, 1864, RG II, box 34, folder 5, Archives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

³¹ Diana Batts Morrow, "'Not only Superior, but a Mother in the true sense of the word': Mary Louisa Noel and the Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1835 – 1885" *US Catholic Historian* 35, no 4 (Fall 2017) 35-36

Education, the Board argued, did not envision black schools when public schools were established in the state and any attempt to establish city financed schools would threaten the state funds the city received. An immediate withdrawal of these funds would cause the school system to fail.³² Many believed that the funds would be diluted by being used for black students, thus decreasing the amount that could be spent on white children. Black education would only be supported when it did not threaten the funding and staffing of the white schools in the city.

While private schools operated in the city throughout the 1850s and 1860s, they could not accommodate all of the city's black children. For example, in 1865, the Oblate Sisters of Providence reported that they had thirty-three students attending St. Frances' Academy, thirty-four students at their free school, and ten students at their male school for a total of seventy-seven students for that academic year.³³ Two years later, the Board of School Commissioners reported an estimated six thousand black children in the city. State sponsored and financed education was still the most effective means of educating as many children as possible, but the 1851 state constitution prohibited such support for black children. The state's Declaration of Rights contained the constitution's only reference to education in Article 41. It stated that the state legislature "ought to encourage the diffusion of knowledge and virtue" through the "the promotion of literature, the arts, sciences, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and the general melioration of the condition of the people." While there was no mention of race in the Declaration of

³² Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 121; "Not only Superior, but a Mother in the true sense of the word": Mary Louisa Noel and the Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1835 – 1885" *US Catholic Historian* 35, no 4 (Fall 2017) 35-36; *Annals*, August 4, 1863, RG II, box 34, folder 5, Archives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence

³³ *Annals*, September 4, 1865, RG II, box 34, folder 5, Archives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

Rights, many Board and community members believed education should be limited to white children. Article 41 did not provide any steps on how to accomplish this, who was to be taught, what they were to learn, or how these institutions would be funded. Each county and the city would develop their own school systems, if the communities deemed it a necessity.³⁴

Standardizing education in the state was one of the goals of the 1864 Constitutional Convention, called by the predominantly Unionist legislature in order to produce a document that explicitly abolished slavery and to establish laws that would govern newly freed African Americans. Specific to both white and black education, the 1864 Constitution would outline how Maryland's schools would be funded and would centralize school governance. This change aligned Maryland with other Northern state constitutions that established governance and funding, clearly separated public education from charitable education, and emphasized "common civic and moral values."³⁵ The new constitution created a statewide mandate for education.³⁶ Article 43 made no reference to whom should be taught, either along racial or gendered categories. Rather, it accepted the state's responsibility to educate its citizens and declared

That the Legislature ought to encourage the diffusion of knowledge and virtue, the extension of a judicious system of general education, the promotion of literature, the arts, sciences, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and the general melioration of the condition of the people.³⁷

³⁴ *Proceedings and Debates of the 1850 Constitutional Convention*, Vol 101, Debates 5, pg 5 <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000101/html/am101d--5.html>

³⁵ David Tyack and Robert Lowe, "The Constitutional Moment: Reconstruction and Black Education in the South," *American Journal of Education* 94, no 2 (Feb. 1986): 239. Other changes to the state constitution include reapportioned representation in the General Assembly that accounted for both white and black demographics, the general disenfranchisement of Southern sympathizers, and a general voting restriction to only white men.

³⁶ William Starr Myers, *The Self-Reconstruction of Maryland*, 124

³⁷ *Proceedings and Debates of the 1864 Constitutional Convention*, Vol 102. Pg 726. <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000102/html/index.html>.

The vagueness of *who* should be educated was both a boon and a source of frustration. As in the antebellum period, black education *could* exist but these institutions would not receive any material, staffing, or financial assistance from the state. The vague language of 1864's Article 43, however, did provide a space for black educational advocacy to occur as the 1860s progressed.

The exclusion of an explicit reference to white or black children caused much debate in the Constitutional Convention, as delegates discussed funding and taxes, one of the primary topics during the debates. A proposed tax of no more than five cents per one hundred dollars of taxable property to establish a permanent school fund of six million dollars failed. Eventually, the delegates would agree to an annual tax of not less than ten cents per one hundred dollars of taxable property for the support of the state's schools and included a provision that allowed individual counties and the city to raise their own additional funds via taxes if necessary. The state funds would be distributed among the counties and Baltimore city relative to their population of children aged five to twenty.³⁸ Several individuals, the representative from Baltimore City being one, advocated for the school fund *also* to apply to free and newly freed black children and youth.

The delegates who argued for the school fund to apply to both black and white children clashed with other delegates who wanted to restrict the school fund to only white children. The proposed property tax, which was in excess to the one already paid in Baltimore, and the subsequent educational funds it generated, should be restricted to only white children and schools. Joseph M. Cushing, the representative from Baltimore City,

³⁸ Richard Paul Fuke, "The Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement for the Colored People," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 66, no 4 (Winter 1971) 370-1, note 3.

argued that “educated black labor will be worth more than ignorant black labor,” so funds should be allocated at both the city, county, and state level for their educational support. Cushing and his supporters noted in the 1850s the “injustice” of Black Baltimoreans being taxed for an education their children could not access and this injustice would continue if black children were unable to access the state’s schools in the aftermath of the 1864 Constitutional Convention. The proposed school tax would deposit into the Treasury of the State and the funds then, upon distribution to the counties and city, would be spent as the county or city school board saw fit. With no restriction on what property tax would fund what school, several delegates were “utterly opposed” to being taxed for black education. Samuel H. Berry, of Prince George’s County, was opposed to any support of black education, stating he “shall ever be opposed to blacks being educated in our midst, to take the place of white men” and that he did not intend to give “free Negroes the privilege of going to school with my children or associating with my children.”³⁹ Berry’s stance was not surprising, as he was a former planter and Prince George’s County had the largest concentration of enslaved people in the state, which outnumbered all other groups in the county. Notions of black inferiority and the fear that white children would be shorted by spending on black education shaped the delegates responses. John L. Thomas went on to say that allocating funds from the school fund would be pointless:

you want to tax me and other free white men in the State of Maryland for the purposes of educating colored men and fitting them to do what your constitution prohibits them from doing [voting/holding elected office]; fitting them to become citizens in the sense in which I am a citizen; to qualify them as I am, and as my children will be hereafter, if I ever have any, to hold office.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Proceedings and Debates of the 1864 Constitutional Convention* Vol 102, vol 1. Pg 128 – 129

⁴⁰ *Proceedings and Debates of the 1864 Constitutional Convention* Vol 102, vol.1, Debates 1252, 1233-1255

Education for black children was pointless, he and others argued, because black Marylanders would never fulfil the rights and privileges of citizenship. It would be a waste of white funds and education if a child could not be an active, participatory member of society. Berry would propose the inclusion of “white” into Article 8 of the Constitution, where the delegates sought to outline the state’s educational structures.⁴¹ Unlike William Watkins’ proclamation in 1836 that black children required education for when “liberty” was granted to them, the white constitutional delegates believed that freedom from enslavement did not equate to citizenship. In addition to arguing that education would create a better workforce in the state, Cushing argued that while the newly freed were not “ready for any separate system of education,” they eventually would be, and the state should be prepared for this eventuality. The inclusion of “white” into the Constitution’s education provisions would limit the General Assembly’s ability to support this future action and *not* including a racialized provision would avoid cumbersome levies and amendments. The inclusion of the word “white” into Article 8 of the Constitution would fail but delegates made it clear that they, and by extension the counties they represented, would only support white education.

As both proponents and opponents of black schools argued, education would only benefit children whose futures included active citizenship. Black male children would never be able to vote under the 1864 Constitution as Article 7 of the Declaration of Rights limited the “right of suffrage” to “every free white male citizen having the

⁴¹ While Maryland would pass the 13th Amendment as Article 24 in the Declaration of Rights, the General Assembly did not ratify the 14th and 15th amendments until the 1950s and 1970s respectively. The state was beholden to the US Constitution however. 1

qualifications prescribed by the Maryland state constitution.”⁴² Rather than come to a conclusion on state funding for black schools, several other proposals for the state’s “Negro problem” were suggested –prohibiting black migration into the state or a state sponsored colonization program were both proposed but ultimately rejected.⁴³ No provision supporting black education would be codified in the constitution despite the attempts of Cushing and his supporters. The fact that no Constitutional provisions established segregated schools was not unusual. In their summary of the different Reconstruction Constitutions, Tyack and Lowe note that, though quiet on explicit references to race, it was generally understood that these institutions would be segregated by race and gender.⁴⁴ The debates around the school tax exemplified this sentiment, as the delegates noted that while the counted population would include both white and black children, counties and the city were only obligated to spend funds on white children and their educational attainment.

The debates ultimately shaped Article VIII of the 1864 Constitution and the ways education would develop in Maryland. The Declaration of Rights provided the ideological framework, while the Constitution provided the actual legislature the counties and Baltimore City would be legally beholden to. Article 8 centralized authority over the counties and the city’s educational systems through the new positions of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. The Board would consist of three elected officials (the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker

⁴² *Proceedings and Debates of the 1864 Constitutional Convention* Vol 102, pg 722

⁴³ For more information regarding Maryland’s American Colonization Society, please see: Deimer’s Text. Though much of the text is devoted to Pennsylvania’s colonization efforts, he notes the vibrancy and support for black colonization in Maryland by both white and black individuals in the state.

⁴⁴ Tyack and Lowe, “The Constitutional Moment,” 248. They note that only one convention, South Carolina, briefly debated integrationism and during Reconstruction New Orleans had some integrated schools until the Compromise of 1877

of the House of Delegates), and the appointed State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The board, housed in Annapolis, was an attempt to standardize local structures of administration, including the appointment of county school board members. Local county governments would still oversee administration of the daily operations but would now report to the state. The mayor would continue to appoint members of the school board of Baltimore City. While Baltimore City was exempted from State Board oversight on appointment of Board of School Commissioner members, they still fell under the state's educational by-laws. These by-laws created a uniform system of a course of instruction, grades, and the selection of textbooks and created a procedure for the removal of school commissioners and teachers deemed "unfit." Lastly, the State Board oversaw the distribution of state school funds and the administration of the school tax.

Despite the city's exemption from many of the 1864 statutes regarding education, black education in the city would be established, not require tuition, and be open at least six months out of the year. All schools in all counties and the city were required to be "free public schools; by which a school shall be kept open and supported, free of expense for tuition in each school district, for at least six months in each year." Unlike the establishment of public education in the city, the post-Civil War schools were to be free in all meanings of the word – open to all students *and* free of cost. Baltimore City's one dollar per term tuition cost was now unconstitutional, although they retained the right to bill students for stationery and books.⁴⁵ Constitutionally, space was made for private organizations to create education infrastructure for black children in Baltimore City.

⁴⁵ Article VIII: Education. *Proceedings and Debates of the 1864 Constitutional Convention*, vol 102 pg 762. <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000102/html/am102--762.html>

In January 1865, Dr. Wayson, a member of City Council, brought forth a resolution to the First Branch of Baltimore's City Council, requesting "provisions" for the education of black children in schoolhouses made specifically for that purpose. The resolution was referred to the committee on education.⁴⁶ A month and ten days after the council's inaction on Dr. Wayson's resolution, Mayor Chapman summarized the support of the board, supporting the "most liberal movement in this direction" [regarding separate primary schools for black children] but noted that support for black education could not impose "too heavy a burden on taxpayers." The limitations of the tax burden would restrict the city's involvement in black education in the city.⁴⁷ City financial support for the education of the city's free and newly freed children could be supported as long as it did not increase the individual tax burden. The mayor's statement seemingly ignored that black property taxes had been added to the school fund since 1828. At the same time Wayson brought forth his resolution to City Council, the state was debating black education as it rewrote the state constitution. The state constitution revisions of 1864 would remove one barrier to tax funded black education, that the city would lose the state dollars supporting BCPS.

The Baltimore Association of Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People

On January 7, 1865, the Baltimore Association of Moral and Educational Improvement ran an advertisement for their first school, which would be held at the African Church Building on Saratoga and Calvert. School No. 1 would be open to all who wanted education, male and female, and regardless of age, and taught free of tuition expense. Books, purchased by teachers, were available at cost for students – who would

⁴⁶ "Education of the Colored Children" *The Baltimore Sun*, January 7, 1865, 1

⁴⁷ "Education of Colored Children," *The Baltimore Sun*, February 17, 1865.

pay a fee to rent or purchase the text. Students were required to provide proof of vaccination, for unnamed diseases, before attending one of the school's two sessions. To accommodate as many students as possible, the sessions ran in the morning from half past eight to half past noon and then in the evening from eight to ten.⁴⁸

The burden of educating Baltimore's black children would continue to rest on the support of private institutions so long as they did not interfere with the city's white public or private institutions. A group of philanthropic individuals established the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People (hereafter the Baltimore Association) in November 1864 and would operate schools in the city until 1867.⁴⁹ Their schools operated throughout the state, with sixteen schools in the city and eighteen in several counties during the first year. In Baltimore, each school consisted of a single teacher in a single room; the sixteen separate schools were housed in seven buildings across the city. The Baltimore Association reported in their *First Annual Report* that they were only able to rent rooms from black churches and black-owned buildings, which often placed restrictions on their use. For example, the three schools that operated out of the M.E. Church on Sharp Street were allowed day schools but could hold night sessions only twice a week. The Board of Managers, the governing body of the Baltimore Association, also lamented their inability to rent an entire building. The M.E. Church had a total of six rooms available to rent and at the end of their first report, the Managers

⁴⁸ "Advertisement" *The Baltimore Sun*, January 7, 1865, 1-2. The advertisement makes no specific reference to what disease the children had to be inoculated against. The only available vaccine in the 1860s was Jenner's smallpox vaccine so I assume this is what the advertisement is in reference too. The vaccine for Cholera would not be developed until 1880.

⁴⁹ The Baltimore Association was also referred to as the Association for the Moral Improvement of the Colored People, the Association for the Improvement of the Colored People, and the Association for the Moral and Intellectual Improvement of the Colored People. For the purposes of clarity, the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People and the Baltimore Association will be used.

noted that they had enough applicants to apply for more rooms at Sharp Street and at Orchard Street, another church building.⁵⁰

The schools were funded by a mix of contributions from individuals, religious societies and associations, and the state government. The *First Annual Report* identified contributions from the state's Finance Committee, the Sabbath School at West Edmoston, New York, the Central Committee of the Society of Friends of England for the relief of Emancipated Negroes, and the Pennsylvania Freedman's Relief Association, among others. Personal donations came from Baltimore City, Roxbury and Northampton, Mass., and Pennsylvania. The Baltimore Association frequently petitioned Baltimore's city council for financial support for their ever-increasing public school system as they struggled to meet the demand for education. Petitioning, rather than bringing forth complaints in front of the legal system, was common in the nineteenth century and protected under Maryland's Declaration of Rights.⁵¹ When the Board of Managers approached the Mayor and City Council in February 17, 1865, to begin the process of establishing a "separate common free school" and to "make an appropriation to this Association" of \$10,000, their request was referred to the Committee on Education. The Board of Managers acknowledged that "these people are now entitled to be recognized as having a right to education" and that the city had a "great . . . interest in making them useful" and "saving them from pauperism and crime, of which ignorance is the fruitful parents." Education was "absolutely necessary, in view of the changed condition of the

⁵⁰ *First Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B Rose and Co, 1866)

⁵¹ *First Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B Rose and Co, 1866) 10; David Tyack and Aaron Benavot, "Courts and Public Schools: Educational Litigation in Historical Perspective," *Law and society Review* 19, no 3 (1985) 351

colored population, that some movement should be made to stimulate and enable them to become a more useful part of the community.” The Board of Manager’s emphasis on usefulness, much like Cushing’s statements to the Constitutional delegation, would justify support for black education in the city. Educated labor would be most beneficial to the city. The Board of Managers, in their presentation to the City Council, noted that, while a “perfect” system of public education might take time, they recognized the need for a private effort and sought to fill that need.⁵²

In an acknowledgement of the “injustice” of black property taxes being funneled into the school tax without benefit for their own children, the response of the Board of Managers, the President, and Vice-President of the Baltimore Association’s petition requesting \$10,000 was favorable. In April, the *Sun* reported that the first branch of City Council approved the appropriation, claiming that it was not only a “wise, philanthropic, moral, and Christian duty to provide an educational system for the colored race,” but that it was also “a sheer act of justice to a class of people who have so long been paying taxes to the school fund of our city without receiving ... benefit from such taxation.”⁵³ Pure altruism and an acknowledgement of previous “injustices” might not have been the only reason behind the change in response from the City Council after rejecting previous Black Baltimorean educational petitions. The change in the demographics of who approached the board may have played a part in the City Council and Board’s willingness to support the petition – the Baltimore Association’s Board of Managers were composed of white individuals of varying social classes in the city. Most were elites and known politicians. There were more than thirty businessmen, lawyers, a judge, clergymen, and

⁵² “Education of Colored Children,” *The Baltimore Sun*, February 17, 1865.

⁵³ “Education of the Colored People,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 29, 1865, pg 1.

four delegates to the 1864 constitutional convention: John Cushing, Archibald Stirling Jr., Henry Stockbridge, and William Daniel.⁵⁴ Using the privately solicited funds and the \$10,000 dollars appropriated from the city (paid over two years), the Baltimore Association schools would employ both white and black teachers and quickly filled their rented spaces with approximately two thousand students.

The purpose of these schools, according to Association President Evan Rodgers, was to save free and newly freed black individuals from “pauperism and crime, of which ignorance is the fruitful parent.” From the letters included in the Association’s first and second reports, several community members within and outside of the city and state agreed and committed funds.⁵⁵ In this sense, the development of education in the state followed patterns identified by other scholars, notably Ronald Butchart, Hilary Green, Robert Lowe, and David Tyack, in other regions of the country. From 1865-67, during Presidential Reconstruction, education was supported by philanthropic groups, the Union Army, and the Freedmen’s Bureau.⁵⁶ In “The Constitutional Moment,” Tyack and Lowe also point to the seemingly “incongruous” relationship between the coalitions of freed and newly freed blacks, philanthropists, and federal military officials. The white reformers were connected to their belief “in the power of education to upraise blacks

⁵⁴ *Baltimore American* December 12, 1864; Richard Paul Fuke, “The Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, 1864-1870” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 66, no 4 (Winter 1971) 375.

⁵⁵ *First Annual Report*, 102-103. In one of the Association reports a black teacher had her school vandalized, Martha L. Hoy. Several historians have used this incident of violence as indication of white resistance to black education in the counties. Hilary Moss notes the lack of violence as tacit approval via neglect.

⁵⁶ Hilary Green’s *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016). Ronald E. Butchart’s *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) and *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen’s Education, 1862-1875* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980)

from the degradation of slavery and make them responsible workers and citizens.”⁵⁷

Circulars distributed by the Association emphasized this sentiment. Their stated purpose, since the adoption of the 1864 Constitution, was to educate the city’s 80,000 free blacks and 87,000 freed people. An “educated labor produces more than uneducated labor,” they declared, echoing Mr. Cushing’s statements to the General Assembly. By educating these “two classes,” the Baltimore Association believed they would be teaching Black Baltimoreans to “improve their habits, instruct them in the industry, make diligent the idle, reform the vicious and stimulate the good, that they may rise in the scale of being, and be better fitted for the varied duties they are called on to perform.” Not doing so, would doom one fourth of Maryland’s population to a lifetime of “ignorance and moral destitution,” and “oppress those of us now residents of the State with additional taxation to furnish what the expense of education would have entirely prevented” by funding penitentiary, reform societies and homes, and asylums. The justifications set out by the Baltimore Association was part of the broader justifications for education elsewhere in the state and in the country.⁵⁸

Funding was a constant concern for the Baltimore Association, as it was for Baltimore’s and the state’s other educational institutions. Multiple requests for aid to the city, state, and federal governments remained unfilled, referred to standing committees, or outright rejected. The support the Baltimore Association received in its first year of operations quickly dried up. Attempts to get financial support from the state stalled when

⁵⁷ Tyack and Lowe, “The Constitutional Moment,” 241

⁵⁸ Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, “Your Attention is Called....” Baltimore, 1864. Library of Congress, digital object: <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.03101900/>. Last accessed 25 June 2020. Richard Paul Fuke, “The Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, 1864-1870” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 66, no 4 (Winter 1971): 369-404

the request, which made it past the floor of the House of Delegates, did not move beyond the Committee on the Colored Population in 1865. The subsequent drive to solicit funds via circulars and letters to churches only generated twenty-three replies out of the 250 letters sent out. One such petition, a request for \$10,000 , prompted the city to pass an ordinance authorizing City Council and the Board of School Commissioners to establish separate schools for Black children “under the same rules as governed the white public schools.”⁵⁹ John M’Jilton, the superintendent at the time, believed that the newly freed population of the city could be educated with one grammar school to be “centrally located,” and six primary schools to be scattered throughout the city in locations convenient for the city’s black communities. Rather than establish their own schools, the Board would incorporate the Baltimore Association schools into the city system. In July of 1867, they did so.

However, as many newspaper articles from that summer and the 1867 Annual Report of the Board of School Commissions of Public Schools reported, no appropriation was made either at the city or state level. There was no way to pay for these schools’ current expenses, which continued to run despite questions around financial responsibility for the schools. Despite the approval of the incorporation idea by the Mayor and both branches of the city council, the city treasurer refused to pay the rents and salaries for the Baltimore Association schools for the 1868 academic year. His action highlights the conflict over state versus local control, and the debate over the amount of support the schools for black children would need, that would color the city’s first year overseeing what would become the Colored Public Schools (CPS).

⁵⁹*Fiftieth Annual Report* (1879) xviii

While financially supporting the Baltimore Association schools was considered appropriate, actual administration of the schools met with resistance by the Board. Cowan, a member of the Board of School Commissioners and representative for Baltimore at the state Constitutional Convention, questioned if City Council and the Board could establish schools for black children as the Constitution did not explicitly reference race in either Article 43 of the Declaration of Rights or Article 8 of the Constitution. The incorporation of the Baltimore Association schools into the preexisting BCPS was governmental overreach. Cowan argued that since legislation for schools were limited to white children, administrating black schools was not legal. His resolution ordered the Board and City Council to revisit their decision about the incorporation, and thus funding, of the Baltimore Association schools, now city schools, for Black Baltimoreans and their children.⁶⁰ As a result, funding of the schools, including payroll for the white and black teachers the Baltimore Association had hired, was struck from that year's budget.

The issue of who should bear the responsibility for funding these schools loomed large in the *Baltimore American* and the *Baltimore Sun*'s reporting of the issue. Articles in December highlight the core of the debate. Cowan and his supporters believed that the Association schools were, in fact, Freedmen's Bureau institutions with teachers imported from the North. The subsequent city incorporation and funding, were a "stretch of authority unwarrantable," as neither the city, the state, or even the Board wanted their inclusion. While the state was never "reconstructed," the Bureau of Refugees, Freeman and Abandoned Lands did have an office in Baltimore City and focused its attention on

⁶⁰ "Public School Board – Questions as to Colored Schools," *Baltimore American* Nov. 27, 1867

the counties, which is where most of the state's formerly enslaved population resided. In the counties, the Bureau provided physical school buildings and the upkeep of the Baltimore Association schools while the Association provided the teachers and their salaries. In the city, the Bureau provided no physical school buildings. Instead the Association rented rooms and buildings from the city's network of black churches and provided the teachers and their salaries. Cowan and his supporters seem to have conflated the Association's activities in the counties with the activities in the city. Cowan was quoted as asking, "Where was the warrant or power that the City Council had to appropriate money for that purpose? What authority for establishing such schools, foreign to the purposes of our laws, and spending our money?" The article makes clear his questions were intended to ensure that the Board and City Council were not following an incorrect precedent by usurping federal and state authority, as he found nothing "to justify us in supporting such schools."

Another school commissioner, Mr. Morris, responded that the general authority to establish schools for black children—including incorporating existing schools—was rooted in the 1865 "Act for State Education," which mandated that a portion of the county educational budget received from the State be set aside for "the education of the negroes." Morris went on to state that the Baltimore Association schools, however, were not faultless, as the Board did not approve the hiring of the white and black teachers, and were unable to determine their salaries before their incorporation to the city. Though the President of the board would eventually correct these misunderstandings about the Baltimore Association's status as a voluntary association run on charitable contributions,

many board members wanted “the discussion of the negro question [to] cease.”⁶¹ It would not be until December 11, 1867, that the Board of School Commissioners would approve the funds necessary to pay the bills and salaries that the ten Baltimore Association, now Colored Public Schools, schools had generated after the city incorporated them.

The conflicts around the city’s incorporation of the Baltimore Association Schools in 1867 were an extension of the debates about black education in the 1867 Constitutional Convention. In 1867, the Democratic party swept elections for both the city and state governments and promptly called a Constitutional Convention to amend the “objectionable provisions” in the 1864 Constitution.⁶² In addition to *not* ratifying the 14th Amendment, the new 1867 Constitution explicitly limited suffrage to “every white male citizen,” though later amendments to the U. S. Constitution would later supersede this provision.⁶³ Bernard Christian Steiner argues that, had no changes to the 1865 educational acts occurred, many of the state’s secondary schools would have been forced to close. But the 1867 changes “restored the right of local self-government in school affairs to the people and left the endowed schools [colleges, universities, and private academies] in the condition they had occupied before 1865.” Education would be less centralized, and each individual local would elect their school boards.⁶⁴ Baltimore City, then, would be free to shape education as both the Board and the community saw fit. The 1867 state Constitution cut Article VIII, on public education, down from six subsections,

⁶¹ “The Public School Board – The Colored Schools Question” *Baltimore American* Dec 4, 1867 and “Public School Board” *The American* Dec 11, 1867

⁶² Bernard Christian Steiner, *The Institutions and Civil Government of Maryland*,

⁶³ Maryland would not ratify the 14th amendment until April 4, 1959, specifically rejecting it at the 1867 Constitutional Convention. The state would also not ratify the 15th amendment until May 7, 1973.

⁶⁴ Bernard Christian Steiner, *History of Education in Maryland*, US Government Printing Office, 1894. Digital Book: <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=zZegAAAAMAAJ> pg 67, 172. Local elections would continue until the 1870s, when judges would appoint the county school commissioners. In 1892, appointment processes for school commissioners were changed again and given to the Governor.

as was in the 1864 Constitution, to three. The provision in the Declaration of the Rights, however, remained unchanged. At the local and school board level, the aftermath of the new Constitution was felt when the Board fired M'Jilton, who had worked for the school board in some capacity – as teacher, treasurer, then superintendent – for eighteen years, and replaced him with William R. Creery.

One of the only hold overs from the 1864 Constitution, due to widespread public support, was the provision establishing free schools for six months out of the year to be supported through taxes. The 1867 Constitution expanded this provision, removing any holdover tuition requirement, meaning the schools in the city and counties would be supported *entirely* by taxation and the School Fund. The ten-cent tax on every hundred dollars of taxable property, paid to the state's Treasury, was to be applied “only to the purposes of education.” Steiner notes that the school tax was more than half of the levied taxes throughout the nineteenth century and the funds generated paid for the state's normal schools and the State Board of Education. However, the school tax restricted access to the funds along racial lines and created a racially distinct tax base, contributing to the future inequity between BCPS and CPS as well as the differences between the counties' schools. To fund the state's schools for black children, the total amount received from *only* Black Marylanders plus \$150,000 USD would be used and dispersed to the city and counties in proportion to the children between the ages of five and twenty years. The State Board of Education, although they had “general care and supervision” of public education throughout the counties, they had *no* authority over the Baltimore City Schools and how they used the generated funds. Until the city's new charter in 1898,

allocation of funding would be one of the only interactions between the state and the city's educational systems.⁶⁵

While the state legislature would standardize the school curriculum at the county level, school boards could use their own textbooks upon state approval, and the management of the city and county school systems were ceded back to local authorities. The conflicts over funding the city's incorporation of the Baltimore Association schools can be traced to the debate at the state level around "home rule" of the school boards. When the Democratic party regained control of the city, they limited the scope and operation of the schools for black children, dismissed teachers hired during the Civil War until the 1867 Constitution under "reviewing qualifications" and rehired those who lost their jobs for having Secessionist sympathies, and removed the loyalty oath as a condition of employment. Throughout the 1868 academic year, all of the black teachers who were previously employed by the Baltimore Association would be fired. Baltimore City was not unique in this, as Tyack and Lowe note that white philanthropic groups, generally, believed that black teachers were not as effective as white teachers and white teachers "civilized" black children to an evangelical and capitalist model that demanded black subjugation.⁶⁶

The Board would describe the protest against the dismissals of black teachers by Black Baltimoreans as "early prejudice" against white teachers. Black teachers employed

⁶⁵ Report (1865): 30-31, 1866: 6-8. Wolffe 110. Steiner, *Institutions and Civil Government*, 175. The other major interaction between the city and the state's school system is an annual report made by the city's Board of Commissioners to the State for inclusion in the state's annual report. Kentucky, Delaware, and the District of Columbia would also use tax codes as the basis of racialized inequity immediately after the Civil War and other states would emulate these codes in the aftermath of the Compromise of 1877. These restrictions also were heavily class based as the codes, tying the funding of schools to property, kept school taxes low in areas that were heavily planter based, even outside of the areas where black individuals lived.

⁶⁶ Tyack and Lowe, "The Constitutional Moment," 242-3.

by the Baltimore Association were demised because they lacked the proper “qualifications” to teach in the city’s schools and the Board and City Council staffed CPS with “qualified” teachers. Since the teachers now employed at CPS were qualified to the same standards as BCPS, the protest around their employment was gradually “passing away.” Unless unnamed “demagogues” encouraged continued protest of white teacher employment for “partisan purposes,” the Board estimated that the criticism of employing white teachers to teach in black schools would “entirely subside.”⁶⁷ White teachers, and the material they taught, would be sufficient for black education. The 1867 Constitution rolled back the standardization of textbooks, the city’s school board switched from purchasing texts from northern publishing houses to a local company, Kelly and Piet, to provide readers and other school materials for BCPS and CPS. Switching to a local publisher meant the school commissioners had greater control over the materials presented to students than they otherwise would have. With these actions the School Commissioners had created a centralized system revolving around the Commission’s authority. Despite the limited nature of the school offerings, Baltimore City’s School Board believed, and demanded, that the city’s black population be content with increased access—despite any other concerns black Baltimoreans might have.

During what one scholar has called Maryland’s “self-reconstruction,” the school board believed that it was “neither advisable nor practicable to provide such grades or schools for this class of people as are in use by the children of white parents.”⁶⁸ The mere

⁶⁷ Report (1870) 44-45.

⁶⁸ Report 1868, 7. “Self – Reconstruction,” comes from William Starr Myer’s 1909 work *The Self-Reconstruction of Maryland, 1864-1867* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1909). Digital Item: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044014500003&view=1up&seq=11>. “Self-Reconstruction” was in reference to Maryland lack of direct federal oversight during Reconstruction. None of the border states – Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, or Delaware – were included in the five military districts but still

presence and access to educational opportunity did not indicate or signal a desire for equity among Baltimore's races or economic classes. In a letter to the Baltimore Association, the School Commissioners stated, "that there is with some expectation that the colored people can be at once elevated to the same social position as the whites, and capable of performing all the duties of citizenship. This I esteem a great error."⁶⁹ These post-Civil War comments echoed the larger national trends in education; the schooling of African Americans would be preventative in nature, with the goals of minimizing crime and promoting order rather than promoting racial equality. As the School Commissioner report from 1868 noted,

The policy of educating the colored children of our city rests, in part, on the same considerations which have led our community to establish public schools for whites. It is true that education is given to the white, partly that he may be better fitted for his public duties as a citizen, which reason is happily inapplicable in Maryland to the colored race. But in so far as public education tends to diminish crime, to promote order, no good reason can be given why the good of society will be less advanced by instructing the colored than the white race.⁷⁰

Earlier issues raised during the debates about schooling in the 1864 Constitutional convention would still hold – what was the purpose of education if black children, particularly the boys, could not be full citizens of the city and state? Once again, Article VIII of the Constitution, despite the decrease in subsections, made no reference to race. School would be “a thorough and efficient system of free public schools.” Taxes would be levied on both white and black property owners, but only white schools would receive funding. Black schools would require private benevolence to supplement state funds. The Public Instruction Act of 1865, which established the procedure to create separate funds

underwent their own restructuring their government and institutions due to changes to the federal Constitution. These states would also not have their revised Constitutions reviewed by Congress.

⁶⁹ First Annual Report of the Baltimore Association, 12

⁷⁰ Report 1868, 7

for counties who wanted to establish schools for black children, was loosely adopted and hardly enacted.⁷¹ When Baltimore City incorporated the Baltimore Association schools, debates around fiscal responsibility occurred.⁷²

It would not be until May 1868 that the City Council would pass an ordinance *explicitly* authorizing the city's school board to establish separate schools and to levy money for their support, that questions around funding and fiscal support would cease. Additionally, the ordinance allocated \$3,600 to pay all arrears for salaries and \$15,000 for the current expenses in addition to any taxes paid by Black Baltimoreans for education for the city's ten primary schools. These schools, located in the neighborhoods where black Baltimoreans lived, would support 3,000 out of the 8,000 black children in the city between the ages of five and twenty. The Board chose to only support black schools based on the same percentage of the white children attending public schools. For these 3,000 students the Board believed primary grades "would supply their present [educational] needs."⁷³ The school commissioners believed that the education offered to black Baltimorean children should be "suited to their position and wants," and give "an intelligent appreciation of their true position and duty."⁷⁴

⁷¹ In fact, many of the Maryland counties would not open educational facilities for black students until 1872. The actual wording of the act is: "The total amount of taxes paid for school purposes by the colored people of any county and the city of Baltimore together with any donations that may be made, shall be set aside for the purpose of founding schools for colored children, which schools shall be established under the direction of the school Commissioners and shall be subject to such rules and regulations as the Board of Education shall prescribe." From, "An act to add a new article to the Code of Public General Laws, to be entitled, "public Instruction," providing a uniform system of free public schools for the state of Maryland ..."*laws of the state of Maryland, 1865*. Chapter 160 pg 26

⁷² Constitution, 1867. Digital source: MSA
<http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000074/html/am74d--583.html>

⁷³ *Report* (1869), pg 7-8, *Report* 1878, pg xviii- xx

⁷⁴ *Report* (1876) xxxix

However, these top down, administratively focused interpretations neglected the black advocacy of communities to advocate and articulate their own understanding of the purpose of education. To be sure, black community leaders faced the societal belief that black education *should be* limited to primary grades, which in Baltimore consisted of three calendar years' worth of direct instruction organized around half-year "grades," or terms. Primary instruction, it was believed by white Baltimoreans and the school administrators, would be useful for black Baltimoreans, but would also limit full civic participation.

The prevailing societal belief in black inferiority and limited civic participation did not stop Black Baltimoreans from advocating for black children. Almost immediately, black Baltimoreans began petitioning City Council to increase access to education for their children. The *Forty – First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools* notes that on June 24, 1869, a petition was presented to the City Council that argued increase access and expanded curricular options would be "for the interest of the city," in addition to themselves and their children. The petition asked for larger facilities, increased grades beyond Primary, and that black teachers should be employed. The City Council referred the petition to the Board, and in discussing the petition, and their subsequent response to the community demands, the board stated that the signers "evidently intended to produce the impression that their children received instruction only in primary studies, and that, therefore, there was an unfair discrimination against them. However, the Board addressed this part of the petition by organizing thirteen schools, which would also provide access to teachers who could

also teach Grammar subjects, “thus affording the colored children equal facilities with the white pupils in our schools.”⁷⁵

Conclusion

There were indications that parents, particularly within the poor black community, did not agree with how these methods were actualized. Although black and white Baltimoreans wanted the same outcome – education for black children – but for every different purposes. For white Baltimoreans, it would provide an educated, yet better, workforce if the educational offerings were limited in scope. For Black Baltimoreans, education provided the backbone of it’s community, offered hope, and they demanded that educational offerings aligned with what they, not white Baltimoreans, believed their children needed for their schooling.

The board responded to the criticisms in a few different ways throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. In both the minutes and published reports to the City Council the board took pains to say that the appointments of teachers and ward representatives were not influenced in any partisan or sectarian ways and in the fifty ninth report, the Board makes it plain that if a student was academically struggling, it was a result of poor parental influences at home, not due to the ways the schools were structured. The schools’ grading policies were intended to address best practices around childhood development, though they did not label it as such.⁷⁶

At its core, the conflict between Black Baltimoreans and public school officials were best summarized in the discussions around grade level reorganizations. A major conversation throughout the post-war period and the remainder of the nineteenth century

⁷⁵ *Annual Report* (1869) xxiv-v

⁷⁶ 59th annual report, pg xxxii.

revolved around how the grades, and thus the course of instruction, would be structured. There were several attempted curricular and pedagogical reforms throughout the latter half of the 19th century, all intending to address large classroom sizes, mechanical or rote learning, too few teachers with adequate training, and crowded facilities. Other concerns, such as infrequent student attendance, was also of great concern and the targets of reform by the school board. Both Black Baltimoreans and the members of the school board agreed upon the necessity of reform, though they disagreed on how these reforms should be shaped.⁷⁷ In 1885, the BCPS school board readjusted the grading system of the primary and grammar schools. These changes would better reflect what the school board believed would address childhood development, best practices for instruction (though they did not call it this at the time), and what education they thought would be most essential for the younger grades as they continued to acknowledge that a number of black students would not advance beyond a primary education.

⁷⁷ Wolfe 138

Chapter Three: “Good facilities” and “suitable buildings:” School Buildings and Educational Advocacy

During the two decades between the 1868 petition by black community members and the 1887 beginning of construction on Colored School No. 9 and the Colored High School, the conditions of Baltimore school buildings occupied much of attention of both the school board and the black community. For years, Black Baltimoreans had requested more and better buildings for their children’s schools at the same time that the Board had reported on the deteriorating conditions of the existing buildings. More classrooms in more buildings would allow an increase in the student population. For the Board, school building and maintenance was a quantifiable and easily observable metric for the City Council to use in judging the schools’ effectiveness and setting budgets.

The successful purchase of a lot and eventual erection of a new school building in 1887 explicitly for the use of black children was the result of decades of petitioning and agitation by the black community. The 1887 petition had several elements, the demand for a new building rather than a repurposed one being the key element. The city had a history of renting buildings for CPS, often at great expense, or moving the children into an older BCPS building when white students vacated it. The other major part of the petition – hiring black teachers – would be partially fulfilled with the erection of Colored School No. 9, which would be under the administration of black teachers but no other school in CPS would be. The new high school would contain a two-year program to educate and qualify black teachers.

Rev W.H Weaver and a committee of ministers and representatives from the Black Baltimorean community presented their petition in 1886. Unlike in 1868, this time

the city's standing Committee on Colored Schools "unanimously recommended" the 1886 requests and encouraged the Mayor and City Council to appropriate money to build a school in the newly incorporated northwestern section of the city. This school, to house both male and female students, would be under "a corps of colored teachers whose qualifications shall be measured by the same standard now applied to other teachers." Colored School No. 9, as it would be known, would open in 1887 and would be completely staffed by black teachers. A similar resolution was also adopted for the erection for a high and grammar school.¹ The administrative promises to support the eventual hiring of black teachers and eventual purchase of a building for the education of black children and the employment of black teachers was a victory for Black Baltimorean education. The addition of a dedicated grammar school and high school meant that black students were closer to receiving the same teacher training and qualifications as white students attending the city's three all white high schools. Prior to the establishment of a dedicated grammar and high school, children were restricted to primary grade instruction unless a teacher believed grammar instruction would benefit the child.

Support for the new schools in the wider community was not as unanimous as the Board and City Council would have suggested. A petition presented to the City Council in 1887 noted that "without race prejudice or political feeling" a group of white residents protested a proposed school building in their northwestern neighborhood. A black school in their neighborhood, these white community members argued, would "depreciate the value" of their homes and property by so much that they would be unable to "sell or rent

¹ "The School Board: Colored Schools and Colored Teachers," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 7, 1886, 6

it except at ruinous rates.”² The petitioning citizens did not protest the erection of a school for black children, but they did not want the building near their homes. Education could be supported so long as white material rewards, in this case, the value of their property, was unaffected. Their property values outweighed the educational needs of Black Baltimoreans and should be considered more important to the economic development of the city than increasing the number of black students in CPS. The petition from the white residents failed to stop the planned purchase of the lot and erection of a new school building for the city’s black children and construction began that year.

The opening of Colored School No. 9 was the culmination of a decades-long process to increase the physical capacity of CPS. It also highlighted tensions between the city council and the school board on one side, and black parents on the other, over the material conditions and the ideals of a future as articulated by black educators and the material conditions needed to make it viable. Ultimately, both groups wanted children to be physically present in the schools but for vastly different reasons.

Attendance and School Buildings

The Board identified several material conditions that prevented all children from attending schools. While the Board acknowledged societal conditions – like the need for children to work to help support their families – they did not address nor offer a solution for this larger issue. Inconsistent attendance due to familial labor needs was, according to the Board, a “necessary evil” to be accommodated in the school’s curricular offerings.

² “Petition and Protest Against Building School at Carrolton Avenue” as quoted in Bettye C. Thomas, “Public Education and Black Protest in Baltimore, 1865-1900” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 71, no 3 (Fall 1976), 386.

Parents were engaged in work that “required the assistance of their children” in maintaining the family’s economic solvency. Children were working in addition to their parents and while it caused “much lateness and frequent absence,” the board acknowledged that there was little they could do to correct it.³ Specific to black children, the Board noted in 1873 that it was “extremely difficult” to keep children in school during the busy season of the packing house and that any argument was “in vain” in comparison to wages.

According to the Board, inconsistent attendance due to economic need would not stop until parents of school-aged children realized that education outweighed the “positive value of a day’s wages.” The Board maintained that “until a better view of the subject possessed the mind of the parents of our colored pupils,” the City Council would have to contend with “complaints of irregular attendance.” CPS was effective, the Board argued, for those who attended, and the inconsistent attendance should not be held against the schools.⁴ Compulsory education laws were proposed and recorded in the Board’s *Annual Reports* throughout the nineteenth century, but failed to pass until the early twentieth century. The Board argued that no laws mandating attendance were required as they believed that children would attend school because it was a good moral choice, not because they were compelled to do so.⁵

The focus of board discussions of attendance was on getting children into the classroom, but not necessarily ensuring the child’s continued attendance in the classroom. In the economic downturn of the 1870s, the Board and city were particularly concerned

³ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870) 23

⁴ *Forty-Fifth Annual Report* (1874) 23-24

⁵ Compulsory education was first discussed in front of the school board in 1869 and again every year between 1871 - 74, 1876, 1880, 1882, 1884, 1896, and 1899.

with the number of children not receiving an education. Children not in the classroom, even if due to the “necessities demanding their time in the home service and other causes,” would be exposed to “ignorance and vice.”⁶ At the inception of BCPS, educating the entire child population of the city was never the intention. When the Board reorganized the Baltimore Association schools, again, educating the entire black child population was not the intention. The schools were able to serve only 3,000 children; in the first year of CPS, the average attendance across the ten schools was 1,312.⁷ In 1875, the year the Board and the City Council first requested the police department to conduct a census of all children between the ages of six and eighteen, 2,761 black children were enrolled in the CPS schools with an average total attendance of 1,839 across eleven schools.⁸ The report made no distinction between yearly or daily average attendance. Operational funds were tied to student attendance and while the Board noted that attendance at the CPS schools was increasing, it had not yet reached the projected number of pupils. When the Baltimore Association schools were incorporated, renamed, and restructured, a lack of consistent student attendance was identified as an immediate problem, even though the board celebrated the increased student attendance. The Board did not discuss a lack of access to material conditions – buildings and supplies – for black children as rationale for the inconsistent attendance. Throughout the first two decades, the increase in black student participation was taken as a belief that the structure was working and there were minimal complaints, despite consistent petitioning to improve CPS by black parents.

⁶*Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 90

⁷ 1867, pgs 7-8

⁸ *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1877) x-xii

Due to the lack of compulsory education laws in the city, prior to 1903 law mandating attendance, Baltimore's school system never educated more than 70 per cent of its school age population between the ages of five and twenty-one.⁹ Student attendance in BCPS and CPS never dipped below 60 per cent of the total enrolled population. That is not to suggest that 60 per cent or more of the city's school-age population was being educated. For example, in 1877, when the first police census was done, the board reported that 69,303 children were between the ages of six and eighteen. In public and private school, 45,426 children or 65.5 percent of the city's child population attended. Out of the 30,867 students attending public schools, there was an average daily attendance of 25,582. The remaining 34.5 per cent or 23,877 students, according to the police census, were not attending school. The police census did not provide a racial breakdown between white and black children, but they provided ward locations for the children. Ward 18, in East Baltimore, had 2,927 students in school followed by Ward 1, in West Baltimore, with 2,376 students.¹⁰ Ward 17, the predominate Black ward in East Baltimore since the antebellum period, had the 7th largest population of children not attending either private or public schools with 1,334.¹¹ These statistics supported the

⁹ In 1903, the state institutes a compulsory education law but it was restricted to the ages between 8 and 12. If a child over the age of 12 could produce a certificate of work, issued by their employer, and demonstrate their ability to read and write they were exempt from the compulsory educational laws. (Chapter 269, Acts of 1902) Compulsory education for all children between the ages of five and sixteen would not be in effect in the city until 1916. Maryland's current compulsory education law, Md. Code, Education § 7-301, states that a child must be in school from the ages of five to 18, these changes occurring between 2014-2017.

¹⁰ Digital ward maps, BCA: <https://msa.maryland.gov/bca/wards/index.html> and William G. Lefurgy, "Baltimore's Wards, 1797-1978: A Guide," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 75, no 2 (June 1980): 145 – 153.

¹¹ Schooling Citizen's section on Baltimore's Ward 17. The full table from the police census is included in the Appendix. The top five wards with the highest number of children not in school fell along the outskirts of the city in 1877. Wards one and seven were in West Baltimore, comprising the lower (one) and upper (seven) boundaries of the city while 19, 18, and 16 comprised the entirety of East Baltimore and the boundary between the county and the city: 19 (upper), 18 (middle), and 16 (between the 18th ward and 15th ward, which borders the modern day Inner Harbor.) Ward 15 had the 6th highest number of children

board's belief that Black Baltimoreans did not support or require public, state sponsored and funded education.

How to get students to attend their schools was of constant concern for the Board. Prior to the 1877 Police Census, the board proposed not to mandate compulsory education through the laws but rather rely upon a "moral suasion principle." Requiring school attendance by law, though producing a reform, would "operate as a great hardship."¹² In other years, however, the board would suggest creating a truancy officer position, although they would not officially create the position until the 1900 city charter changes. By the middle 1870s, the board had explicitly linked student attendance to student performance within the classroom and to the overall "efficiency of the school" and that irregular pupil attendance was one of the "principal obstacle" to not only teacher success, but the success of CPS.¹³ Funding for materials, including books and stationary, and for repairs to buildings, was tied to student enrollment and attendance. Irregular attendance affected not only the pupil, but also disrupted the learning of the surrounding students as well.

To track and quantify student attendance, thus justifying the expenses of the schools, the annual reports, which were presented to the Mayor and City Council and then available in print form, contained a breakdown of the number of students on the roll of each school either in October or December, the yearly average attendance, and the

not in school with 1,486. Ward 17th is the lower Southeast Baltimore boundary that extends to the location of modern-day Fort McHenry.

¹² 1873 Report, pg 23. There was always a difference between number of pupils on roll, the total number of *all* children who ever attended a school for any length of time and the average attendance. The Forty Eighth report, which highlights the police census' findings, noted that students on roll was 31,404 to compare with the average 30,867 students attending.

¹³ 1878, pg L

“number of different pupils in school during the year.”¹⁴ These numbers were also coupled with a breakdown of expenses per type of school, for each school, and a cost per student based on average attendance. In 1878, the President of the Board, John T. Morris, noted that attendance had been slowly increasing, though there was a wide range of student attendance (92.11 per cent to 60.73 per cent) depending on the school in question. The following Table was compiled from statistics generated for the Board’s annual reports. The numbers in parentheses are the number of schools for each category in the first column and number of students in the second.

¹⁴ The included tables accompanying the Superintendent of Instruction’s report also contained information about the number of schools, teachers, pay pupils, and free pupils. Post 1870s reports also include information about student promotions to the City College, Eastern and Western High Schools, and the Grammar Schools for white children. After the grammar school is opened for black children, the number of promotions are included, as well as when the high school is opened and attached to the grammar school.

| Attendance of Pupils | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Female High Schools (2) | 92.11 (728) |
| English – German Schools (5) | 91.40 (2914) |
| Baltimore City College (1) | 91.9 (484) |
| Male Grammar Schools (19) | 97.31 (4302) |
| Female Grammar Schools (19) | 85.95 (4346) |
| Male Primary Schools (29) | 84.87 (6353) |
| Female Primary Schools (30) | 81.91 (6520) |
| Colored Day Schools (13) | 79.98 (3066) |
| Normal School (1) | 76 (104) |
| Evening School (4 white, 4 black) | 60.73 (318 white, 383 black. 701 total) |
| Total schools: 127 | Total number of students: 29,518 |

Information from: “School Statistics,” *Fiftieth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1878* (Baltimore: John Cox City Printer, 1879) pg. xxiv and 48.

Comparing white and black student attendance for both the primary and grammar schools, the differences in attendance are within a few percentage points. While attendance of black students was less than white student attendance, the comparison was less dire than Board members made it seem. The overall increase in student attendance was heralded by the Board as an indication that the schools were well-thought-of by the black community, but increases would continue if the school buildings themselves were more welcoming and more conveniently located according to the Board.

More and better schools would raise attendance and increase the number of children who would become “good and useful citizens.”¹⁵ The Board had to convince the City Council that the requested appropriations for school buildings and repairs would improve not only the schools but benefit the city. The City Council, rather than the Board, had full control over the appropriation for school buildings and dictated the number, size, location, and allotment per building of all schools under BCPS. Recommendations and a proposed budget were presented by the Board every year and, inevitably, the City Council would approve less than what was requested, particularly during economic downturns.¹⁶ Appropriations for new buildings stalled to almost a standstill during the depression of the 1870s and the City Council repeatedly allocated far less than the requested amount for repairs and maintenance throughout the decade. New buildings, or even repairs to existing properties, would require the City Council to agree with the Board’s recommendations. Generally, construction of any new school buildings between 1870 and 1900 was incredibly haphazard and depended upon the political clout of the ward representative on the City Council and the Board.¹⁷ The Board made recommendations, but ultimately the decision was the City’s.¹⁸ Purchasing a lot to build a school building that was purpose-built for education represented a symbolic victory and investment into black education by the city.

In their summary of the police census, the Board connected physical facilities to student attendance, an association that would continue throughout the remaining decades

¹⁵ 59th annual report, 1887. Pg 36

¹⁶ Andrea R. Andrews, “The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870-1900: A Study of Urban Reform” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70, no 3 (Fall 1975) 263

¹⁷ Andrea R. Andrews, “The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870 – 1900: A Study of Urban Reform” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70., no 3 (Fall 1875) 267.

¹⁸ Andrews, “The Baltimore School Building Program,” 263.

of the nineteenth century. At the conclusion of their report, they noted that to encourage citizens to send their children to public schools, rather than to the system of private schools in the city, “suitable provisions for the accommodation and instruction of their children” must be made. “Suitable provisions” included a “proper building, furniture, teachers, books, and the other appliances of school life.”¹⁹ If schools were “suitable,” “attractive,” and conveniently located, children “who would otherwise roam the streets, and grow up in ignorance and vice,” and most needed the influence of schools, would be compelled to attend school as they were “attracted” to the buildings. The very children who would be compelled to attend school due to the attractiveness of the buildings were “the very class that our public schools should aim to elevate and make good citizens.” Without getting children into the classroom, the schools would not be able to perform their primary function. As there was no compulsory law, appealing to the sensibilities of the children would be the only consistent way of encouraging children to attend school. The children who attended BCPS would “be put in the way of becoming good and useful citizens.”²⁰ Increasing the population of children attending BCPS would require an increase of physical space through the construction or purchase of new buildings.

Physical Conditions of the Schools and What a Child Needs to Learn

The physical condition of the schools occupied many of the reports from the Board to the City Council. To the Board, the physical “facility” of a school was the physical plant – the lot, the building, and the classrooms. To the black community members that petitioned for new buildings, “facility” encompassed both the physical building *and* the grades offered. In part, the focus on the physical limitations of the

¹⁹ *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1877) xviii

²⁰ 59th annual report, 1887. Pg 36

schools justified the increased appropriations the Board requested each year. Immediately after the Baltimore Association schools were incorporated into BCPS, Black Baltimoreans petitioned the City Council and Board for “greater facilities” for their children. Black Baltimoreans wanted an increase in the physical capacity of the schools.²¹ When the city assumed authority and funding of the Baltimore Association, they decreased the number of schools from twenty-two to ten, thus cutting the public-school offerings for black students in half. When Black parents requested an increase in facilities, rather than increase the physical capacity of the schools, the Board increased the “facility” of the schools – offering grammar instruction if a child showed aptitude and a teacher deemed it necessary. The schools were no longer limited to primary instruction. However, the number of schools, ten, would not increase.

The Board continued the Baltimore Association’s practice of renting buildings for CPS rather than purchasing buildings designed specifically for education. Several of the schools continued to rent space in black churches, while others found temporary housing when their locations were rented out for other purposes. Male and Female Colored Schools No. 1 and Male and Female Colored Schools No. 3 were removed from their Association locations and other locations were found while the remaining schools stayed at their previous locations. For example, Colored Female No. 4 was located at Orchard near Ross Street, the location of the Methodist Episcopal Church and previously the location of one of the Association schools. It was unclear if the building held African Methodist Episcopal services as well. Despite the change in locations, the Board noted that all of the schools at least maintained their “usual numbers” and, in most cases,

²¹ “The Colored Schools” *The Baltimore Sun*, January 10, 1868

increased the number on roll.²² As CPS expanded from ten schools to fourteen by 1885, the Board and City would continue to rent buildings for the schools despite noting in 1870 that the buildings were “ill-adapted to the purpose” and that the purchase of purpose-built buildings would be required. The policy of renting rather than purchasing buildings was not an indication of discrimination against “this class of pupils,” but, rather, a continuation of the practice established by the Baltimorean Association to furnish “every reasonable facility . . . for obtaining a good education.”²³ “Every reasonable facility,” according to the Board, was to include both material and abstract definitions of “facility.” Despite the “unsuitability” of the rented buildings and the Black Baltimorean petition requesting “increased facilities,” the Board made no note of the disparity between “reasonable” facility and the existing material conditions of the schools.

Immediately, the Board noted the unsuitability of the rented facilities for CPS and the necessity of improving the physical conditions of the buildings. They also noted that finding adequate physical accommodations was a “great difficulty” and that the buildings they were able to find were not desirable. The 1871 Report to the Mayor and the City Council noted that the rented buildings for all but one of the CPS schools were crowded and that the children were in “low, dark, and badly ventilated apartments”; these physical limitations were “very disadvantageous to their success.” The poor physical conditions of the schools were “unattractive to that class of our community,” which, according to the board, would make it difficult for Black Baltimoreans to see the utility and benefit of

²² Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, 4; *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 45, 55.

²³ *Forty – Second Annual Report* (1871) 23

attending school.²⁴ This statement seemingly ignored the educational advocacy of Black Baltimoreans prior to 1870. Prior to 1870, black parents advocated for the state to hire black teachers, increase educational offerings to their children, and reform of the city's tax code.²⁵ At the conclusion of the Board's report, they urged the City Council to "fulfil [their] obligations" and purchase "suitable buildings" in locations "deemed most desirable for their accommodation, in the different parts of the city."²⁶ Improved physical facilities placed in convenient locations would remove barriers for black education in the city, but it would also result in an increase in student ability. The Board member continued, that an increase in physical facility could also extend the course of instruction to include Grammar Schools for advanced students. None of these suggestions would be adopted by the Board and another school would not open until 1873. Everyone, the Board and Black Baltimoreans both immediately noted, that the schools suffered from overcrowding.

The small size of the rented buildings limited the number of black children who could receive a public education in the city. Even if a parent determined the cost of lost wages to be worth their child's educational attainment, many were unable to access the public accommodations and often ended up on waitlists as space was unavailable. Both the Baltimore Association and CPS schools were restricted by the physical limitation of the rented rooms they occupied. Despite the Board's desire to increase the attendance of schools, the buildings *could not* physically hold more children. The Baltimore Association ran twenty-two schools, including a normal school for black teachers, in the

²⁴ *Forty-Third Annual report* (1872) 14-15

²⁵ "The Colored Schools," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 1868.

²⁶ *Forty-Third Annual report* (1872) 14-15

city by 1867 with 2,800 students enrolled.²⁷ The Board also determined that educational spaces would only be needed for 3,000-- or about 37.5 per cent—of the city's approximately 8,000 black children. While the number of black children who *could* attend one of the city's Colored Public Schools (CPS) was greater than the Baltimore Association schools, 2,800 compared to 3,000, education was still restricted to less than half of black children. Enrollment for CPS would surpass 3,000 students in 1877, although average daily attendance would not surpass 3,000 students until the following year. The Board would record, and compare, enrollment at the start of the year and average attendance of students throughout the year. Often, average attendance, rather than enrollment or "pupils on the rolls," would be used to justify budget recommendations from the Board to the City Council. During this almost ten-year period, only three additional schools would open for black students despite the fact that the enrolled population nearly doubled.²⁸ The practice of renting, rather than purchasing, would continue. An attempt to abandon rented buildings would occur in the 1870s, but the use would only increase and over enrollment would continue.²⁹

The City Council rarely authorized funds to purchase additional buildings despite the overcrowding of the schools. The overcrowding also restricted the number of students attending both CPS and BCPS and limited the growth the Board wanted to see in student attendance. To address the overcrowding and potentially expand the number of schools,

²⁷ "The Colored Schools" *The Baltimore Sun*, January 10, 1868

²⁸ This rate of school openings exceeds the rate of schools opening for white children, which plateaued during this period. Several evening schools would close during this period due to low enrollment. In 1871, there was a total of eighty-six white schools and in 1877, when black student enrollment crossed the initial 1868 projection of 3,000 students, there were eighty-four white schools. Information compiled by author using Annual Reports, 1870 – 1878.

²⁹ Andrea R. Andrews, "The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870-1900: A Study of Urban Reform," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70, no 3 (Fall 1975) 271.

the Board and City Council relied on renting and the use of annexes to accommodate the increasing number of students. John T. Morris, the president of the school Board, blamed the overcrowding on the City Council's unwillingness to exceed the annual school building appropriation, which forced the board to continue the policy of annexing buildings in the 1880s.³⁰ Since the Board was comprised of ward representatives who were appointed by the City Council, they were beholden to the election cycle and accommodated the desire for a good public school system and lower taxes, particularly during the economic downturns of the latter half of the nineteenth century.³¹

Morris considered the use of annexes to be a poor solution to the city's overcrowded schools. He believed that it was not "right to place children in rented buildings and halls, entirely unsuited for school purposes" and urged parents to keep their children out of school until enough purpose-built schools were available.³² It was unclear if Morris meant the statement to guilt the City Council to increase the appropriations or if he genuinely believed that children should wait until space could be found for them. While the motivation of his statement was probably in the middle, it discounted the schools black children had access to and encouraged children to wait, rather than seek out their education. Unintentionally, or perhaps not, Morris encouraged less children to attend CPS as all but one building was rented and many of the schools wanted to make liberal use of annexes. The Colored High and Grammar school was able to accommodate their students with two annexes and Colored Nos. 7 through 9 had all requested annex accommodations. Colored No. 7 was need of annexed space, as the school had two

³⁰ "Are Larger Schools Needed?" *The Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1880

³¹ Andrea R. Andrews, "The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870-1900: A Study of Urban Reform," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70, no 3 (Fall 1975) 263.

³² "Are Larger Schools Needed?" *The Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1880

rooms, with three teachers each, but “enough scholars to form six classes.”³³ The condition of the building Colored No. 7 was in was particularly egregious; the Board noted as early as 1876 that the building *and* location were “discreditable” and “unfit for occupation for school purposes.” The Board further noted that it would “undoubtedly” be condemned, and it was “unjust” for the teachers and pupils to occupy the building. They recommended a new building, where School No. 6 and No. 7 could be consolidated, but no such appropriation was made.³⁴

The Material Conditions of Schools

The physical plant of a school building was just one element of the material conditions of the schooling experience, but it was one that loomed large in both the Black Baltimorean and the Board’s imaginations. Each annual report from the Board to the City Council contained information regarding the physical condition of all the city’s school buildings, rented or owned outright. In part, the report would provide support for the Board’s annual budget request. CPS, however, continued to occupy rented buildings that were ill suited for educational purposes, which were often overcrowded and not maintained. While all the schools in CPS were in some sort of decay, the Colored High and Grammar School and Colored Schools no. 3 and no. 4 were singled out as being in particularly poor condition. Several rooms in Colored School no. 3 were condemned by both the community and the Board for being damp and badly lighted in 1881.³⁵ Colored

³³ “Are Larger Schools Needed?” *The Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1880

³⁴ *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1877) xxiv

³⁵ *Fifty-Third Annual Report* (1882) 71

School no. 3 was originally a chapel that in 1872 had been “rebuilt and adapted to its present uses” for a capacity of 800 male and female students.³⁶ Colored School no. 4 was so crowded that rooms in both the male and female departments were occupied by two teachers with their classes and students were regularly turned away due to a lack of space.³⁷ The Colored High and Grammar School, which also shared a building with Male Colored School No. 1, occupied the old City Hall building and although retrofitted for educational purposes, it was inadequate for the number of children attending the schools. The Board would use this building from 1872-1889 as its high and grammar school, despite the small classrooms, the poor ventilation and lighting, and the inadequacy of the exits. It was almost impossible, the Board reported in its 1884 Annual Report, for children to move quickly out of the building due to the narrowness of the stairway. In case of an emergency, particularly fire, children on the third floor would be doomed.³⁸

Despite the reliance on renting buildings and refitting them for educational purposes, building new schoolhouses was still the ideal, even for the city’s black children. A good school building was one element of the larger conversation around what a child needed in order to learn. It meant that the building was well attended, and “the most satisfactory results attained.”³⁹ Joseph S. Davis, a black lawyer speaking on behalf of the Maryland Educational Union, noted that the schools were “sadly deficient” and that there were “glaring inconsistencies in the establishment and maintenance of our schools.” Black Baltimoreans, he continued, were duty bound to protest, speak plainly, and be “a race of grumblers” because schools, the “very bulwarks of our civilization”

³⁶ *The Sun*, October 9, 1872

³⁷ *Fifty – Eighth Annual Report* (1887) 39

³⁸ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) 32; *Fifty – Eighth Annual Report* (1887) 39

³⁹ *Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (1875) xiii

needed to improve.⁴⁰ Repeatedly throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, the Board pressed the City Council to increase appropriations for CPS school buildings. Year after year, appropriations would never be enough to implement the scheduled maintenance and repairs for BCPS. If new buildings were erected, they were often built as inexpensively as possible, thus requiring repairs quickly, eating into the small building appropriation the Board received from the City Council.⁴¹ Davis denounced CPS, as half of the school age population of black children could not find accommodation in the public schools. The constant requests for increased facilities to the City Council by the Board and Black Baltimoreans failed to increase the number of schools and by extension, the number of children educated in the city.⁴²

Importance of Community Schools: Location

In addition to the physical condition of the school buildings, the Board and Black Baltimoreans both noted the importance of the location of a school to black children's educational attainment. In 1871, the Board explicitly made this connection in its report to the City Council. This inspired the campaign to open a school in the northwestern section of the city in 1886. It was generally understood that a child *should* attend the school that was closest to their residence, but the actuality was far from this. The location of the city's schools had less to do with students than with city politics. A *Baltimore Sun* article from 1895 pointed out the way in which political reality conflicted with School Board policies. As a result, recommendations from a City Councilman to build a school in his

⁴⁰ "The Colored People: Mass meeting in the cause of education" *The Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1887

⁴¹ Andrea R. Andrews, "The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870-1900: A study of urban reform" *Maryland Historical Magazine* vol 70, no 3 (Fall 1975) 266-67

⁴² "The Colored People: Mass meeting in the cause of education" *The Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1887

ward was often done “without regard to the actual needs of the section or of the location of the other schools.”⁴³ While Board members were thinking of their future political gains, parents wanted schools near their homes to minimize student travel time and to ensure their child’s safety. Parents were explicitly fearful of their child’s safety while traveling to and from school in addition to the school’s poor accommodations. Colored School No 3, for example, required children to cross the Baltimore and Ohio railroad tracks to attend school in a building that had condemned rooms and was ill suited for their educational needs.⁴⁴ Renting buildings and the haphazard nature of construction reflected the board’s efforts—despite the City Council’s response—to ensure that children should attend a school near their homes. Since new schoolhouses often did not follow the patterns of where families and children lived, school capacity varied from being overcrowded and “beyond their proper sitting capacity,” to others that did not meet their projected capacity and had many available seats, but were not conveniently located.⁴⁵ Until the mid-1880s, Baltimore’s black population, living near their workplaces, had been distributed evenly across three quarters of the city’s twenty wards. The annexation of land and residential segregation practices would see the congregation of Black Baltimoreans in the northwest section of the city a decade later. The increasing residential segregation of the city would make neighborhood schooling and the buildings’ locations of upmost importance.

Location of the schoolhouses was a particular concern throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century but was a particular focus after the annexation of county land into

⁴³ Baltimore Sun, February 14, 1895. Andrea R. Andrews, “The Baltimore School Building Program, 1870-1900,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70 no 3 (Fall 1975) 263.

⁴⁴ *Fifty-Third Annual Report* (1882) 71

⁴⁵ *Sixty First Annual Report* (1890) xl

the city's boundaries in 1888. Attempts to change the city's boundaries occurred several times in the two decades after the Civil War, but was consistently voted down by residents of the "belt," the area to the north, west, and east of Baltimore. The incorporation of the lands into the city added approximately 38,000 residents to the city's overall population, added two members to the Board of School Commissioners, and incorporated the existing county schools into BCPS. In July of 1888, the Board was tasked with the funding and administration of fifteen additional schools – twelve for white children and three for black children.⁴⁶ How these schools would be reorganized dominated the Board's discourse during the summer.

The county schools were organized differently than the city schools, employed both white and black teachers, and were not conveniently located for children to attend. Several of the schools were considered "unclassified" – they did not make a distinction between primary and grammar grades – and were co-educational. The newly acquired schools were immediately segregated by gender to align with the city's schools. To immediately address the "unclassified" grades, the Board created a system of annex schools and created equivalencies between the county and city grades. In their annual report the Board noted that most of the students, 3,054 of the 3,840, were in grades one through four in the county schools, which corresponded with grades one through three in the city schools.⁴⁷ The primary schools contained the largest number of students and adding the additional county students would only compound the overcrowding of these

⁴⁶ *Sixtieth Annual Report* (1889) xxxii

⁴⁷ *Sixty First Annual Report* (1890) 38-42

particular schools. The stated student to teacher ratio was forty students to one teacher but actual count lists seventy students per one teacher in several of the schools.⁴⁸

When discussing the location of the rented buildings for the ten schools, the Board noted in 1867 that “nearly all the present schools are located in neighborhoods inhabited by colored people” and, therefore, would encourage children to attend school.⁴⁹ Children should attend the school nearest to their residence was codified into the organization of the schools. Article XVII, section three, of the rules of the Board noted that “pupils shall attend the school nearest their residence unless otherwise approved of by the Board, or the Local Committee having charge of the school to which the pupils properly belong.”⁵⁰ The vagueness of the phrase “unless otherwise approved of by the Board, or the Local Committee” meant that it was still within the boundaries of authority that black children often had to travel great distances or attend schools surrounded by factories. Despite the supposed proximity, several neighborhoods the schools were located in were not “friendly” to schools. To justify the purchase of a new building for the Colored High and Grammar School, the Board noted in 1884 that the neighborhood was “too noisy” for a school and again, in 1886, that the old City Hall building was located “in the midst of a number of manufactories, and the noise in the vicinity is at times almost deafening.”⁵¹ In arguing for a new high school building, several individuals pointed to the unsuitability of where the high school currently was located to justify the expense.

The unfitness of the location was set forth in an open letter in the Baltimore sun of November 14 from Messrs. G. S. Griffith, C.V Slagle and F. P Stevens, in which

⁴⁸ *Sixtieth Annual Report* (1890) 48

⁴⁹ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 72

⁵⁰ *Fifty Seventh Annual Report* (1886) 39

⁵¹ *Fifty – Eighth Annual Report* (1887) 39; *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) 32

it was shown that the work of the school was rendered impossible at times by the whirl of machinery, steam whistles and the smoke and dirt from engines. The health of pupils and teachers was impaired by overcrowding and defective ventilation and light. The building, as is probably known to the board, is not safe. Not only is the egress insufficient, but the main wall is out of plumb and has had to be stayed. There are 524 grammar and high school pupils and 150 primary school pupils, with a prospect of 300 applicants for admission to the grammar school after the June examinations.⁵²

For children to learn, or so the board declared, the schools could not be located next to factories and should be a reasonable distance away from their homes. Decreasing the distance from home to school meant that even during inclement weather, a student's attendance would be minimally affected and would increase the overall attendance for the schools creating more opportunity for the children that were restricted from pursuing their education, even if they wanted it.⁵³ The number of black students in the city's public schools would not increase without an increase in the physical capacities of the schools.

School No. 9 and the Colored High School

The community's and administration's belief that children should be able to attend a school close to their homes motivated the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty to agitate for a school in the northwest corridor of the city. Joseph S. Davis, one of the Brotherhood's members and a lawyer, deemed the situation an "educational crisis."⁵⁴ The Brotherhood, led by Rev. Harvey Johnson, was one of the first civil rights organizations in the city. Very explicitly, the organization through coordinated campaigns, meetings, and petitions sought to address several inequalities in the city.⁵⁵ The Brotherhood of

⁵² "Baltimore City Schools: The question of colored teachers for colored children and other matters" *The Baltimore Sun*, February 24, 1886.

⁵³ Annual Report, 1876, 41-42; 58th Annual Report, 1886 pgs 40-41

⁵⁴ "The Colored People: Mass meeting in the cause of education" *The Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1887

⁵⁵ In addition to advocating for black education, the Brotherhood of Liberty agitated to open the bar to black attorneys, coordinated community protests to challenge Supreme Court and lower court decisions, and defended labor rights and protested re-enslavement on a Caribbean island. Dennis Patrick

Liberty, as it will be referred to for the remainder of the chapter, made education one of its primary foci in the 1880s and would be a primary driver of the agitation for opening additional schools and hiring black teachers. At the Brotherhood's inaugural meeting, it organized an educational committee that was tasked with appearing before the City Council and making the city's black community's demands heard. Almost two decades after the creation of CPS, the Board reported that CPS could only accommodate *at most* 6,000 of the approximate 14,000 black children of the city.

The opening in 1889 of School No. 9 in the newly annexed Belt was a result of two years of continued agitation by the Brotherhood and highlights the tension between the material concerns of the Board and Black Baltimoreans. The goals of the two groups were the same: both focused on getting children into the classroom. But the Board and Black Baltimoreans (through the Brotherhood of Liberty) sought different outcomes. For the Board, merely getting children into minimally acceptable—"reasonable"—classrooms was enough. The purchasing of a lot and building a new building was going "above" what the Board deemed reasonable and would hopefully encourage more children to attend CPS. For Black Baltimoreans, getting children into the classroom solidified the child's access to some claim to citizenship and for girls, an economic future outside of the home.

In the two decades between the request for "greater facilities" for black children in 1868 and the petitioning for School No. 9 and the Colored High School in 1886, the Board made consistent requests for increased appropriations from the City Council. They were consistently denied. On February 9th, 1886, a "delegation" from the Brotherhood

appeared before the Mayor and City Council to read their list of demands, highlighting the need for black teachers to teach black children. The response, unlike previous approaches, was favorable. Mayor Hodges, a son of former slave-owning planters, noted that “race prejudice still exist[ed]” and noted that children would benefit from being educated by their own as “sympathy is the foundation of success in everything.” Sympathy, according to the Mayor, was the ability to see and be taught by one that looked like oneself. While the Mayor promised to do “all [he] could for its success” no concrete plans were made. The proposed School No. 9 would be staffed entirely by black teachers, as black teachers could not be employed in schools where white teachers were currently employed. Staffing School No. 9 with black teachers presented a compromise to the Brotherhood and others who were agitating for the employment of black teachers.⁵⁶

The following week, the committee returned, but with more explicit demands; rather than vague promises, they requested an appropriation to purchase a lot in a “central location,” build a new building, and move the Colored High and Grammar school to that location. The petition was brought forward to the Committee on Colored Schools. When they did not receive a satisfactory answer, the committee again approached the Board, identifying the lot in the northwestern part of the city, where it would be accessible to the largest number of students for the greatest gains.⁵⁷ In April, the City Council passed an ordinance not only to build the new high school but made provisions for two new primary schools to alleviate the overcrowding of No. 4 on Biddle and create School No. 9. School No. 9 was to employ only black teachers. However, despite his initial promises to “do all

⁵⁶ “Colored Teachers: Mayor’ Hodges’ Speech to a Visiting Delegation at the City Hall” *The Baltimore Sun* February 9, 1886

⁵⁷ “The City School Board: Bohemian Evening School – Colored Public School Facilities” *The Baltimore Sun*, February 17, 1886

he could” for the success of the black petitioners and CPS, Mayor Hodges vetoed the provisions for the primary schools and only offered funding for the high school.⁵⁸

Increasingly, the drive to open new schools for black children also became a drive to employ black teachers. A new high school building, with increased facilities and physical space for black children, meant that black teachers could be qualified in the same way as white teachers in the city. The annexation of the “belt” into Baltimore proper would provide an impetus for the city to seriously engage with the employment of black teachers, rather than outright dismiss the request. As City Council and the Board debated about how to reorganize the county schools, they eventually allocated funds to purchase a lot, and build a school for black children to staff black teachers. This new school, so long as it remained completely segregated, would employ black teachers.⁵⁹ At the start of the 1888-89 academic year, Roberta Sherdian would become the first black public schoolteacher employed by the city when she joined the staff at Colored Primary School No. 9.⁶⁰ In 1889, the school would educate about 650 children “under the exclusive charge of [twelve] colored teachers.”⁶¹

Despite the protests of the surrounding white neighborhood, in October of 1888, the Colored High and Grammar School officially opened. The new building contained twenty-four classrooms and could “comfortably seat about 1,000 pupils,” increasing the number of courses that could be offered. Of the twenty-four classrooms, seven belonged to Female Colored Primary School No. 1, which was moved from its previous rented

⁵⁸ Halpin, *A Brotherhood of Liberty*, 76-77; “Colored Teachers,” *The Baltimore Sun* February 9, 1886; “The City School Board,” *Baltimore Sun* February 17, 1886; “The School Board – Colored Schools and Colored Teachers,” *The Baltimore Sun* April 7, 1886

⁵⁹ “The City Council,” *The Baltimore Sun* April 24, 1888; “Approved by the Mayor,” *The Baltimore Sun* May 4, 1888

⁶⁰ Halpin, *A Brotherhood of Liberty*, 77

⁶¹ *Sixty-First Annual Report* (Baltimore: John Cox, “City Printer,” 1890) xxii, xxxv

location. The primary school was moved into the building as a temporary measure, as the Board projected an increase of 350 to 400 grammar students the next academic year.⁶² The following year, the Board noted that the success of the high and grammar schools provided an “impetus” to the primary school students, and several entered “with the purpose of advancement and the hope of becoming teachers.”⁶³

The City Council and Board, when making their appropriation for the Colored High and Grammar School, underestimated the Black Baltimorean drive to gain education. Within three days, the new school was overcrowded.⁶⁴ The original intent of the new building, located on Saratoga Street, was to house not only the Colored High and Grammar School but also Female Colored Primary School No. 1 *and* Male Colored Primary School No. 1. The latter had moved into the old City Hall building that the Colored High and Grammar school originally occupied but received notice that they would have to vacate the building by the end of the summer. In total, Female and Male Colored Primary School No. 1 contained 600 students and, if no appropriation were made, would occupy rented buildings again.⁶⁵ While School No. 9 was presented as a solution by the Board and City Council as a way to address black community agitation, it’s immediate overcrowding signaled that it was only a temporary measure against a much larger community concern. More children wanted an education, either of their own volition or as encouraged by their parents, than the physical buildings could provide. Through their unwillingness to open more schools for black children, the Board and City Council restricted and limited the education black children could get in the city. By

⁶² *Sixtieth Annual Report* (1889) xxiv, 37

⁶³ *Sixty-First Annual Report* (1890) xxxv

⁶⁴ “Colored High School” *The Baltimore Sun* October 11, 1888

⁶⁵ *Sixtieth Annual Report* (1890) xxiv

limiting the number of children that received an education, the Board reinforced their belief that black children did not interact with the city's public schools in ways they wanted children to.

Conclusion

The physical plant of a school building was linked to student attendance, which was used to support or dismiss black education in the city. These competing narratives around black student attendance would become linked with understanding the purposes of education in the city and justify what reforms did and did not happen. Irregular student attendance had material explanations. The Board acknowledged the frequent need for a child's employment to sustain their household and that this reality would not change, so they focused on the appearance and location of the school buildings. An attractive and conveniently located school, they believed, would encourage children, irrespective of race and gender, to attend school. For Black Baltimoreans, opening a new school, either by renting or purchasing a new building, increased the number of children able to access education. Increasingly, through the advocacy of the Brotherhood of Liberty, opening a school would become tangled with the fundamental belief that a child should be taught by their own community. Beyond the physical plant of a school building, the inherent advocacy for black teachers signaled the increasing correlation between education and right for Black Baltimoreans.

Chapter Four: “With Various Wants and Different Purposes:” Curriculum and “Classes” of Children

The 1893 Columbian Exposition and Student Work

“It is recommended” a circular from the National Educational Association started, “that the public schools shall lead in all local celebrations on Columbus Day.” The circular, reprinted in the *Sixty Third Annual Report of the Board* in 1892, outlined directions for school districts to follow to create display materials for the 1893 Columbian Exposition.¹ The National Educational Association (NEA) was dedicated to elevating and advancing the teaching profession and to “promote the cause of popular education in the United States.”² For the Columbian Exposition the NEA wanted to display “educational work,” or student assessments, in the planned Liberal Arts Building to “reveal to the nations of the world the mighty processes which are in operation for promoting the physical, intellectual, and moral well- being of this great people.”³ Although the association would provide a “uniform program of exercises” for every school district to complete, each state would have an assigned space to exhibit whatever educational materials they would like to compile.⁴

Another circular from the Hon. William T. Harris, the United States Commissioner of Education, echoed the goals of the National Educational Association. In one building, the Columbian Exposition would highlight the educational work done in the United States and provide comparative models for “teachers and other persons interested

¹ *Sixty – Third Annual Report* (1892) xxxii

² National Educational Association, *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses: Session of the year 1891* (New York: The Association, 1891) 5

³ National Educational Association, *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses: Session of the year 1891* (New York: The Association, 1891) 39

⁴ *Sixty – Third Annual Report* (1892) xxxii

in educational work to make a comparative study of the various exhibits, and to form some idea of the systems they represent.”⁵ The proposed educational exhibit demonstrated not only the increasing professionalization of teaching and the importance of continuing education to that process, but also highlighted the educational progress of students. The Baltimore School Board moved to be represented and sought to “secure the requisite amount of money” to create their exhibit, transport it to Chicago, arrange it “suitably for display,” and then transport it back to Baltimore. The educational expenses would be incorporated into the \$60,000 requested by the Board of World’s Fair Managers, a statewide committee that coordinated the varying exhibits the state intended to display in Chicago.⁶

The exhibit of Baltimore City’s Public Schools at the World’s Fair consisted of fifty-six volumes of “written specimens of work in all branches of study.” Nineteen volumes were from the high school and college, twenty from the grammar schools, thirteen from the primary schools, and four from the English-German schools.⁷ Interspersed in the volumes would be work from black children attending Female Colored nos. 1, 5, and 7 through 9, and Male Colored nos. 4, 7 and 8. Of the children represented from these schools, thirty-one were girls. Daisy Dial, at twelve, had a language assignment where she discussed trees in the same volume in which Alice Chambers, fifteen, wrote about “going out and coming in” and Theresa M.A McTeeny, sixteen, showed off her penmanship. All three girls represented the “best” of grammar

⁵ *Sixty – Third Annual Report* (1892) 81-82

⁶ *Report of the Board: World’s Fair Managers of Maryland* (Baltimore: Geo. L. McCahan, 1894) 6-7, *Maryland Historical Society* PAM 2392

⁷ *Sixty Fifth Annual Report* (1894) xxxvii-xxxviii

education in fifth grade, or the fifth year in the course of study.⁸ Three sixteen-year-olds were featured in one of the 8th grade volumes: Annie Delena, in a response that spanned three handwritten pages, discussed grammar instruction; Joseph Matthews demonstrated his penmanship; and, in a two-page essay, Joseph Garner wrote about physiology.⁹ With the exception of noting where the child attended school, no other distinction was made to separate black and white students in the volumes but it is clear from the names of the schools. Black children attended the Colored Public Schools (CPS) and white children attended Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). Although none of the reports generated after the World's Fair mention where the BCPS materials were displayed, it was most likely in the liberal arts building along with other states' educational materials.¹⁰ The Superintendent of Instruction believed that "this general exhibit of our schoolwork exercised a beneficial influence on our teachers and pupils and recommends an annual exhibit in our city."¹¹

The display of student work at the Exposition went "so well" that the Board proposed an annual display in Baltimore, which would "afford an opportunity to the public to see the condition of our system of public education and the progress the schools are making."¹² Student displays of work would fulfill several purposes. First, successful completion of the assessments would justify the choices made on behalf of the children. The Board routinely said that they made personnel and curricular choices outside of the scope of politics and sectarian influence. Secondly, displays of students' excellent work

⁸ Baltimore City, Grammar School 5th Grade (fifth year in course) no 35, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD. MS 1820

⁹ BCPS Grammar Schools 8th Grade (eighth year in course) no 23

¹⁰ *Sixty – fourth Annual Report* (1893) xxxviii

¹¹ *Sixty – fourth Annual Report* (1893) xxxix

¹² *Sixty-Seventh Annual Report* (1896) 50.

would justify the expenses of the schools, which were a source of conflict between the board and City Council. The inclusion of black children in the materials presented at the Columbian Exposition, and the lack of distinction between the white and black children in the materials, highlighted the lack of overt racialization in the Board's curricular choices.

As the educational displays were intended to show, school administrators created two "classes" of children and structured their curricular choices around these understandings of what education needed to do for a child's education. These choices were made *on behalf* of children that would funnel them, if deemed a "certain" class into certain educational choices that, while not on its surface racialized and gendered, would become racialized and gendered by the end of the nineteenth century.

The Purpose of Education and Categories of Children

Much like the rhetoric around the establishment of the city's public school system, when the Baltimore Association established their schools, they made no distinction between rich or poor black children. All would require education. In fundraising bids during their brief administration of the city's black schools, the Baltimore Association justified its rationale for schooling by referring to the limited future of the children if they remained *without* education. Without adequate schooling, the free and newly freed children throughout the state would become a drain on state resources. Joseph M. Cushing, the Corresponding Secretary for the Baltimore Association and the city's representative at the 1867 Constitutional Convention, wrote in the Association's *Second Annual Report*

You must either raise them up or they will drag you down. You must either make them able to know the laws so that they may obey them, or you must pay heavily

to restrain them from and punish them for crime. You must either teach them chastity, thrift, sobriety and decency of conduct, or you must dot your State with Alms Houses, Jails and Penitentiaries¹³

Cushing intended his statement to do several things: to raise money for the Baltimore Association, as the schools were financially struggling in 1867; to justify the education of black children and illiterate adults as a preventative at a time when education was neither compulsory nor universally supported, even for white children; and to offer a future for black children that adhered to the prevailing Protestant social values – “chastity, thrift, sobriety, and decency of conduct.” Teach the children to be self-sufficient and they would be able to participate in the city’s larger economic processes.

Cushing continued his calls for funds by extending his economic justification for education from the broader state to the individual. Educated black individuals would provide labor for white Baltimoreans and then their increased spending power would directly benefit the economy as they shopped at white owned business. Thus, educated black individuals would benefit the overall economic health of the city. “You need their labor, for without them your fields will lie waste, and your business operations be small.” Without an income, uneducated Black Baltimoreans would starve or steal. Cushing advocated for teaching Black Baltimoreans “the value of contracts” and to “read and write” because without it, they could not do any of the things that would support their community or the local economy. “The advantages of educating them are great,” he concluded, “and we can see no disadvantages.”¹⁴ Educating *all* children, irrespective of their status, would be an economic benefit for the city.

¹³ Joseph M. Cushing, *Second Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People*, (Baltimore: J.B. Rose & co, 1866) 12

¹⁴ Joseph M. Cushing, *Second Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People*, (Baltimore: J.B. Rose & co, 1866) 12

When the city incorporated the Association schools, the Board and City Council justified their administration of the black schools in a similar way. Education would not support black children in their pursuit of citizenship, as fitting a boy for “his public duties as a citizen ... is happily inapplicable in Maryland to the colored race,” according to the *Thirty Ninth Annual Report* in 1867. However, education of black children would “diminish crime,” “promote order,” and advance the “good of society.”¹⁵ While Cushing emphasized the economic gains of an educated black labor force, the Board emphasized the general social health of the community and structured a course of study, emphasizing primary education, around this. Education explicitly for black children would decrease crime and promote order so long as interest in educating black children continued. Any failure to increase the student population would be because the community was swayed by protests that the schools did not have the broader community and the black children’s interests in mind.¹⁶

According to the Board, the purpose of schooling aligned education to the “conditions in society” to “fit them specially for the active and practical duties of life,” whatever those duties may be and in “whatever sphere they may be called to act.”¹⁷ Anything less than that would be a dereliction of responsibility. Education should be accessible to both rich and poor children so that “in the race of life, [all children] may have equal advantages with their more favored competitors.” The board’s statement made no reference to the race or gender of the child; rather, they focused on their economic class. Much like the push to justify popular education in the antebellum period, the Board

¹⁵ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 7

¹⁶ *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 45

¹⁷ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1870); *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (1878)xxxii-xxxiii

wanted to encourage both rich and poor children to attend the schools to emphasize the egalitarian nature of their education. Children of all classes, in obtaining their “fit” in society through education, would benefit the entire community. What a child was “fit” for depended upon their parental socio-economic class and the child’s ability when in the classroom. Schools were required to address as many different socio-economic classes from which their students came. If schooling could support the disparate children that attended and nominally treated them as “equal,” then community complaints around unjust and unfair treatment would cease. The *Forty Ninth Annual Report* stated that the city’s schools were “made up from every class in society with various wants and different purposes. Let the whole community be gratified in this educational desire, each one according to his preference, and then there can be no just cause of complaint of unfair discrimination.”¹⁸ It is unclear if their reference to the “whole community” was directed toward the continuously agitating black parents, but they were part of the broader sentiment of the Board’s statement. The Board, even if they did not acknowledge or cite him, were embracing Horace Mann’s argument that common education would, with “proper upbringing,” be the best means of achieving social, moral, and economic uplift of the entire community.¹⁹ The benefits of education, however, could not be obtained if the student was not physically in the classroom and thus, attendance would become a primary concern of the Board.

¹⁸ *Forty-Ninth Annual Report*, (1878) xxxii-xxxiii

¹⁹ David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 101; Jonathan C. Messerli, “Localism and State Control in Horace Mann’s Reform of the Common Schools” *American Quarterly* 17, no 1 (Spring, 1965) 104-105; Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Horace Mann’s Troubling Legacy: The Education of Democratic Citizens* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010)

While Mann was not the only one agitating for this understanding of public education in the early to mid-nineteenth century, his reputation for educational reform would loom in how many individuals, then and now, understood the purpose of education.

Attendance and Categories of Children

The gains of education and its association with student attendance was immediately apparent by anyone who even cursorily examined the schools. Without children physically attending, the benefits would be lost. However, the Board was acutely aware that, due to the conditions in which they lived, most of the children would not follow the entire course of study. The 1877 School Census identified 69,303 children in the city, between the ages of six to eighteen. Just over 44 per cent of these children were in the city's public schools, 21 per cent in private schools, and 34.5 per cent in neither. The 23,877 students not currently attending, the Board took pains to note, did not mean that these children were wholly uneducated, as many children left school after learning how to read. These children, often under the age of fifteen, "never advance[d]" beyond grammar school because "their services [were] required elsewhere"; the Board believed such children constituted at least two-thirds of the 34.5 per cent not attending school. The census only identified the child's gender and if they attended school. The Board's comments regarding *who* attended school and those "growing up in idleness and ignorance" also did not explicitly discuss race. Instead, they focused on a category of children that would "become a burden and a curse to the community" due to their lack of education. These children, whose parents did not "seem to appreciate the school privileges offered . . . neglect[ed] the opportunities and advantages of free instruction."²⁰ The problem was not in the educational choices the board was making on behalf of the children, but in the fact that the parents and children did not fully embrace the benefits these choices afforded them.

²⁰ *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1877) xii

Parents who supported their children's educational attainment, white or black, rich or poor, would receive the full benefits of education and those without parental support would need intervention. Student attendance indicated several positive improvements, according to the board – if students attended the public schools, white or black, it meant that the community not only supported the schools but also the decisions the Board made.²¹ This “appreciation of the efforts” made by the city's educational officials, as evidenced by the number of students attending public schools, signified that no significant changes should be made to the schools. The reasons *why* students did not attend were largely outside of the control of the board: parents did not support their children's education because they needed their children's income and because they were discouraged from sending their children to school by those who protested the presence of white teachers in the black schools. This “necessary evil” of irregular attendance resulted in lateness and frequent absence that disrupted the learning for not only the absent student but also those in the classroom.

Frequent pupil absences had a compounding affect as children would influence each other and their habits of behavior would impact their adult years. Children built habits in their school years, the Board argued, and by not attending school, children would “create distaste for the school.” This dislike for school exercises caused students to judge their teachers unfairly and “induces those misrepresentations which sometimes influences parents to inflict irreparable injury, undesignedly, upon their own offspring, by withdrawing them from the school in which they are required to comply with its reasonable requisitions.”²² Parents who did not influence their children to attend were

²¹ *Annual Report 1(872) 19*

²² *Forty – Fourth Annual Report (1873) 15*

doing them “irreparable injury.” In addition to supporting these “misrepresentations” of the necessity of education, the Board noted that with inconsistent attendance, children would develop other bad habits. In 1873, when debating the necessity of a compulsory education law, the Board explicitly tied the “various offences” committed by many of the boys sent to the city’s House of Refuge to “their life of vagrancy in the character of truants from our schools.”²³ The House of Refuge, established in 1851, would be both remedial and preventative and would serve “the moral good of juvenile delinquents and the protection of the community.”²⁴ If teachers and parents were able to keep these children within the schoolhouse, the amount of truant crime would decrease and so would the amount of money spent on managing crime in Baltimore. This belief in education’s ability to decrease street crime was not unique to Baltimore. Many school districts in both urban and rural settings pointed to education’s preventative nature and its relationship to crime.²⁵ Despite the concerns of Baltimore policy makers from the 1870s onwards, compulsory education would not become law for children aged eight to twelve in Maryland until 1902. Even then, exceptions for children over twelve were made and they did not need to attend school if they could prove they were gainfully employed and could read and write.²⁶

Complaints from both school board and the community members centered around attendance – though they blamed low attendance on different factors. The Board of School Commissioners often cited the inability of parents, irrespective of race but more

²³ *Forty-Fifth Annual Report* (1874) xxii

²⁴ As qtd in Adam Malka, *The Men of Mobtown: Policing Baltimore in the Age of Slavery and Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018) 77

²⁵ David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 87 - 98

²⁶ Acts of 1902, Chapter 269

often to class or community status, and their unwillingness to emphasize the importance of education, as the underlying reasons for low student attendance. Black community members, on the other hand, pointed to material shortcomings such as the lack of buildings and school material, accessible schoolhouses, and black teachers as to why children did not attend CPS.

Attendance of both white and black children continued to be a persistent problem, not only locally but nationally. Considering the amount of money and support the city gave its schools, the Board and City Council believed that student attendance should be greater. The Board acknowledged that they could not expect students to attend in direct proportion to the number of children in the city as “home influences and opportunities of the pupils” interfered not only how the individual child did in their education but also impacted the other children in the class as students filtered in and out of the classroom. The Board did, however, want to equalize the number of students per class as the number associated in the different classes were variable. The variability of student attendance in a specific classroom was a result of the ability of the teacher to manage both a large class size as well as encourage children to continue their education.²⁷ The variability of student attendance impacted not only the classes of children but also the attendance rates across all of the city’s schools. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, overall attendance rates for CPS fluctuated between the lowest percentage of 64.7 per cent in 1870 and the highest, 83.5 per cent, in 1887. Comparatively, BCPS fluctuated between 77.5 per cent in 1871 and 86.5 per cent in 1894. The percentages for both CPS and BCPS were in line with national attendances averages, however. The 1872 *Annual Report* noted

²⁷ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 90

that, nationally, some schools hovered around 50 per cent student attendance of those on roll while other cities and towns, “where public education is a popular feature,” were around 75 per cent.²⁸ Throughout the postbellum period, the Board continued to reference lagging and inconsistent attendance as the largest impediment for students, and by extension their parents, to understand the importance of consistently attending school.

Attendance, as described by the Board, stressed that students should interact with the schools to gain the most out of their educational experiences. Students who consistently attended school would reap the benefits of the Board mandated course of instruction and those who left for whatever reason, needed an education that would prevent them from becoming drains on society. The 1876 report, in a section discussing the proposed police census to ascertain the number of children between the ages of five and twenty-one, the Superintendent stated, “When it is understood that to attend these schools is a privilege to be gotten and retained only by complying with certain wise conditions fixed by the Board, then they will become of great use to the colored people and to the community.”²⁹ By highlighting student access to publicly funded educational institutions as a “privilege,” the board explicitly stated that access to schooling could be taken away if a student, or the community writ large, did not comport themselves by the roles or “wise conditions” fixed by the Board. The Superintendent’s statements aligned

²⁸ *Forty – Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the year ending October 31st, 1872* (Baltimore: King Brothers, 1873) viii. Attendance percentages for BCPS and CPS compiled by author from the Annual Reports, 1869-1900. These numbers are not a direct one – to – one comparison as the BCPS numbers included the three high schools and the several grammar schools for white children. Since high school students were identified as either perusing high school instruction to either attend college or to become qualified to teach, the smaller class sizes and willingness of students to attend could have artificially increased their overall percentage of students. Until Colored Grammar and High School no. 1 was opened in 1887, black students were limited to only primary education.

²⁹ *Annual Report* (1876) 41-42

with the prevailing notion at the time that education-imposed order on children, particularly those from working class backgrounds. The Black Baltimorean community would counter the understanding that education and access to schooling was a “privilege”; rather, they argued that it was fundamental to their understanding of citizenship and, as a result, an inherent right.

Due to the sheer number of students that funneled through the primary schools in BCPS, the Board paid particular attention to what and how these students were taught. Given the centralized authority the Board had over curricular decisions, discussions regarding best practices and textbooks frequently appeared in the Board minutes and annual reports. It was estimated that a child needed six to seven years to pass through Primary and Grammar school, as each school contained six “grades” that each lasted approximately three months. If a child started their education at the age of seven, it was expected that the student would complete the entire course of instruction by the time they were thirteen. Only 4 per cent of the students who entered the primary and grammar schools continued into the high schools. To advance to another grade, students took a semi-annual examination given to them by the Board’s Superintendent. An annual examination for children recommended by their school’s Principal occurred for students transitioning from the grammar schools to one of the city’s high schools.³⁰ The curricular choices made were to support whatever the pupil needed to “faithfully and successfully perform their obligations to society in whatever sphere they may be called to act.” Distinctions regarding the students’ economic status – rich or poor – should not dictate their educational options.³¹ Curricular choices, although they were not called as such in

³⁰ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) xxxix.

³¹ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) xli

the *Annual Reports* and the Board's minutes, were to emphasize the purposes of education and the development of a child's mental, moral, and physical capabilities.

The Board structured their curricular choices around the belief that children's education was a privilege rather than a right, but they wanted to ensure a child would be successful once in the schools. Several times throughout the 1860s and early 1870s, the Board cautioned overzealous teachers from "overtaxing the power of their pupils." During a school visit in 1867 to one of the primary schools, the Superintendent noted that children were often asked to do sums of seven columns of thirteen lines each. While this might be appropriate for an older mind or a student of "much more advanced capabilities," it was too much for a younger child in primary education. The Superintendent recommended no more than five or six columns of five to six lines each in arithmetic questions as the *most* a primary school student should be expected to engage with. Anything more than that would cause the child undue stress and associate learning with a task a child did not want to do.

The strain upon the child's intellect was sufficient to produce discouragement and distaste for such exercises. ... The effort of the memory in holding the increasing numbers while the additions are made is sometimes oppressive upon matured minds. It must be much more so upon the mind of a child. When the demand is made beyond the power of the pupil the labor is exhaustion of mental power, a result that never should be admitted. While the mental powers of the child should be cultivated in the extent of their ability, they should never be overtaxed by urging the pressure beyond it.³²

When structuring the course of instruction for primary students, the Superintendent recommended keeping student capacity in mind. Pushing a child too far, with no distinction of economic class, race, or gender, would eventually encourage the child to

³² *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 84

drop out of school. If a child dropped out of school, even if their family did not need their economic contributions, they would eventually become a drain on the state's and the city's coffers. It was of utmost importance that children stay in primary school as "those of the lowest primary classes, that the desires and capabilities of childhood are in most natural, and simplest, and clearest development." Children were best suited to learn the younger they were and primary education was to be the entry point into the educational system, which would then "increase the development of the child's mental and moral powers."³³ While schooling was important to the overall health of the city's white and black communities, the Board would not require children to attend, since education was a privilege that a child and their parents should *want* to take advantage of rather than be *required* to attend.

The Board's belief that education was a privilege, rather than a right, justified their creation of different "classes" of children – one that would attend college and another that would drop out sometime between year one and eight. One of the Board's duties was to visit each primary and grammar school and report their progress. In the aftermath of the Board visits to the schools, they would summarize what went well, what was not working, and how to improve the overall performance of the schools. Often, their conversations would center around how to best help students learn and eventually apply their schooling to their broader life. Due to the large number of children who only attended primary education, the Board noted these children were "always been the objects of special attention."³⁴

The Course of Instruction – Primary Education

³³ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 82

³⁴ *Forty-Fifth Annual Report* (1874) xxi

To be an effective primary school and to best support the sheer number of children's learning needs and outcomes, Superintendents frequently discussed the best methods of child learning. The course of instruction for primaries aligned with the three "objects of education," that is, the "development of a child's physical, mental, and moral powers."³⁵ In 1868, the Superintendent, William R. Creery, recommended that the Primaries, as the primary schools or departments were referred to, include "object lessons" in their course of instruction for composition. According to later *Annual Reports* that fleshed out the purpose of an "object lesson," the goal was to both "develop and train" the child as well as provide instruction and to "educate the mind through the medium of the senses." Children would be given an "object" and told to observe it, first by the parts and then by the whole, to "elicit observation, to induce thought and inquiry, and to apply what has been gained in ideas." It was not enough for a child to identify an apple; the student should be able to identify its parts according to all senses – sight, taste, feel, order – and apply this to the *idea* of an apple as a food. The first three grades of primary education – five, four, and three – would build on one another and add a sense and an idea.³⁶ The value, according to the Superintendent, was not the observation of the object themselves, in fact they recommend starting with familiar and known objects but use of the object to "furnish a vocabulary of correct words." By building a vocabulary of "correct words," a child would "fix careful, regular, systematic habits of thought and mind," and from there, build skills that would allow them to be successful in other

³⁵ *Forty-Fifth Annual Report* (1874) 55

³⁶ The Board gave no justification for why the numbering system of their grades went in reverse order. Students would advance in their course of study by going into grades into lower numbers. The numbering system would be one of the things addressed in the 1885 re-grading of the schools to make the system more comprehensible.

branches of study. In the case of developing vocabulary through observing an apple, Creery believed it would help students in their composition work.³⁷

While several teachers balked at the inclusion of these “object lessons,” each grade contained at least one, and later superintendents would laud their success. While Creery discussed the purpose behind object lessons in 1873, they were introduced in 1868 as being listed under each grade. In addition to the “object lesson,” to be designed by the teachers, the 1868 course of instruction or the “schedule of exercises” began in fifth grade, the first three months of instruction and focused on alphabet class and primer class, which contained basic reading and counting skills, including spelling, reading from a blackboard and a primer, writing numbers up to 100 on a slate, an “object lesson,” and music. First grade, the last semester of instruction in the primary department, included reading in the third reader, spelling and definitions of words, written arithmetic through multiplication and division, timetables, weights and federal money, geography, the history of the State of Maryland, and writing short sentences, among other things.³⁸ Since black children were limited in their offerings, as their schools only included primary instruction and grammar instruction as a teacher saw fit, they largely fell under this schedule of instruction. Their education would emphasize alphabet instruction, spelling, reading, arithmetic, penmanship, and geography.

Manual Instruction for Girls – Sewing and Cooking Instruction

One could not be employed as a domestic servant or within Baltimore City’s seamstress corps if one’s virtues were suspect. Industry and morality, therefore, were linked. The Oblate Sisters of Providence’s curriculum and course offerings walked the

³⁷ *Forty-Fifth Annual Report* (1874) 50 - 54

³⁸ *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 37-39

fine line of maintaining the racial and gendered status quo of the city while also providing the child some sort of access to economic stability later on in their life. Additionally, since the school was tuition based and public offerings were available to the city's children, parents had to be persuaded that their girls would receive some sort of "useful" training. The girls would be situated as future community leaders, as well as good mothers who could pass down their education and values to their children and the children entrusted to their care, while at the same time not causing undue economic burden on their families.³⁹

The educators at St. Frances Academy, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, included handwork into their curricular offerings for students and linked it to the moral development of the students. According to the 1834 national Catholic directory, the Oblate curriculum offered courses in "English, French, Cyphering and Writing, Sewing in all its branches, Embroidery, Washing and Ironing."⁴⁰ Though Washing and Ironing was dropped from the curriculum in 1853, the nuns were taking in washing and ironing from other orders and domestic labor was open to day scholars to cover some of their tuition costs. Domestic manual instruction fulfilled several different purposes in education – the girls would develop a practical skill but in developing the practical skill, they would also develop their virtuous sentiment and become good citizens, aligning the girls' education with broader female education in the antebellum period. The girls were properly performing their place in society, that is, fulfilling some sort of domestic role. The inclusion of embroidery into the curriculum also served a dual purpose for the

³⁹Diane Batts Morrow, *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)2-3

⁴⁰ *Laity's directory* (lucas 1834) 65-71, Original Rule

school, it provided practical instruction for the girls for their futures but provided income for the academy, as community members could purchase them, and they were displayed during fundraising events for priests and community members during the girls' public recitations.

Conversely, when the Colored Public school system was incorporated into the Baltimore City's Public School system in 1867, curricular choices, limited that they were, emphasized an alphabet and primer class to teach reading, spelling, terms, numeration and arithmetic and penmanship in the first three years of primary education. In fact, no manual instruction was discussed when the Board of School Commissioners, who determined the public school's curricular offerings, including what books were assigned, was even mentioned.⁴¹ While the Board did incorporate many of the elements of the Baltimore Association schools – many of their locations and many of the teachers – they did not retain manual instruction. In the Baltimore Association's 1866 annual report, Joseph M. Cushing had reported that several women established Industrial Schools to “teach them habits of industry and home comfort.” The Lady Managers of these schools, believed sewing instruction would “foster a proper independence,” as children were tasked with bringing their own articles to either make or mend. They proposed expanding their industrial training beyond the four schools they established to create “Industrial Colored Schools of Baltimore for the Improvement of the Colored Person in Industry, Morality, and the Comfort of Home-Life.”⁴² But when the city took over administration of the Baltimore Association schools, the manual instruction was dropped.

⁴¹ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 81 -82

⁴² “Report of the Lady Managers of the Colored Industrial Schools,” *Second Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B Rose and Co, 1866) 9- 11

When Black Baltimoreans petitioned the city council and school board to expand educational offerings to the students beyond these first primary grades in 1869, no mention of manual instruction was included. It was assumed that Baltimore's educational system would support a liberal arts education. In fact, no manual instruction for white or black children would be introduced into the public school system until 1884. In 1884, an all-white boys manual training school would open in the city. The school intended to blend both liberal arts and manual instruction, following the Object and Course of Study as established by Washington University in St. Louis. While the school focused on "manual instruction," the Board intended it to be preparatory in nature for their future careers as engineers or another profession in the sciences.⁴³ The Colored Manual Training School would not open until 1892 after the city passed an ordinance demanding the school's establishment in 1888. Bayly Ellen Marks argued the years of deliberations for manual education to be established for either white or black children in the city centered around conversation about what was the best form of education and the projected futures for boys. Alexander McFadden Newell, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was a proponent of manual education that would support boys as they went into business, trade, and the mechanic arts rather than the "learned professions." Newell, with very little control over both county and city curriculum, conflicted with the city's Superintendent Henry Elliot Shepherd. Shepherd was focused on defending classical education and the "training of the mind" of an intellectual elite.⁴⁴ Children who

⁴³ An eventual name change shortly before the turn of the century would emphasize this focus. In 1894 the Manual Training School would change its name to the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and become even more explicitly a preparatory academy for boys projected to attend one of the city's colleges, most notably Johns Hopkins University, which was established in 1876.

⁴⁴ Baylyn Ellen Marks, "Liberal Education in the Gilded Age: Baltimore and the Creation of the Manual Training School," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 74 no 3 (Fall 1979) 204 - 242

completed the course of instruction at BCPS and attended one of the city's colleges would become the elite of the community. After manual instruction was introduced for boys, the Board of School Commissioners began debating expanding manual practical instruction for girls and experimental courses in sewing instruction would be introduced in the female grammar schools, but it would not be until the 1890s when it would be included as mandatory instruction.⁴⁵

When sewing was first introduced in 1883 under the grammar course of instruction, it was largely an experiment that students could opt into. If successful, the Board would then debate opening a Manual Training School for Girls, focusing on cooking and domestic economy, to be associated with the Female High Schools.⁴⁶ It was not an explicitly racialized conversation, as the president made no mention of race in his discussion and black children were limited to primary instruction although the association with the Female High Schools, which were limited to white girls, suggests that the focus was less on black girls but rather white girls. Bettye C. Thomas argued that the push for white manual education in the city rather than focusing on black manual education diminished the presence of skilled black labor in the city by privileging immigrant labor. By privileging white children's manual instruction, the Board reinforced the city's preference by explicitly training students to be skilled labor.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) xxvi; Bettye C. Thomas, "Public Education and Black Protest in Baltimore 1865 – 1900," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 71, no 3 (Fall 1976) 386; Bayly Ellen Marks, "Liberal Education in the Gilded Age: Baltimore and the Creation of the Manual Training School," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 74 no 3 (Fall 1979) 242-44. In the postbellum period, the only school in Maryland to offer manual instruction for black male students was in Prince George's county - Cheltenham State Reformatory. There students would specialize in brickmaking, tailoring, and upholstery work among other trades.

⁴⁶ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) xxx

⁴⁷ Bettye C. Thomas, "Public Education and Black Protest in Baltimore 1865 – 1900," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 71, no 3 (Fall 1976) 389-91

The inclusion of sewing instruction as an elective intervened for those girls whose parents did not teach them at home. Special teachers, or teachers specific to one topic, would be required to teach girls sewing. To justify the expense, the Board noted that “many of our pupils will never have the opportunity of acquiring this kind of useful knowledge at home, and must grow up in ignorance of that which is so indispensable to every woman, unless such instruction is furnished them in our schools.” Since their parents had failed the girls, the school board would hire teachers to see that the girls would be equipped for their futures. Without this intervention, these girls would not be “useful.” Private schools required a course, sewing, that was merely an elective in the city’s public schools. The Board contended that the lack of a required course meant that public school educated girls were behind the city’s private schools’ girls as sewing was already included in the curriculum. The inclusion of this particular skill, as a requirement rather than supplemental instruction done on a voluntary basis, would support girls to learn how to sew “for the home-circle, or as a means of support.”⁴⁸ Much like the justification for manual instruction for black girls by the Lady Managers of the Baltimore Association’s Industrial Schools, sewing and domestic instruction would teach the girls some semblance of independence.

St. Frances Academy, the black Catholic school in the city, always included domestic instruction, particularly sewing, throughout its course offerings. In the academic year 1888-1889, the course offerings included courses in Arithmetic, English studies, composition, and Christian Doctrine among other courses as part of its standard curriculum. Additional courses in dress making and plain sewing, embroidery, tapestry,

⁴⁸ *Fifty-First Annual Report* (Baltimore: John Cox Printers, 1880) xxx

marking, housekeeping and domestic economy could be added to a girl's instruction at additional cost. Although there were numerous changes to the curriculum throughout the nineteenth century, handwork remained constant course offering. Each year, a girl could take a course in some sort of handwork. The school explicitly linked domestic arts and economy to the promotion of the girls' virtues at the very establishment of the school. Domestic manual instruction fulfilled several different purposes in education: the girls would develop a practical skill, but in developing that practical skill, they would also develop their virtuous sentiment and become good citizens, thus fulfilling the roles that Baltimorean society dictated to them. While the Board was focused on white manual instruction for girls and were juxtaposing their students' inability to match the white private academies in the city, the same was true for black students. The girls were receiving explicit domestic instruction in at least one private school in the city and were not in the public schools.

An entry in the Catholic Almanac in 1893 summarized this well:

these girls will either become mothers of families or household servants. In the first case, the solid virtues, the religious and moral principles which they acquired, when in this school, will be carefully transferred as a legacy to their children. Instances of the happy influence, which the example of virtuous parents has on their remotest lineage, in this humble and naturally dutiful class of society, are numerous. As to such as are to be employed as servants, they will be instructed in domestic concerns, and the care of young children. How important then, will it not be, that these girls should have imbued religious principles, and have trained to habits of modesty, honesty, and integrity. The habits of solid virtue, and the exact observance of piety and correct principles of morality.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Oblate Sisters of Providence, The United States Catholic Almanac, 167-170. Motherhouse Box 14, Folder 8. A.G. Davis. Newspaper clipping from Washington DC. July 8, 1893. "St. Frances' Academy: Commencement Exercises of this Grand Old Catholic Institution – Its History" Motherhouse Box 14, folder 9

However, access to education, and the ability to become educators themselves not only reinforced nineteenth century understandings of a proper place for women. It also provided entry into the black middle class of Baltimore City in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but provided a way for black women to educate and advocate for black children.

Black Parental Advocacy and Increasing Grades

Immediately after the city's reorganization of the Baltimore Association schools in 1868, Black Baltimoreans petitioned the Board to increase educational offerings for their children. They recognized that without access to grammar education in public schools, their children would be limited in what they could do. Their children needed education beyond the subjects in the primary schools. While black parents did not focus on specific subjects in their protests for increased grades, the subjects covered in the primary schools were spelling, definition of common words, reading, writing, geography, Primary rules of arithmetic, drawing, and music.⁵⁰ In their broader protests for increased grades, black parents demanded their children receive more education than that. If, as the Board stated in their 1877 *Annual Report*, education was to "meet the wants of the community in which it exists," then Black Baltimoreans were well within their rights to ask for better instruction for their children.⁵¹

Education in Baltimore during 1893, the year the World's Fair materials were produced, had 160 day schools and 10 evening schools. The latter were opened in 1892 to accommodate those young persons who must work, though they also often taught immigrant and illiterate adults. Twenty-two of those schools were for children of color –

⁵⁰ *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1877) 37-40

⁵¹ *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (1878) ix

twenty-one in the primary and grammar levels (the high school was combined with Grammar One) and one Colored Manual Training School. These schools served 7,626 students of color out of a total of 58,250 students in Baltimore public schools. The Summary of Statistics in 1888 noted that the total population of school age children in Baltimore, ages six to twenty-one (divided into dependent, delinquent, and defective classes) was 110,731. This means that approximately half of the school age population of the city could access and be educated by the city's educational institutions.⁵² Within the schools for children of color in 1893, girls outnumbered boys at every level. The Colored Grammar Schools and the high school were coeducational, while the primary levels were segregated along gender lines. Girls outnumbered boys 296 to 179 at Grammar One, 121 to 70 at Grammar Two and 77 to 27 at the high school. There were 3, 513 girls who attended the primary schools compared to the 2,988 boys.⁵³

In 1887, however, the general increase of black children's attendance at CPS was used against black Baltimoreans petitioning for increased educational access and reform. In increasing agitation for black teachers and new buildings for black children, the Board attempted to use the average attendance rate against the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty, or the "colored ministers and other parents," to quell the agitation. The criticism the Brotherhood levied against the Board, particularly "with reference to the teachers"

⁵² *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (1878) xxxi, 41

⁵³ *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (1878) 95-96. Percentage of attendance for the colored manual was 84 % and for all of the CPS, 78% and an average per capita cost of 19.76 at the Colored High and Grammar School, 85.67 for the Colored Manual and 15.24 USD for the Colored Primary. According to an inflation calculator provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018 dollars, it would be 555.22 per capita cost for the Colored High and Grammar School, 2,407.18 for the Colored Manual School, and 428.22 for the Colored Primary. <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1893-dollars-in-2018?amount=15.24>. This website uses a combination of Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index, established in 1913. The information from the 19th century was created from a historical study done by Robert Sahr, Oregon State University for the Official Data Foundation

and “character of the instruction in these schools” did not hold in comparison to the attendance rates of the city’s other schools.⁵⁴ John E. McCahan, the Assistant

Superintendent of Public Instruction, noted that he was

greatly gratified at the improvement in this respect in the colored schools. Much adverse criticism is indulged in by this class of our people with reference to the teachers, and the character of the instruction in these schools, but when we consider the fact that in the first decade of their existence the percentage of attendance was 10 per cent. less than the last ten years – the average for the first being 69.49 per cent., and for the latter 79.51 per cent – we fail to find any just cause of complaint. They certainly cannot be badly managed under our present system, or they would not be so generally patronized.⁵⁵

Mr. McCahan stated that if people were so upset at the educational offerings provided to them, the parents would remove their children from schools and seek other institutions for their children’s education. Black parents did not remove their children from CPS, therefore, the problems and the proposed reforms introduced by the black parents were unnecessary. During the mid-1880s, the Brotherhood agitated for increased buildings, the employment of black teachers, and curricular reforms.⁵⁶ Prior to the increasing agitation during 1886-87, the Board instituted their own reforms, largely around the “grading” of their primary and grammar departments. Seemingly, these reforms were to address broader concerns individuals had with education for both white and black children.

Regrading, or reorganizing the curriculum for each grade, was intended to better align the city’s system of “free instruction” with the way in which the Board defined the purposes of education. The new plan of instruction would “materially improve the civilization and promote the progress of society, will diminish crime and develop and

⁵⁴ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) xxiv

⁵⁵ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) 91-92

⁵⁶ The push for increased physical facilities of the schools is the subject of chapter three and the push for the employment of black teachers is the focus of chapter five.

diffuse virtuous sentiment, and thus prepare the people for the proper performance of their duties.”⁵⁷ Additionally, the changes would make it harder to pass students who were “intellectually incapable” of completing the increase in work. Students who were prematurely advanced and found “not equal to the work of the grade” impacted not only themselves but continuously held back their classmates and were drags on teachers’ overall performance.⁵⁸ If a student was advanced and unable to complete the work, the pressure on the student as they overworked themselves could cause “sickness and death.”⁵⁹ Rule 82 of the *Rules of Order of the Board of School Commissioners and Regulations of Public Schools* very explicitly addressed this concern. The Rule stated that no teacher could assign a greater number of lessons than what could be “readily accomplished” and permitted teachers to “detain” students who were unsuccessful or delinquent with their recitations after regular school hours to “make up the deficiency.”⁶⁰

While no racialized terminology was used in the Board’s summary of the purpose of the schools—ostensibly they were discussing both BCPS and CPS—their focus was clearly on BCPS. Ordinances nominally stated that BCPS and CPS were to be structured in the same way. The change in how the schools were graded would also simplify the process of how students advanced from grade to grade. Prior to the 1885 changes, each grade in both the primary and grammar schools were three to four months long. It was assumed a child would advance after completing the course of instruction after the three-to-four-month long process. The schools were numbered six, the lowest grade, to one, the

⁵⁷ *Fifty Seventh Annual Report* (1886) viii

⁵⁸ *Fifty-Third Annual Report* (1882) 79

⁵⁹ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) xxxi

⁶⁰ Rules of Order of the Board of School Commissioners and Regulations of Public Schools in the City of Baltimore. Adopted January 1872 with amendments to May 5th, 1874. Baltimore: Kelly, Piet and Company. 1874. BRG31-1-5

highest. The plan of instruction after 1885 numbered the grades across both the primary and grammar schools, starting with one, the lowest grade, to eight, the highest. Grades one to five would be housed in the primary schools with the remaining three housed in the grammar schools. Rather than three to four months with a semi-annual examination for promotion, each grade would be a year, and the examination for promotion would happen annually. Each grade would now be completed in an academic year rather than a few months. A provision was added that allowed for a child to be advanced, without an examination, if a pupil showed “exceptional intelligence and who may be able to pursue the studies of the higher grades.” Additionally, geometry, physics, physiology, and hygiene instruction were added to the eighth year in response to parents who wanted their children to have a “more advanced grade of instruction” without needing to attend one of the city’s colleges.⁶¹ These changes would seemingly address all complaints levied at the board.

In the changes to the curriculum, which included far more explicit directions on how teachers should scaffold their instruction, the Board emphasized “the perceptive faculties [of the students,” rather than rote memorization. They wanted children “*to do and discover for themselves*” rather than parrot back their lessons. If the board could structure the course of instruction in such a way to develop the independent pursuit of knowledge, the child’s mental and moral character would improve. Education should “Train the eye to see, the ear to hear, the hand to do, and through these the mind to think.”⁶² Much like the object lessons, the goal was to foster some sort of self-driven pursuit of knowledge, although the board did not use that language.

⁶¹ *Fifty Seventh Annual Report* (1886) xxii – iii.

⁶² *Fifty Seventh Annual Report* (1886) 125

To achieve these aims, the Board became far more explicit in its course of instruction. Curricular directions would expand after the mid-1880s. For instance, in 1883, instruction in the sixth-grade—the first year of instruction—listed only “Alphabet from black board or chart, Spelling from black board or chart, and Reading from black board or chart of short sentences, talks about objects.”⁶³ When the Board regraded and reordered its primary and grammar schools two years after, the same course of instruction contained far more directives for teachers. Each year was to be divided into “half years” and the intent was for the course of instruction to build from the first half year to the second, *yet* to be complete enough that if a child left their schooling, would still have some necessary information for their future. The first grade contained the following instruction:

First Grade. First Year

Reading. – First Half Year – Use objects or pictures, blackboard, slates and reading chart. From the beginning lead the pupils to associate words with the things, qualities, or actions of which they are the representatives. First present the object to their attention and then the word that names it. After a few simple words have been learned in this way combine each object – word with other simple words to form sentences which the pupils are to be taught to read. Continue this exercise with a series of simple object-words. In all new sentences present repetitions of word -forms previously learned and introduce new words gradually. Teach writing from the first, beginning with the small letters of the simplest forms, as wholes, and afterward combing the letters to form simple words. Give much repetition in new combinations of letters previously learned. Use the reading chart after the written forms of a few words have been thoroughly taught. Begin with written instead of printed words.

Second half year – American Educational Reader No. 1 – Supplementary reading to repeat word – forms in new sentences. Continue to practice writing words and sentences and reading them. In this and all subsequent reading work, take special care to see that the thought to be expressed is in the mind of the pupil before requiring him to read aloud. Insist upon a distinct and audible utterance, and correct pronunciation. Pupils must not be permitted to acquire the habit of drawling or reading disjunctively. Teach them to see whole phrases and to speak them as wholes. The articles *a*, *an*, and *the*, and the unemphasized [sic] little

⁶³ *Fifty Fifth Annual Report* (1884) 144

words *in* and *to*, *etc.* should be pronounced and unemphasized [sic] prefixes. For example, *a float*, *a boat* should be spoken as single words like *a float*, *about*, *etc.* Never allow the too common fault of hesitating in learning to read. Make the pupils familiar with the matter of each reading lesson by conversation and explanation, so as to lead them to read it as sight. To this end the new words of each lesson should be written on the blackboard and fully explained. The pupils should also be required to copy them into sentences before allowing them to read the lesson. Oral spelling from the reading lesson.⁶⁴

These instructions were far easier to examine and, thus, quantify as children moved through their grades. Very explicitly the Board intended the “halves” of the academic year to allow students to exit and still receive a minimum of their education to best support future endeavors. The Board was also far more explicit about segregating children into groups – those who would finish the course of instruction and those who would not. These groups of children were not necessarily grouped by age, race, or gender but rather their ability. This, of course, ignored the child’s material conditions and the ways in which black children had been previously limited by Board choices. Each grade, then, was to be as complete as possible for those that would leave school and “at the same time a thorough preparation for the work of the next grade.” As a result, “if it becomes necessary at any time for a pupil to quit school, he leaves with as practical and completed an education as the circumstances permitted.”⁶⁵

The Board’s curricular choices would not address parents’ primary complaint that their children received inadequate classroom instruction. Inadequacy was defined several ways by Black Baltimoreans – the quality of the teachers, their race, and their willingness to support black children in their learning. These three points, taken all together, meant that the white teachers staffing the black schools were both pedagogically incompetent as

⁶⁴ *Fifty – Eighth Annual Report* (1887) 121

⁶⁵ *Fifty – Eighth Annual Report* (1887) 44-5

well as racially insensitive. While new school buildings and the eventual hiring of black teachers were addressed at different points in the post-bellum period, the limitations placed on black children due to their instruction was never fully addressed or acknowledged by the Board as a problem worth responding to.

In 1879, Dr. H.J. Brown, of the Brotherhood, noted that black children were taught to be “niggers not negroes” and were taught so “ungrammatically that they may remain ignorant.” He pointed to an instance in which he overheard a white teacher correcting a black students’ pronunciation of eleven. The teacher encouraged the child to pronounce eleven as “’leven.” Students were not only limited by the instruction they had access to, the primary offerings, but they were also limited by how they were taught. The students were not taught to be “negroes” or leaders within their communities; rather, stereotypes of the students’ ability colored how white teachers, and therefore the broader white community, would approach the children.⁶⁶ The best way to instruct black students, according to the Brotherhood, would be to hire black teachers from their own community, which would allow students to “make more rapid progress.”⁶⁷ The Brotherhood’s agitation for the employment of black teachers in the schools constantly frustrated the Board. White teachers, according to the Board, had proven competent in the past and CPS was graded *and* beholden to the same rules and regulations as the white schools.

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth centuries, the Board, at least, rhetorically, emphasized the equality between BCPS and CPS. In 1887, when

⁶⁶ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers &c” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

⁶⁷ “Public Schools and Colored Teachers” *The Baltimore Sun* January 26, 1886

summarizing the Superintendent's frustration with the continued agitation, the Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction wrote that the board "has dealt fairly and liberally with [Black Baltimorean community] in their efforts to educate the children of the colored race."⁶⁸ The students received the same instruction, care, and attention as students enrolled in BCPS.

The race has strengthened enough in good sense and sound judgment to see that the coddling process enervates and weakens independence of character and manly conduct, and thereby defeats the very aim and purposes of public education. The responsibility of the teachers of these children is proportionately greater than those of the other schools, inasmuch as it is essentially necessary that they should supply the acknowledged deficiencies of home training which exist to a great degree in a large majority of cases among these pupils; and in order to meet this responsibility they should have the rules to sustain them, and in executing these rules they should receive the support and constant encouragement of the school authorities.⁶⁹

Consistently accommodating black educational demands, according to the Assistant Superintendent, undermined the child's ability to become independent and stunted their character growth. This directly undermined the Board's belief that education should improve the child's moral, mental, and physical conditions.

"Partisan Demagogues" and Criticism

As the foregoing indicates, the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners and black parents engaged in sometimes heated exchanges over virtually every aspect of black children's education, from the location of the schools to the quality of the buildings and from the employment of black teachers and the grade levels offered to black children. In addressing complains and criticisms around their management from both white and

⁶⁸ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the year ending December 31, 1887* (Baltimore, MD: JH Medairy and Co, 1888) 92

⁶⁹ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) 93

black Baltimoreans, the Board grouped the complaints into legitimate and illegitimate concerns. Legitimate concerns were welcomed and often invited: “Judicious criticism will promote the interests of public education, and will aid those who are engaged in the work.” The board’s primary function, as it envisioned itself throughout the nineteenth century, was to align schooling to the “conditions in society” and to flatten perceptions of differentiated treatment along racialized or gendered lines to “fit each person more efficiently for a place in society.” In Baltimore, the board was primarily concerned, even before the Civil War, with appropriate education for different “classes” of children.⁷⁰ Criticism would help improve the schools to better reflect community desires, even if the Board believed they were an accurate representation of Baltimorean society. However, as the Board often noted in their official documents, that was not the sort of criticism usually levied against them:

But unfortunately this is not the kind of criticism which is frequently bestowed on the schools. There is a class of superficial critics who interfere with the public schools, and sometimes impede their progress. Some of these protest against the amount of work required of the pupils, whilst others think there is not sufficient; some insist that the teachers ought to accomplish much more than they do, and that they are overpaid for their service, whilst others believe that they are overworked and inadequately compensated. Some think that the public schools give too much education and the cost is too high, whilst others feel that no system of public instruction is complete that does not furnish all that is required from the lowest to the highest grade, and that the most liberal expenditure is justifiable for this purpose.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, “From Social Movement to Professional Management: An Inquiry into the Changing Character of Leadership in Public Education,” *American Journal of Education* 88, no 3 (May 1980) 304-305. For more on the nature/personality of superintendents see: David Tyack’s “Pilgrim’s Progress: Toward a Social History of the School Superintendency, 1860-1960” *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no 3 (Autumn, 1976): 257-300.

⁷¹ *Sixty First Annual Report* (1890) xxxiv - xxxv

This quote from the 1890 *Annual Report to the Mayor and the City Council* echoes statements the board makes throughout the nineteenth century – that criticism was overwrought, superficial, and were, in fact, contradictory, coming from “two classes” of community members who levied complaints against the Board – one that insisted the education children received was “too much” for their supposed position in society and the other, that “not enough, is given.” By identifying the two ends of the spectrum and the impossibility of satisfying both, the Board acted as it deemed appropriate, “establish[ing] a liberal, intermediate standard, adapted in quality and Quantity to the wants of those around us.” Criticism came, the Board claimed, because people believed that they couldn’t educate better than the educators without a “theoretical knowledge of teaching” and that the populace could do better. Additionally, management and appointment of teachers were political criticisms without merit as teachers and the board members were “friend[s] of public education and is willing to labor for its advancement.” No one was allowed to criticize the school system unless the individuals were deemed “competent” by the Board (though it is unclear what made a particular individual competent or not) and *any other* sort of criticism was a result of community ignorance and a lack of understanding of how schooling was to function.

Responses to specific criticisms – often around the hiring of teachers and the resulting partisan patronage and expenses – fell along similar lines. The Board would critique the individual or individuals making the complaint, acknowledge that there might be misuse and therefore the policies around hiring or management of funds should be evaluated, and enact one or two steps to address the initial complaint. Actual reform regarding policies around the hiring of teachers would not be enacted until 1896. While

this chapter has focused on the Board and its deliberations around what children in BCPS needed to be successful in its schooling, black parents openly resisted the proscriptions of the Board to best support the education of their children.

In addition to addressing those who did not want *any* universal education in the city, the board notes that the “two classes” of community members “differ entirely in their views upon the subject of popular education” and what it should fulfil in the community. One group of community members insisted the public schools were doing too much, while the other group insisted that “not enough, is given.” It would be impossible to fulfil both sets of criticisms, so the Board acted as it deemed fit. “Of course, it is impossible to fully satisfy both, or perhaps either of these extreme views; and we have, therefore, established a liberal, intermediate standard, adapted in quality.” The Board believed that their choices best supported *all* children in the city, irrespective of the child’s future. They claimed to be the “friend[s] of public education . . . willing to labor for its advancement.”⁷²

In fact, it was the parents who were the “friend[s] of public education” and the parents this dissertation seeks to highlight believed that they knew what their children needed without a theoretical knowledge of teaching. Despite the Board protesting that those without an educational background were unqualified to levy criticism at the Board’s decisions, Black parents routinely agitated and advocated for what they believed their children needed.⁷³

⁷² *Annual Report* (1882) xlii

⁷³ *Forty – Second Annual Report* (1870) 7-8

Chapter Five: “Their Right to Teachers of Their Own Race”: Colored Teachers for Colored Schools

At St. Paul’s Lyceum in 1879, to an audience of black citizens, Dr. H. J. Brown declared, “it is necessary for the just advance of colored pupils that they should have their right to teachers of their own race.” Moreover, Black Baltimoreans had the right to demand that their children—who took to “instruction like a duck to water”—had black teachers because “we are taxpayers and have our rights.” Brown pointed to instances of parents starving to give their children an education as an indication of the lengths black parents would go to ensure their children received the best education they could, which would only come from black teachers. In these qualified teachers’ hands, black children would reap the benefits of education and help “advance” the city’s black community.¹

The *Sun* did not record the audience’s reception of Dr. Brown’s comments.

Brown’s 1879 declaration echoed the demands made eleven years earlier by black community members. In 1868, when Baltimore City assumed administration of the Baltimore Association’s schools, all the city’s black teachers had lost their positions. Immediately after this decision, Black Baltimoreans petitioned the Mayor and City Council and one of their demands was to hire black teachers. The teachers’ exclusion from the ten schools of the Colored Public Schools (CPS) was an injustice according to the black community and the men chosen to represent the group.² The injustice of the black teachers’ dismissal, they argued, must be reversed. Brown, and five others, were tasked with approaching the Board and City Council with resolutions that protested the

¹ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c” *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

² “Colored Mass Meeting,” *The Baltimore Sun* July 1, 1868; The Colored Schools” *The Baltimore Sun* July 2, 1868

exclusion of black teachers and agitated for their reinstatement in 1868. The board denied their request, sparking further protest.

Black parents employed explicitly rights-based language when advocating for black teachers. It was their right as taxpayers to approach the City Council and demand improvements to their schools and it was their children's right to be taught by black teachers. Failure to employ black teachers would take "from [the children] the right of intellectual competition," and slow the progress of the city and the state. Without black teachers or those "in sympathy" with them, children would not fully benefit from their education. How could they if only their parents taught them to "learn with advantage?" Black Baltimoreans noted in 1879 that white teachers instructed black children not to engage with them outside of the classroom. Teachers told children not to greet them on the street or acknowledge them at all. The relationship between teacher and child was to be limited to exclusively the classroom.³

Although petitioning for black teachers continued in the eleven years following, the 1879 meeting marked the beginning of an increase in public pressure on the Board and City Council to hire black teachers. Qualified black teachers would have social contact with pupils, improve the economic standing of black community members, and not only teach them the necessary subject material, but also encourage and help students to develop "positive self-concepts" or what could be understood today as "cultural competencies."⁴ These benefits were as much a right as access to basic education. The use of rights-based language to argue for black teachers' employment in CPS was one

³ "Colored People's Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c" *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

⁴ "Our Public Schools," *The Afro American*, October 19, 1895

way the parents positioned themselves in the “right” versus “privilege” debate about education. Community activism (organized and informal) around the hiring of black teachers for CPS was part of the debate over whether education was privilege or a right, and one way in which the black community expressed their ideas about civil rights and racial uplift.

The Baltimore Association Teachers

Agitation to hire black teachers in CPS began immediately after the city took over the administration of the primary schools of the Baltimore Association. The community pushed the board not only to rehire black teachers but also to rectify the fact that during the transition between the Baltimore Association and the Board’s administration of the schools, black teachers went without pay as the Board and the City Council debated whether the city, the federal government, or the largely defunct Baltimore Association was responsible for their salaries. The question of payment was basically a question of governance; who had overseen the schools during that confusing transition?

According to the First Branch of Baltimore City’s City Council, the city had authority and therefore, owed the backpay. The third section of the city ordinance “Providing for the education of the children of colored parents” explicitly set aside money for the owed expenses.⁵ The Second Branch of the City Council struck out the provision for \$3,700 in backpay and eventually failed to pass the bill. The Second Branch declared that settling the owed backpay was not within their authority. The issue affected black women disproportionately; \$1,845 was explicitly owed to black women, who were all listed as associate teachers and made \$360 per annum. Only \$530 was owed to black

⁵ “Local Matters” *The Baltimore Sun* April 3, 1868

men, \$920 to white teachers, and \$405 to an individual whose race and gender are impossible to determine.⁶ Appeals to the City Comptroller and Register would debate responsibility for these payments and, by extension, the nature of authority and administration of the schools. Both the Annual Report and *The Sun* noted conflicts around jurisdiction of the schools and, therefore, who should pay for them. Several City Council and Board of School Commissioner members mistakenly believed that the Baltimore Association was part of the Freedmen's Bureau, and therefore thought that forcing Baltimore City to accept financial responsibility for these schools was an example of federal overreach. When the matter of jurisdiction was settled, the teachers would be paid their salaries.⁷

The delay between the hand off from the Baltimore Association to the Baltimore City Public Schools was due to concerns over authority and funding between city institutions. *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of School Commissioners* notes that prior to a January 1868 session of the Legislature of Maryland, it was unknown if the city had the authority "to appropriate funds for the Colored School already in existence" and support schools that were originally under the purview of a "previous Council."⁸ Once jurisdiction between the city and federal government was established, the Board of School Commissioners passed a series of resolutions outlining the administration of the newly named "Colored Public Schools" (CPA) that clarified the funding of CPS by the other city institutions. The initial ordinance establishing CPS passed in the First Branch of City Council but failed in the Second Branch. The failure of the ordinance in the

⁶ "Public Schools for Colored Children," *The Baltimore Sun* April 18, 1868; *Thirty Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 77

⁷ *Thirty Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 7-8, 74-78

⁸ Department of Education, *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 5-6, -44, BRG 31, BCA.

Second Branch of City Council meant that the City Comptroller and City Register declined to pay the owed salaries and outstanding bills. They justified their decisions because there was “no appropriation of the money for the purpose.”

Without an explicit ordinance declaring the city’s authority and approving an appropriation for the purpose of paying the teachers’ salaries, the Comptroller and Register would not authorize funds for payment.⁹ In their January 1868 session, the General Assembly of Maryland passed a school bill with explicit language that authorized not only the establishment of a CPS system, but also authorized financial appropriations. In the aftermath of the General Assembly passing the school bill, the City passed an ordinance officially establishing and funding CPS. Prior to the state’s school bill, the City Council hesitated to establish their own school system for black children, despite community advocacy and the Baltimore Association’s request. The following ordinance officially established the CPS under the same rules and regulations that had governed the BCPS, allocated \$3,700.65 unpaid salaries, and repealed any ordinances and parts of ordinances inconsistent with the 1868 School Law. Section Three expanded upon the state law establishing black schools. Very explicitly, most likely to counter attempts to subvert or sidestep funding of the schools, Section Three echoed the language of the state school law and designated “all taxes paid by colored persons in the city of Baltimore for educational purposes, shall be placed to the credit of schools for colored children in the accounts of the City Register.”¹⁰ Following the model of many other states in both the North and the South, Maryland had racialized their educational funding.¹¹

⁹ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 77-78

¹⁰ *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 42-43

¹¹ Camille Walsh, *Racial Taxation: Schools, Segregation, and Taxpayer Citizenship, 1869-1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018) 17-18

When the Baltimore Association transferred ownership of their ten schools to the Baltimore City Public School system in 1868, children had been taught by both white and black teachers. The county schools employed more black teachers than the city's twenty-two Baltimore Association schools. The *Thirty Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council* identified Schools Two, Three, Five, Six, Eight, and Ten, as each having at least one black teacher, Assistant, or Principal. Five out of the nine black teachers were women. School No. 2, located on East Street near Douglas, had one hundred and fifty pupils, three classes, and three teachers, two of whom were black: Harry Wilson, the Principal, and N. Cornish, the Assistant. According to the *Thirty Ninth Annual Report*, Schools Three, Five, Six, and Eight had both white and black teachers.¹² Between the 1867-68 and the 1868 – 1869 academic years, the Board of Commissioners, restructured and reorganized the Association, now Colored Public, Schools – changing the names, the materials taught, the teacher corps, and some of the locations.

Further resolutions passed in June 1868 structured CPS further, officially removing black teachers from the schools. The resolution stated, “that the teachers now employed in the colored schools be notified that their services will not be needed after the end of the present session unless re-elected.”¹³ None of the black teachers were reelected, creating an all-white teacher corps for all of the schools under the umbrella of the Baltimore City Public School system. As a result, taxes paid by black citizens would support black schools with white teachers. The decision not to reelect any of the

¹² Department of Education, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1868) 72-73.

¹³ Department of Education, *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 44, BRG 31, BCA; “Colored Mass Meeting,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1868

previously employed teachers was met with protest as the lack of black teachers in the schools was part of a larger indictment of the schools' inequality. Initial protests in 1868 did not change the Board and City's decision that CPS would be staffed by white teachers. What the black community did in 1868 to protest the exclusion of black teachers structured how they would respond to the city's educational decisions for CPS for the remainder of the century. Meetings would occur, a committee would be appointed to bring resolutions forward to the Board and the City Council, the Board and City Council would defer or outright reject the resolutions, *The Sun* would report, and meetings would occur in protest of the rejection.

In addition to foreshadowing the process of protesting throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, the 1868 protests and petition outlined the major educational concerns of Black Baltimoreans. George A. Hackett, Dr. H.J Brown, S.W. Chase, R. Deaver, and A.W. Handy, representing the black community, "solemnly protested against the injustice of the school commissioners" and unsuccessfully appealed to the board to reconsider and to "appoint colored teachers when found competent after examination."¹⁴ "In a becoming tone" the *Sun* reported the following day, the committee presented its resolutions to the Board. The committee's resolutions were not the first time the board was presented with these requests, as the *Sun* noted that the resolutions echoed a petition "addressed some weeks ago" by the recently released black teachers. *The Sun* supported the teachers' petition, declaring that the suggestions by the black community's representatives seemed reasonable. The *Sun*'s "favorable" reporting included encouraging the Board not to exclude black teachers if they were found to be "competent

¹⁴ "Colored Mass Meeting," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1868

and [to] give satisfaction,” and demonstrated “the proper standard of qualification and character.” The *Sun* assumed that the Board, acting with “due deliberations” and “more specific information on the subject than others,” would be acting in both the community and the school’s best interests.¹⁵

“Qualifications:” The Hiring of Black Teachers

Despite the lack of positions in the city and the exclusion of their employment, black individuals could, and did, receive teacher training. In the decade between the 1868 and 1879 protests, the idea of teachers’ “qualifications” would be used to simultaneously prevent and encourage black teacher training. A lack of “qualified” teachers, according to the Board, meant that black teachers could not, and should not, teach in CPS. According to the black community, “qualification” was a standard that would improve not only curriculum but also increase economic opportunities for Black Baltimoreans.

Teacher training in the city began with a Baltimore Association school. In 1866, the city’s Joint Committee on Education, a subcommittee of the City Council, visited the Baltimore Association schools. In the *Sun*’s summary of the Councilmen’s visits, they noted that School No 1., on the corner of Calvert and Saratoga streets, also contained a normal school. Under the direction of a white male teacher, “seven or eight” female students were training to become teachers. The Joint Committee on Education noted that the students studied mental arithmetic, geography, history “without the use of textbooks,”

¹⁵ “The Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 1868

spelling, signing, and calisthenics. All of this showed that they were “in a proper course of training.”¹⁶ The “proper course” of training made them suitable for their future work.

According to both the Black Baltimorean community and the Baltimore Association, the success of their schools depended on having qualified teachers, particularly in counties where black education was not as supported or welcomed as it was in Baltimore City. Ensuring that teachers were competent and qualified was a way of preventing the shortcomings of one teacher being used to criticize the entire system. The *Second Annual Report* of the Baltimore Association claimed “many” of their seventy-four teachers in 1866 were black. These students had attended or were attending the Baltimore Association’s normal school and were subject to “most rigorous examination before [the Baltimore Association sent] them to take charge of a school.”¹⁷ The *Sun* reported in 1868 that the normal school “in which teachers for colored schools are thoroughly trained for their special work,” had purchased a building explicitly for the institution and that the students would be moving in shortly.¹⁸ When the city took over the Baltimore Association schools, they did not assume authority of the normal school, since the “primary grades” would be appropriate for most of the black children’s educational needs and teachers would not need the advanced training available at the normal school.¹⁹ As the city would not hire black teachers, there was no need to

¹⁶ “Local Matters: [illegible] to the Baltimore Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun* November 28, 1866. From the author’s understanding, signing is another way to describe penmanship classes. No explicit definition is given on the specificities of the course.

¹⁷ *The Baltimore American* as quoted in Martha S. Putney, “The Baltimore Normal School for the Education of Colored Teachers,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 72, no 2 (Summer 1977), 251; *Second Annual Report of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People* (Baltimore: J.B. Rose and Co, 1866) 7

¹⁸ “The Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, January 10, 1868

¹⁹ The state legislature authorized the State Board of Education to assume control of the Baltimore Normal School in 1908. By 1910, the state moved the school to Bowie, Maryland and would open in 1911. In 1914, the name would change to the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie and

financially support an institution dedicated to the training of black teachers in the city. The institution would continue in the city until 1908, when it would be moved to its current location and fall under the supervision of the State Board of Education. A trained black teacher corps was present in the city, despite the lack of employment.

The presence of a normal school for black teachers and a trained teacher corps, encouraged the Board to respond to the criticism of their hiring policies as coming out of partisan politics rather than community interest. Of course, the schools were deeply entrenched in Baltimore politics. Ward appointments, and therefore school commissionerships, were controlled by the city's Democratic party bosses. Teachers were then appointed to the schools by the Board. This system of appointment—inherently political—was why the Board took pains to emphasize their lack of political affiliation in the post-bellum period.

Hiring white rather than black teachers, according to the Board, was in the students' best interests and those protesting simply wanted to “interfere” with public education and encourage its failure. In response to the 1868 petition and protests requesting expansion of black education and the employment of black teachers, the Board provided a blueprint for how they would respond to other petitions later in the century.

The board explicitly declined the request, stating:

The number of pupils has increased since last year, though it is not as large as it ought to be. This has resulted doubtless from the persistent efforts of those who took exception to the exclusion of colored teachers, and who are seeking, in this way, to interfere with the full success of our system of free education. Their efforts cannot, however, materially check its progress or injure its usefulness; and we are satisfied that the colored people of our city will yet fully appreciate the freely accept the facilities offered to them for a liberal education.²⁰

in 1963, would become Bowie State College. In 1988, Bowie State College would become Bowie State University.

²⁰ *Annual Report*, (1869) xxiv-v

The board also noted that “there exists a notion that the schools are not in the hands of those who will do the best for them. This idea is encouraged by a few designing persons who do not wish the colored people to patronize the Public Schools.”²¹ Black Baltimoreans, the School Commissioners believed, could not and did not want to protest their meager offerings. Rather, others within the community were fanning complaints and using the black community as their mouthpiece. In the aftermath of the reorganization, teachers did not have their contracts renewed because they were not qualified according to standards the Board established, not due to any “race prejudice.” This alleged lack of qualifications would prevent black teachers from being added to the teacher eligibility rolls. Political issues, like schooling, would become administrative ones. Poor attendance and the inability of the students to follow the planned course of instruction, justified limiting the curricular options to primary education. Although better school facilities and increased curricula, or grades of instruction would also be the focus of protest and reform efforts by Black Baltimoreans, the employment of black teachers in the city encompassed all the elements Black Baltimoreans wanted to address with their children’s educational advocacy and much of their attention was placed here.

Conflicts between the Board and the Black Baltimorean community could be summarized by the different meanings associated with the word “qualified.” “Qualified,” according to the board, meant that the educator went through an approved program and passed an examination to be placed on an eligibility roll. An exception from the teacher examination, however, was established in 1887, as graduates from Eastern and Western Female High School, Baltimore City College, and the state’s white normal school, were

²¹ *Annual Report* (1869) xxv

exempt from the exam if they maintained an eighty five percent average during their high school or normal school studies.²² They would be immediately placed on the eligibility roll. All non-exempt prospective teachers would have to pass the examination before being placed on the roll. From this roll, the Board selected teachers to fill vacancies. The examination not only signaled to the Superintendent the teacher's content ability but allowed for the Superintendent to "note their intellectual fitness, as well as their ability to control the class." Once elected, teachers were placed in a ninety-day probationary period where, upon successful completion, would be "permanently elected." This was not a suggestion of tenure, however, as both white and black schools used annual contracts that would provide an easier means of removing "incompetent and unsuccessful" teachers. Informally, however, those "proven to be competent" were assumed to have appointments for life.²³ As with other elements of school reform, the Board stressed that it was not political or religious consideration and motivation behind the appointment of teachers but only "their personal fitness for the work."²⁴

When the board decided not to renew black teacher contracts in the aftermath of the Baltimore Association schools' reorganization, it emphasized that teachers had to be qualified. Qualification, and nothing else, would either place or not place, black teachers on the rolls. White teachers, if they went through BCPS and completed a course of study at either the male or female high schools, could be exempted from the exam. Unlike the boys and girls who graduated from Baltimore City College, the all-boys high school, or

²² "Baltimore City Schools: Reports in Favor of Pensions for Teachers and a Colored High School" *The Baltimore Sun*, February 5, 1887

²³ *Fifty Sixth Annual Report* (1885) xxiii – xxiv. Further research into the teacher rolls is needed to see if the board removed "incompetent" teachers as frequently as they claimed or if community protests of tenured teachers protected by political appointment were more true.

²⁴ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) xxvi

Western and Eastern High Schools (the city's two all-girls high schools), where successful passage of their course of study qualified them to teach in the city schools, black students did not have a course of instruction that would support the conferring of "teaching testimonials." Until the Colored High School added a two-year course of instruction to confer "teaching testimonials," or teaching certifications, black teachers could only gain employment through successfully taking the qualification exam. In 1879, "an application" was presented to the Board and suggested that regular attendance and "better results" in CPS could be gained by the employment of black teachers. The 1879 *Annual Report* and the *Sun* did not record who proposed what the Board called "an experiment," but given the increase in Black Baltimorean advocacy, it would not be out of the realm of possibility to suggest it was the committee of five put together in January of 1879 or a similar group. While intrigued by the possibility of increasing student attendance and producing "better results," nebulously defined, the Board noted it could not fulfil a request for a school exclusively under the charge of black teachers. Only three black teachers had passed the necessary examination and neither placed above the grade of being a second assistant teacher, or the third ranked teacher behind principal and assistant teacher. Until there was a "sufficient" number of qualified teachers, schools would "probably be placed under their charge and a fair opportunity be given to test their capacity for teaching colored children." Additional schools opened for black children would be placed under the direction of white children until there was enough "qualified" applicants.²⁵

²⁵ *Fifty-First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Schools to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the year ending Dec. 31, 1879* (Baltimore: John Cox Printers, 1880) xxii

For Black Baltimoreans, “qualified” went beyond the ability to engage in the content and classroom management techniques but included a teacher’s ability to support their black child’s intellectual growth. Much like with the 1868 protests, in 1879, Black Baltimoreans converged during a series of meetings to advocate for their children’s education by agitating for the employment of black teachers. The lack of black teachers impacted not only the students but also the black community. In the summary of a meeting of Black Baltimoreans protesting the exclusion of black teachers from CPS, the *Sun* reported that an educational committee presented resolutions highlighting the importance of black teachers in their children’s schools:

making a class distinction, drawing the color line, and taking from [the students] the right of intellectual competition; that, as citizens and taxpayers, they have an interest in common with other citizens in the progress of the city and State.²⁶

Without black teachers, the children’s education would suffer and “class distinction[s]” and the “color line” in the city would be maintained. Again, Black Baltimoreans engaged in rights-based language as children had the “right of intellectual competition” that their parents’ status as citizens and taxpayers earned for them. The call for black teachers in 1879 was not an explicit call to replace *all* teachers in black schools with black teachers; rather, it asked that black teachers have as much of a chance as white teachers to take the examination and be placed on the eligibility roll. Much like the Board, Black Baltimoreans wanted “qualified” teachers for their children, and not just those who were black. Several *Sun* articles reported black leaders saying that they did not want the testing requirements to be lowered and individuals hired merely because of their race. That would cheat “the helpless little ones and [send] them forth but half furnished for the

²⁶ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c” *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

battles of life.”²⁷ The quality of teachers would support children’s futures. To not have qualified teachers, adhering to the same standards in place for white children, would be a disservice not only to the children, but also to the race’s future. If only afforded the chance, the black community would “give them thoroughly qualified colored teachers. We want fair treatment and equal opportunities. We ask justice from the school board. We ask it because it is a wise policy, as well as justice.” Despite the board’s opinion, they argued, there were qualified teachers in the city, thanks to the “good work” of the Baltimore Association Normal School.²⁸

It was not a lack of “qualified” teachers that prevented black teachers from educating black children according to Black Baltimoreans but, rather, an unwillingness by the Board and the City Council to support such an action. G. W. Nicholson, a member of the committee established to coordinate black educational advocacy in 1879 noted that there was not a legal prohibition for black teachers to take the examination. Despite this, he continued, teachers were turned away. Either they applied too late for the examination, as one of his friends told him, and were told to apply again next year. In the case of several “colored ladies who had applied and had been refused examination,” this had occurred “more than once.”²⁹ On paper black teachers could participate in the teacher hiring process, but, in practice, they could not. It was, as Frederick Douglass would put it in December 1879 during a speech in support of hiring black teachers in the city, “a question of prejudice.” Prejudice barred black teachers’ way. It was obvious due to the

²⁷ “Letters from the people: The clamor for Colored Teachers” *The Baltimore Sun*, March 2, 1887

²⁸ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c” *Baltimore Sun* 10 April 1879

²⁹ Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c” *Baltimore Sun* 10 April 1879

city's inaction that white administrators did not want black teachers in the schools. Yet the futures of these schools were not entirely bleak and doomed to be administered by white teachers and administrators. Douglass noted that public sentiment and a "growing sense of justice and humanity" would influence both public opinion and the Board. By influencing public opinion, it could encourage the employment of black teachers, ending to laughter with "We are an irrepressible people, we negroes."³⁰ If necessary, continued agitation would occur. They would not, as the *Sun* would report in February 1880 come, "hat in hand, begging for colored teachers as a favor." Rather, they "demand it as taxpayers and wealth producers." If Black Baltimoreans are "good enough" to pay taxes, to serve in the military during the Civil War, then they were "good enough to be teachers in the public schools."³¹

Black Teachers and the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty's Committee on Education

By 1885, eighteen years had passed since the incorporation of CPS into the broader Baltimore City Public School system, with almost constant agitation for the employment of black teachers, and very little progress. From 1868 to 1879, agitation for the employment of black teachers was often stopped by either by the Board or by the City Council dismissing the request and sending it to committee and never referring to the petition again. In 1885, efforts to persuade the City Council and Board to employ black teachers would be renewed, in part because of the establishment of the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty.

³⁰ "Colored Teachers in Colored Schools – Speeches by Frederick Douglass and Others" *Baltimore Sun*, December 5, 1879

³¹ "Colored Teachers in Public Schools: Remarks, Resolutions, &c" *The Baltimore Sun*, February 6, 1880.

Employment of black teachers would again dominate educational reform as the newly formed Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty argued for better facilities, curriculum, and teachers for black children. In the year the Brotherhood was established, 1885, the movement for longstanding educational reform efforts would become reinvigorated. By this time, schooling *everywhere* was in the process of becoming more centralized and standardized, and becoming increasingly hierarchical and bureaucratic. In Baltimore City, school officials and community members worked and reworked the nature of schooling from its very inception in the 1820s until the Board believed the curriculum generally fulfilled its utility for the children's imagined futures. By 1885, the Board generally assumed it structured the city's course of instruction to benefit the greatest number of children.

Despite attempts to create a "common ideology" that would govern the development of education, schooling and local voluntary action did not necessarily represent all community values.³² For Black Baltimoreans, the lack of black teachers continued to be an urgent issue and would increase their agitation for their employment during the middle of the 1880s. Their agitation would continue in earnest for two years until black teachers were employed. The Board, however, believed that the appointment of black teachers would not be "in the best interest of the schools" and by extension, the children. The current white teachers were "zealous and faithful" in their duties and were "entitled to special commendation" due to the "disadvantages" they were under in the classroom. The Board implored the parents to work with the white teachers to better their children's performances and "obtain all the education they may desire." Those protesting

³² "From Social Movement to Professional Management" *American Journal of Education* 296

the schools, the Board stated in their 1884 annual report, were influenced by “political teachings of demagogues who are striving to engender ill-feeling and strife.”³³ Much like the response to the 1868 petitions, the Board defaulted to delegitimizing the criticism, emphasizing that it was rooted in political affiliation and an attempt to discredit the broader system of universal schooling in the city.

The primary—and most contentious—of the requests was the hiring of black teachers for employment in the black schools. Again in 1886, Black Baltimoreans would propose “an experiment” where black teachers would teach black children. The *Sun* reported that the justification was “sound and convincing” and urged the Board to join the Mayor in supporting the request. Hiring black teachers would “prove satisfactory to the board, as well as to parents and pupils.”³⁴ The Committee of Colored Schools pushed back on the belief that students would benefit from having children taught by those “in sympathy” with them or were of their own race.

Mr. Fenton, one of the three members of the Committee of Colored Schools, asked why black children should have black teachers “any more than the Irish, Germans, Italians, or other citizens descended from those nationalities” should require teachers from their own ethnic communities. In response, Rev. Messrs. Weaver and Schaffer, representatives of Black Baltimoreans, answered

there has never been any discrimination in regard to other races, as there has been in regard to other races, as there has been in regard to colored teachers. The colored people wanted this as a privilege and as a right. They had no complaints of the white teachers, but they believed their children will do as well, if not better, under colored teachers. They do not look forward to mixed schools in the future and do not consider colored teachers in colored schools a step in that direction. Moreover, the colored committee said it will encourage colored youth to become

³³ *Fifty Fifth Annual Report* (1884) xxxviii.

³⁴ “Baltimore City Schools: The question of colored teachers for colored children and other matters,” *The Baltimore Sun*, February 24, 1886.

better scholars and more useful members of society if such rewards are presented as incentives to exertion.³⁵

Again, petitioners emphasized that hiring black teachers for their children was “a privilege and . . . a right.” They did not demand integration or “mixed schools,” either by race or gender. Black teachers would have both an immediate and long-term impact on the black community. Black teachers would “encourage colored youth to become better scholars.” Moreover, the presence of black teachers in the classroom would provide “incentives to exertion,” as children could envision themselves in those positions.³⁶ As Dr. H. J. Brown had stated in a the 1879 petition, black teachers were “necessary for the just advance of colored pupils that they should have their right to teachers of their own race.”³⁷ Black teachers would not only impart content knowledge, but would also interact with students in the community and teach them how to present themselves. White teachers, Dr. H.J Brown contended, held black children back and did not contribute to their overall development.

Why, I know, and can prove it, that white teachers of colored public schools forbid their pupils to speak to them on the streets. They call them niggers, not negroes, and teach them to speak ungrammatically that they may remain ignorant. I have heard a teacher tell a colored pupil who said ‘eleven,’ ‘you should say ‘leven.’³⁸

Black teachers would encourage community interaction and impart skills that created “negroes” that would benefit society overall. Brown ended his comments with “how can colored pupils learn with advantage when their teachers have no sympathy with their

³⁵ “Baltimore City Schools: The question of colored teachers for colored children and other matters,” *The Baltimore Sun*, February 24, 1886.

³⁶ Baltimore City Schools: The question of colored teachers for colored children and other matters,” *The Baltimore Sun*, February 24, 1886.

³⁷ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

³⁸ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

efforts?”³⁹ If teachers did not want their pupils to succeed, then the children would not, and it would impact the future development of the community. Brown’s 1879 comments would shape much of the justification given by the black community in support of the employment of black teachers for years afterwards.

At the 1879 meeting of the Maryland Educational Union, composed of the city’s black teachers, religious leaders, and lawyers, Reverend P.H.A Braxton said, “I have always been on the opinion that we will not get what we want until we take this matter into the courts.”⁴⁰ Since over the previous decade all of their petitions had failed, he proposed they take their goal of hiring black teachers for the city’s Colored Public Schools into the courts. In addition to the call for legal action, Rev. Braxton proposed a committee to identify individuals in the city who already held teacher certificates from the Board of Education and the discrepancies between the number of vacancies and number filled by black teachers. The unwillingness to hire qualified black teachers, declared Mary Sanders, a teacher at the Howard Normal School of Baltimore City, was the result not of incompetency, “but because of the color of our skin.”⁴¹

In the decades after the Civil War, Black Baltimoreans continuously petitioned the Mayor and City Council for more black teachers. Each petition stalled - referred to the Committee on Colored Education, part of the Board of School Commissioners, where the request would be summarily dismissed. 1887, the year in which Rev. P. H. A. Braxton called on Black Baltimoreans to take the matter to the courts, saw an increase in

³⁹ “Colored People’s Educational Meeting – Demand for Colored Teachers, &c.” *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1879

⁴⁰ “They Mean Business: Going to Court to Obtain Colored Teachers for Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 20, 1887.

⁴¹ “They Mean Business: Going to Court to Obtain Colored Teachers for Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 20, 1887.

public agitation for “colored teachers in colored schools” even if there was no move toward legal action to force the hand of City Council and the Board.⁴²

That year’s *Annual Report* noted that the “colored ministers and other parents are urgent in their request for another school” to be under the purview of black teachers.⁴³ Additionally, “a number of petitions” were presented to City Council requesting the appointment of black teachers. The Board preferred to maintain its present system, but offered what they considered a fair compromise in which a new school would be purpose-built and placed under the direction of black teachers. This would provide “an opportunity of seeing the work that can be accomplished by this method.”⁴⁴ Just as the Board had classified the push for the employment of black teachers as an “experiment,” this new school, eventually known as Colored School No. 9, would be an experiment to see if black teachers teaching black schools would produce better results than white teachers teaching black students. Even as they agreed to hire a few more black teachers, the board declared that the race of the teachers was not the cause of the differences in the “quantity and quality” of the CPS and BCPS schools. Rather, it was the “class of students” attending those schools. The teachers’ work was not supported by parental activity and attention at home and, therefore, the overall success of the institutions fell behind their white counterparts. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Henry A. Wise, was affronted that the Black Baltimorean community continued to agitate for increased facilities and better accommodations for their children. In his 1887 report, he noted that the schools could not be doing *that* poorly as the schools were “so generally

⁴² This phrase, “Colored Teachers for/in Colored Schools” became a rallying cry for both Black Baltimoreans and *The Baltimore Sun*. Articles in *The Sun* often used this as the heading.

⁴³ The School that eventually opened, School No. 9, is the subject of Chapter Three.

⁴⁴ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) xxiv - xxxiii

patronized.”⁴⁵ Since black children attended CPS at a Board accepted attendance rate, which hovered around 70 per cent of enrolled students, and black parents did not withdraw their children from CPS over the lack of black teachers, the presence of black children signaled some sort of support for the Board’s actions. The Board would return to this understanding again throughout the nineteenth century – if black parents were so upset with the development of their children’s educational offerings, which were a privilege the Board and City Council extended to them and believed black children were not making full use of, they could take their children elsewhere. The Board was generally confused about *why* black teachers would be preferred to white teachers by the black community.

Good black teachers, the Black Baltimorean community argued, would best support the community’s children. The 1888 debates in City Council and in Board meetings between white and black community members and officials highlight this difference in opinion. The question of “qualification” would be central to the debates. A letter, ostensibly published by Thomas I. Hall, who the *Sun* identified as a “colored man” who held views “considerably at variance with the expressed voice of the majority of writers and speakers.” The *Sun*’s reporting was generally favorable to the black advocacy, despite the paper’s democratic leaning and Hall’s article was one of the only few protesting. Hall concluded his letter to the paper by tying the qualification of the teacher to the future of the student.

We as a race cannot afford at this critical juncture of our race’s progress to hazard the dwarfing of our race’s progress to hazard the dwarfing of our children’s progress by committing the same to the guidance of less qualified parties merely

⁴⁵ *Fifty Ninth Annual Report* (1888) 93

because he is colored, while superior qualifications can be enlisted, promising better results for our children⁴⁶

Hall was opposed to the push for black teachers in the city, as he believed that qualified teachers interested in the general support of black children already existed and that, therefore, black teachers were unnecessary. Almost immediately the black community protested, publishing rebuttals to Hall's letter. During a March 8th meeting of black community members, Dr. J. H. A. Johnson questioned the authenticity of the published letter, noting that Hall's statements were "sentiments that have long existed" in the broader white community and these sentiments were largely behind the lack of progress on improving education in the city for black children. No black man, according to Dr. Johnson, would have the opinions on black education that Hall expressed in his letter to the editor. Reverends Dr. Scaton and W. H. Brown echoed Johnson's criticisms of Hall and did not believe it was written by a member of the Black community. However, they believed the published letter was necessary to "awaken us to renewed effort" and to continue to agitate.⁴⁷ Increasingly throughout the remainder of year, Black Baltimoreans were committed to continue doing just that, not only for themselves but for their teachers.

It would be this call to action that would inspire the creation of the Maryland Educational Union by Colored Citizens in 1885. Explicitly formed to coordinate protest and petition movements by Black Baltimoreans, the group intended to "perpetually

⁴⁶ "Letters from the people: The clamor for Colored Teachers" *The Baltimore Sun*, March 2, 1887

⁴⁷ "Colored Ministers: Action on the Letter of Thomas I. Hall about Colored Teachers," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 8, 1887; "Teachers for Colored Schools: Resolutions and Speeches Denouncing Thos. I. Hall's Letter," and "Colored Teachers" *The Baltimore Sun*, March 9, 1887; "Colored Teachers," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 17, 1887 "At a Regular Meeting of the Official board of Ebenezer A.M.E Church" *The Baltimore Sun*, March 23, 1887.

agitate the matter of ‘colored teachers’ for the colored public schools.” Mr. Braxton, one of the members, summarized the importance of petitioning for black teachers:

We are American citizens, and as such we have rights that should be respected, and according to my judgement, among our highest rights in that of teaching our own children. We have here before petitioned and besought the powers that be for the privilege of enjoying this right, but to the present our efforts have been in vain. But we should not – yes, we will not – despair, but continue to labor and wait until our right is recognized and enjoyed.⁴⁸

One of the rights the group claimed was the parental right to teach their own children.

The right to ensure that their children were educated gave them the right, by extension, to demand qualified teachers. Black teachers were “best adapted to [teach] our own people,” according to Rev. M. H. Moss, one of the members of the Union. Although efforts to do so had thus far been in vain, the Maryland Educational Union saw the importance of the “privilege of enjoying this right.” The Union’s explicit tasks would be to gather information in support of the employment of black teachers and to “secure qualified colored teachers.”⁴⁹ Once again, the meaning of “qualification” would be a point of contention within the community, as several members wanted to strike out the word from their resolutions as “it was not necessary for the resolution to define the kind of teachers wanted.” Others argued that emphasizing “qualification” was necessary in order to combat the perception that “they wanted colored teachers simply because they were colored” and to show that these teachers were selected because they were “colored and qualified.” The emphasis on “qualification” was also important because, as Rev. W. M. Alexander noted, the general community believed that “colored people are standing as a

⁴⁸ “Colored Teachers: Formation of the Maryland Educational Union by Colored Citizens,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 7, 1887.

⁴⁹ “Colored Teachers: Formation of the Maryland Educational Union by Colored Citizens,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 7, 1887.

howling mob to thrust the present competent white teachers from colored schools and fill the vacancies with unqualified colored persons.” Removing “qualified” from their request, he continued, would reinforce the perception that they wanted only to replace white teachers and there were not enough individuals of “sufficient ability” to form a corps of instructors for their children. Rev. Alexander did not want “ability” or “qualifications” to be the means black teachers were prohibited from gaining employment. Rather than focus on merely race as the teachers’ qualification for employment in black schools, the black teachers should be held to the same standards as white teachers. This would, according to Alexander, stop any comment from outside white community members that black parents were fixated on the teachers’ race. Black Baltimoreans knew their children would be successful under black instruction and that enough black teachers existed to create a black teachers corp. It was only a matter of convincing the Board to add black teachers to the eligibility rolls.⁵⁰ Throughout the summer of 1887, the Maryland Educational Union would petition and agitate for the employment of black teachers.

In May of that year, the Maryland Educational Union published their preamble and resolutions, outlining not only their motivations but also the steps they intended to take. The necessity of black teachers in black schools would “fit [the student] for the responsible duties of citizenship” and failure to pass ordinances to employ black teachers was to do the black community a disservice and “depriving [the black community] of their rights.” The organization promised, in their third resolution, to “never cease” until

⁵⁰ “Colored Teachers: Formation of the Maryland Educational Union by Colored Citizens,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 7, 1887; “For Colored Teachers,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 7, 1887; “Doings of the Colored People: Educational, Political, Social and Other Matters,” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 27, 1887; “Action of the Educational Union,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1887

“equal school facilities” and “colored persons are not discriminated against for the positions of teacher.”⁵¹ The group assembled about 900 black Baltimoreans at the Calvary Baptist Church on Biddle Street to rally others to the support of their petitions for more black teachers for an expansion of black schools.⁵² Later meetings would encourage lady auxiliary unions and young people meetings in support of black teachers’ employment and would debate whether legal action was the next step if direct petitioning did not result in the changes the community wanted.⁵³

The continued agitation by the Maryland Educational Union would result in an ordinance authorizing the employment of black teachers at the end of the 1888 academic year. It was the result of overlapping causes – the Black Baltimorean agitation throughout the decades after BCPS incorporated CPS and the annexation of land from Baltimore County. In 1888, the city expanded its borders and in doing so, several of the county schools now fell under the authority and administration of BCPS. Several of these county schools employed black teachers. Baltimore County, a different school system than the city, fell under the purview and authority of the State Board of Education. The State Board largely exempted Baltimore City from its decision making as the city had their own Board that predated the state’s department of education.

The ordinance authorized the Board of School Commissioners to employ black teachers in any school to be established or annexed into the city, establish an examination

⁵¹ “Action of the Educational Union – Debate on Class Legislation” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1887

⁵² “The Colored People: Mass Meeting in the cause of education” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 27, 1887;

⁵³ “The Colored Teachers Issue: Is it a political question? Lively Discussion by the Educational Union” *The Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1887; “The Colored People: The Movement to secure Colored teachers for Colored Public Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, June 8, 1887; “Colored Ministers,” *The Baltimore Sun*, June 16, 1887; “They Mean Business: Going to Court to Obtain Colored Teachers for Colored Schools,” *The Baltimore Sun*, July 20, 1887

date specific to black applicants in September 1888, approve certification for individuals who successfully passed the examination, set salary ranges for black teachers at the rates of the white teachers, and prohibited the employment of black teachers anywhere a white teacher was employed.⁵⁴ The last section of the ordinance, that no black teacher would be employed where white teachers were employed, would effectively halt the progress of educational instruction of the schools and lead to fears among white teachers that they would lose their positions due to their race rather than their ability. This section, largely a compromise to get the ordinance through the Second Branch of City Council, effectively halted any progress on the employment for black teachers, although they were able to join the eligibility rolls. It was, in effect, a nominal victory for black Baltimoreans after two decades of agitation.⁵⁵

Nowhere in the ordinance were there provisions to replace the existing white teacher corps and, despite the enactment date of September 1, 1888, would only take effect with new schools. Several letters to the editors decried the ordinance as fixating on a teachers' race, rather than ability, and would cause mass unemployment as white teachers found themselves out of a job for nothing they could control. That same year, School No. 9, also the result of agitation and petitioning by Black Baltimoreans, would open and was staffed by black teachers. The 1888 ordinance was the result of the decades of agitation by Black Baltimoreans, protesting the firing of black teachers in the Baltimore Association of Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People's

⁵⁴“An Ordinance to Authorize the Board of School Commissioners to Employ Colored Teachers for Schools set Apart for Colored Youths (Approved May 2, 1888)” *Sixtieth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public School to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the Year Ending December 31st, 1888* (Baltimore: John Cox, City Printer, 1889) 194. Department of Education, BRG 31, Baltimore City Archives.

⁵⁵ “The City Council,” *Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 1888; “Approved by the Mayor,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1888

schools. By consistently articulating a desire for black teachers for their children's schools, Black Baltimoreans expressed an understanding of their children's schooling. As taxpayers and as citizens of the city and the state of Maryland, Black Baltimoreans demanded to have an equal say in their children's education.

"Colored Teachers for Colored Schools"

Despite the initial Black Baltimorean victory in the form of School No. 9 and the ordinance authorizing black teachers to teach in black schools, process to fully staff all of CPS was slow if not non-existent. By 1892, the Board was ready to declare the plan of employing black teachers a failure, as there were still not enough black teachers to "equip the colored schools as required by law" despite the 1888 ordinance. From 1888 through the 1893 academic year, occasional vacancies arose in CPS but no individuals would be on the eligibility rolls.⁵⁶ However, the Board neglected to address how the provision that no white and black teachers be employed in the same school impacted the inability for black individuals to be employed as schools transitioned. Ordinances at City Council would be introduced by black councilmen, who were appointed to the city's Committee on Education, to attempt to address the disparity between words and action. Cargill's Ordinance eventually was watered down to be functionally useless. The final ordinance declared that an entire school's faculty had to be replaced at one time. As white teachers in CPS retired or resigned, substitutes would be appointed until "qualified" black teachers were on the eligibility rolls to fill the entire faculty of a school. Additionally, amendments stipulated that only one-fifth of the new teachers hired in any year would be

⁵⁶ "Success of Colored School Teachers," *The Baltimore Sun*, December 16, 1892; "Scarcity of Colored Teachers," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 6, 1893; "Controversy about Colored Teachers – The Association's Session" *The Baltimore Sun* July 26, 1894

black and were required to complete a two-year residency requirement. White teachers were not subject to the same regulations.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *City Council Journal of the First Branch, 1895-96*, 52, 111, 195, 351, 457, 488, 492, 526; Suzanne Ellery Greene, "Black Republicans on the Baltimore City Council, 1890 – 1931" *Maryland Historical Magazine* 74, no 3 (1979) 208-210

Conclusion: The 1900 School Charter and the Reorganization of BCPS

After 1900 Progressive Era reforms swept Baltimore and disrupted the previous ward system that governed the city in 1898. The relationship between Black Baltimoreans and the Board of School Commissioners changed and reduced Black Baltimorean advocacy. The result of the new reforms reshaped BCPS and resulted in CPS being subsumed into the larger educational system in the city. Prior to the 1898 City Charter, Black Baltimoreans actively petitioned and shaped their children's relationship to the city's plan for universal schooling. After 1898, the increasing professionalization of the Board created a distance between the community and Board, preventing the level of direct advocacy Black Baltimoreans used in the post-bellum period from being successful.

In 1897, Mayor Hooper dismissed most of the school commissioners and appointed six commissioners with explicit educational training to replace them. Prior to this, school commissioners were nominated by the ward's councilmen subject to the City Council's approval. As the city's boundaries grew, so did the number of Board members. At its largest, right before the 1898 change, it had twenty-four members. Many of these political appointees did not have an educational background and were part of the larger city political machine.¹ The president of the new Board was also the president of Johns Hopkins University and appointees would make education their life-long career rather than a step in a broader political career.

¹ For more information regarding Baltimore's machine politics, please see Chapter Five and Matthew A. Crenson, *Baltimore: A Political History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2017) chapters twenty five and twenty six;

The dismissed commissioners, however, refused to step down, and for several months into the 1897 academic year, Baltimore City had two active school boards. Both Boards made contracts, authorized payments, and appointed teachers.² The political scandal of the dual Boards, alongside other political scandals that year, provided the impetus for removing Hooper as Mayor and enacting a new City Charter. The new City Charter of 1898 reorganized the city's school system and, as a result, limited the advocacy of black parents by creating a centralized, bureaucratic system administered by professionals. This limited opportunities for advocacy by the Black community.

When Black Baltimoreans brought forth complaints and requests to improve CPS according to their understanding of what their children needed during the antebellum and early post-bellum periods, the Board dismissed their complaints as being driven either by “enemies of education,” or those driven by “partisan or sectarian” beliefs that universal state sponsored education would fail.³ To recommend a “true” complaint throughout the nineteenth century, the petitioners should have an educational background, as the Board would only accept complaints from professional educators or highly educated citizens. The focus on the background of the individuals presenting complaints to the board explained *some* of the hesitation around Black Baltimorean's requests for improving their children's schools. With the new professional board, community members, organized into groups like the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty, could no longer rally together or influence choices made on behalf of their children as they did not have a sufficient educational background. The distance between Board and community widened. The

² *The Baltimore Sun*, January 6 and 8, 1897. James B. Crooks, *Politics and Progress: The Rise of Urban Progressivism in Baltimore, 1895-1911* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968)

³ For more information regarding the ways the Board dismissed Black Baltimorean complaints and petitioner requests, please see Chapters two and four

reforms in Baltimore City were part of a larger trend of professionalizing educational administration and the removal of partisan politics from schooling. This was, in effect, the end result of protests throughout the nineteenth century that politics influenced their decision making, particularly around the appointment of teachers.⁴ David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot have noted that the emphasis on being “above politics” and “removing” political considerations from schooling provided the dual function of removing lay influence as well as turning political concerns into administrative ones.⁵

The new City Charter resulted in the complete overhaul of the city’s schools, from the appointment of the school commissioners to the materials used in classrooms. The Board would no longer be ward-based; rather, it was now a nine-member body appointed by the mayor to six-year terms. Appointments were staggered so a third of the board retired every two years. The Board of Commissioners was to be the “central governing authority” of all schools in the city but would largely depend on “experts” with experience in education. Rather than focus on administrative details, they were more concerned with policy making for all schools. New budgetary practices reevaluated how the books and stationary supplier contracts were awarded and how materials were disbursed to children. These new educational authorities reorganized the primary and grammar departments and established kindergartens.⁶

The new charter increased the level of professionalism and control the Board had over curriculum and “methods of study,” or what today would be referred to as

⁴ For more information regarding political influences in BCPS, please see chapter two and five

⁵ David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820 – 1980* (New York City: Basic Books, 1982) 7-10

⁶ *Seventy Second Annual Report of the Board of School Commissioners to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1900* (Baltimore: WM. J.C. Dulany Company, 1901) 43-44

“pedagogy.” Under the direction of James H. Van Sickle, the new Superintendent, improvements and strategies were discussed by the superintendents and group principals to then be defused to assistant principals and teachers.⁷ Individual schools were supervised by an assistant principal and grouped together to be supervised by a group principal who reported directly to the Office of the Superintendent, rather than the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent visiting and observing all of the city’s schools.⁸ Van Sickle, guided by prevailing progressive understandings of the purpose of education, emphasized training opportunities for children that were “child – centered” rather than rote memorization.⁹ The goal was to create a system of schools that were as uniform as possible and moving from one school to another would result in no decrease in educational attainment or require students to “cope with the difficulties inherent in a change of textbooks and methods.”¹⁰ The schools, irrespective of gender, race, grade, or location, would nominally be equal.

In 1901, the Board would shift from using the racial and gendered language to distinguish its different schools to one that embraced the nation-wide nomenclature to further emphasize the perception of seeming equality. The primary and grammar schools were to be classified as elementary schools and high schools as secondary schools. CPS schools were no longer Colored Schools, identified by gender and number, but rather Schools no. 100 – 118. Schools 103, 105, 107, 112 – 116, and 118 were completely

⁷ *Seventy third Annual Report* (1902) 3

⁸ Doster, “To Strike for Right, to Strike with Might,” 181-183; Robert S. Wolff, “Racial Imaginings: Whiteness, Schooling, and Society in Industrial Baltimore, 1860 – 1920” (PhD Diss., University of Minnesota, 1998) 170 – 183. Van Sickle would also appoint the first two black principals. Heber E. Wharton and Harry T. Pratt were appointed group principals for Colored High School and Colored Training School in 1910. When Wharton passed a few months into his tenure, he was replaced by George B. Murphy.

⁹ Doster, “To Strike for Right, to Strike with Might,” 181-183

¹⁰ *Seventy third Annual Report* (1902) 3

staffed by an all- black teacher corps while the remaining schools would not have an all – black teacher corps until 1907 when the schools completely segregated. These schools also occupied several buildings that predated the war – School no. 116 at Druid Hill Avenue near Biddle Street was erected in 1842 while the newest, School no. 101 located at the corner of Mount and Saratoga streets, was erected in 1896.¹¹ Schools still suffered from overcrowding, poor ventilation, general unsanitary conditions, and a serious safety concerns that would plague BCPS.¹²

A retrospective on black education in the state published in the *Afro-American* noted that the laws passed at the beginning of the twentieth century created a fundamental weakness of Baltimore City’s school system. Howard E. Young, a black pharmacist, wrote that “whatever is mandatory for white children and white teachers is discretionary when applied to colored children and colored teachers.”¹³ Materials, curricular reforms, and qualified teachers were universally provided for white children while black children suffered from haphazard and delayed policy implementation.¹⁴ Mostly explicitly, the uneven enactment of policy colored the push for black teachers. In addition, the Board would increasingly turn to the Hampton model for instruction, advocating for the use of manual instruction.¹⁵

While black parents never advocated for integration, they used the possibility of integration as a legal threat to pressure the city to enact their wants and navigated the

¹¹ *Seventy third Annual Report* (1902) 33; *Seventy Fourth Annual Report* (1903) 70

¹² Bettye Collier- Thomas “The Baltimore Black Community,” 315, 326-329

¹³ Howard E. Young, “Colored Schools in Maryland: Their Origin and Their Needs,” *Afro American* September 4, 1915

¹⁴ While white schools did receive more funding and general support from the Board, white schools suffered from similar problems as the white schools including the poor physical conditions of school buildings and many of the children only attending primary education. Please see chapter four for more information regarding student attendance in the different grades of schools.

¹⁵ *Seventy third Annual Report* (1902) 39

increasingly tightening restrictions of Jim Crow Baltimore to create a system of schools that educated an increasing number of children. For a school system that emphasized increasing neighborhood schooling for white children, education for black children would see itself become increasingly restricted and limited.

Despite the antebellum petitions that centered on tax reform as necessary to educational access for their children, post-bellum reforms never addressed the racialized tax code that funded the city's schools. From the antebellum period, Black Baltimore had supported the expansion of universal education as the best way to benefit the city's children and it was a common refrain that it was an "injustice" that Black Baltimoreans paid into a system their children were prohibited from using.¹⁶ When the first CPS schools were organized, the Board debated how much CPS should receive of the public-school tax. The proposed solution segregated white and black taxpayers, where "such taxes as might be paid by the colored people for educational purposes," plus an appropriation by the city would fund CPS under the School Law of 1868.¹⁷ The act authorizing black schools did not use the words "colored property holders," but focused on the "taxes paid by the colored people" to fund the schools. Although the Board for many years noted that "no ascertainment of the amount" black taxpayers paid into the school fund could be made, they believed that this amount would be more than sufficient to run the schools.¹⁸ Despite the rhetoric of Black Baltimoreans demanding their "rights as taxpayers" to better schoolhouses and teachers for their children, taxes and how

¹⁶ "Public Schools for Colored Children," February 16, 1850 and "Citizens of Baltimore" April 26, 1852 *The Baltimore Sun*

¹⁷ *Fortieth Annual Report* (1869) 5-7; *Fiftieth Annual Report* (1879) xix

¹⁸ "Public Schools for Colored Children," *The Baltimore Sun*, April 18, 1868.

schools were funded were never the major focus of their protest.¹⁹ Appropriations for African American schools ranged from \$100,000 to \$125,000 annually. When funding increases, however slight, were made, white schools often received similar increases, so black schools never reached parity.²⁰ This unequal system of funding would underpin the continued inequality of the schools.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Black Baltimoreans were able to petition for what they believed their children *needed* for their education as a right inherent to not only their citizenship and through their taxpaying, but also as a vital component of their children's futures. And they had achieved notable, if slow-coming, successes. Their advocacy increased the number of schools from ten to twenty-two by 1900, expanded the course of instruction to encompass high school and teacher training, and the employment of black teachers. The terms of the 1868 petition were seemingly fulfilled in 1900.

However, after 1900, avenues like directly petitioning the City Council and the Board, were closed to Black Baltimoreans as increasing bureaucratic structures surrounded the educational system in the city. Navigating the legal system in the city to demand changes would be the preferred method of educational advocacy as the twentieth century progressed. Black Baltimoreans did not stop their educational advocacy, but the nature of their advocacy changed – hampered not only by the city's governmental choices but also the increasing presence of Jim Crow in the city. What seemed like liberation, for example, the hiring of black teachers, became the means for future segregation. By 1907

¹⁹ Please see chapters three – five; Camille Walsh, *Racial Taxation: Schools, Segregation, and Taxpayer Citizenship, 1869 – 1973* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018)

²⁰ Dennis Anthony Doster, "'To Strike for Right, to Strike with Might': African Americans and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Baltimore, 1910 – 1930" (PhD Diss., University of Maryland – College Park, 2015) 8-10

Baltimore City had completely segregated both the teachers and students. Black teachers were teaching black students with increasingly limited resources and in deteriorating school buildings.²¹ As parents advocated on behalf of their children, they demanded education be both preventative, as children were “fitted to their duties,” as well as protective. Their children would be citizens and would require an education that would support that understanding. As the city’s Jim Crow narrowed Black Baltimorean options, parents were still able to advocate for their children.²²

²¹ Bettye Collier Thomas, “The Baltimore Black Community, 1865 – 1910”; William Paul, “The Shadow of Equality: The Negro in Baltimore, 1864 – 1911”

²² Dennis Anthony Doster, “‘To Strike for Right, to Strike with Might:’ African Americans and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Baltimore, 1910 – 1930” (PhD Diss., University of Maryland College Park, 2015) 10. Voting restrictions in Baltimore restricted black voting in a series of informal measures after three amendments to the state constitution (the Poe Amendment in 1904, the Straus Amendment in 1907, and the Digges Amendment in 1911) attempted to implement formalized disenfranchisement but ultimately failed. Increasingly, Black Baltimoreans were pushed to low wage positions. Doster noted that by 1910, three trades – foundry work, dressmaking, and barbering – had black labor in proportion to their share of the city’s population

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