

Board of Education Records, 1855-1990

Collection Summary

Title: Board of Education Records

Summary: A collection of building records, minutes, photographs, reports, bound volumes, and other records documenting the administrative history of the Board of Education for the City of Nashville, Davidson County, and Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County. Dates range from 1854-2005. Bulk dates: c.1915-1990.

Physical Description: 129 boxes, 94.3 linear feet.

Language: English

Stack Location: Archives II, closed stacks; Archives main area shelves; Archives staff area shelves.

Repository: Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Historical Note:

The first official school board in the City of Nashville, Tennessee was elected by the City Council on October 14th, 1853. The election was made following an official report completed by Alfred Hume, who had examined public school systems in other cities. This report became the basis for the first public school system in Nashville. Hume School, the first school in the Nashville public school system, opened its doors on February 26, 1855.

Likewise, among the first schools for African-American students to be opened by the City of Nashville was Meigs School, a school established by the Freedman's Bureau after the end of the Civil War. After the demand for another school became greater, Pearl was built after the Board of Education appropriated funds in 1881.

The Davidson County Board of Education was formally established in 1907 in an effort to organize the public schools scattered throughout the county. Nashville and Davidson County public schools were integrated on September 9, 1957. However, by the late 1960s, efforts to fully integrate the schools had still not been completed, and Federal court ruled that the Board of Education and administrative staff begin busing students to reduce racial segregation in schools.

The move to begin busing students was not met without controversy - zone lines were reestablished and personnel and faculties were shifted and restructured to meet requirements.

After the consolidation of metropolitan government in 1963, the Metropolitan Board of Education held its first meeting on July 1, 1964, at which point the schools both in Nashville and in Davidson County operated as a single system. Currently, the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Education has nine elected members, along with its appointed director of schools. The school district has a total of 139 schools, including 72 elementary schools, 34 middle schools, 21 high schools, along with three alternative, four special education, and five charter schools.

Scope and Contents of the Collection:

The Board of Education Records include materials relating to the history of Nashville's Board of Education. This collection, comprising about 94 linear feet, contains documents, correspondence, bound volumes, photographs, and printed materials that span the period 1854-2005. The bulk of the collection documents the history and activities of the Nashville Public Schools system, and includes enrollment records, educational census records, teacher and pupil attendance records, and grade lists.

A large bulk of this collection includes administrative records and reports generated by the Board of Education, as well as legal opinions and various legislation relating to educational matters. The Board of Education Records also contains a large number of construction contracts for various Nashville City School buildings, including Hume-Fogg, Pearl High, and East High. School property files also make up a significant amount of this collection, which contain title history and property acquisition records for the sites of most Metropolitan Nashville Public School buildings. This collection also contains a considerable amount of photographs - mostly black and white - of students, teachers, classrooms, school events, school buildings, and Board members.

Index Terms:**Subjects:**

Education--Tennessee--Nashville.
Public Schools--Tennessee--Davidson County.
Public Schools--Tennessee--Nashville.
School integration--Tennessee--Nashville--History.
Schools--Tennessee--Nashville.
Schools--Tennessee--Nashville--History--20th century.
Tennessee--Nashville.
Tennessee--Nashville and Davidson County

Related Collections:

C. Beverly Briley Mayoral Papers
Libbie Walsh Teachout Papers
Margaret Claridge Gray Collection
Metro Archives School Yearbooks Collection
Metro Nashville Education Association Minutes
Vertical Files--Schools
William Henry Oliver Papers

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged alphabetically into six series: *administration*, *photographs*, *printed materials*, *reports*, *school buildings*, and *school property files*.

The *administration* series contains materials relating to the administrative functions of the Board of Education. It is further divided into ten subseries: *blotters*, *correspondence*, *deeds & leases*, *financial*, *legal*, *legislation*, *minutes*, *personnel*, *resolutions*, and *student records*.

The *blotters* subseries contains record books of attendance and deportments for various Nashville City Schools, and dates range between 1867 and 1939.

The *correspondence* subseries contains communication between the Board of Education and various other entities relating largely to Nashville City Schools, with dates between 1904 and 1968.

The *deeds & leases* subseries includes records relating to the lease or purchase of various properties for the use of the Board of Education.

The *financial* subseries contains the general financial records for the Board of Education, including account books, budgets, and mortgage bonds. Dates range from 1894 to 1979.

The *legal* subseries contains legal opinions, court rulings, and contracts involving the Board of Education. Most notable in this subseries are the court documents from the case of Thomas vs. Hibbitts, in which the difference in salaries for white and African-American teachers under the Board of Education was declared unconstitutional.

The *legislation* subseries includes House and Senate bills relating to education in the United States and/or in Tennessee.

The *minutes* subseries contains bound volumes of the minutes of the Board of Education from 1854 to 2002, the Association of High School Teachers from 1942 to 1955, and the Nashville City Lunch Room Association from 1939 to 1962.

The *personnel* subseries contains records relating to faculty and staff for Nashville Public Schools, including absentee lists, attendance sheets, pay roll information, salaries, and time sheets. Dates range between 1856 and 1958.

The *resolutions* subseries includes various resolutions adopted by the Board of Education and the City of Nashville.

The *student records* subseries contains student grade lists and enrollment records for students of Nashville Public Schools. Dates range from 1896 to 1947.

The *photographs* series contains a large amount of mostly black and white photographs of schools, students, classrooms, Board members, and special events. Dates are largely between 1970 and 1990.

Printed materials contains newspaper clippings, directories, newsletters and publications, courses of study, and event programs.

The **reports** contains annual, statistical, enrollment and attendance reports, comprehensive surveys, various school studies, and the Tennessee Educational Census reports. Dates range between 1880 and 2005.

The **school buildings** series contains contracts and correspondence relating to the construction of various Nashville Public Schools. Contracts include those for painting and glazing of buildings, architects, and general contract work. Most materials in this series date between 1912 and 1935. This series is arranged alphabetically by school.

School property files includes materials relating to the acquisition, taxes, and title abstracts of and for the properties on which public schools in Nashville and Davidson County are built. This series is arranged alphabetically by school.

Contents Listing

For full inventory of this collection, please contact Metro Archives.

Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: In-library use only.

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Administrative Information:

Copyright: The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions may apply.

Provenance: Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Board of Education.

Processing Information: Processed by Kelley Sirko, June 2021.

Accruals: No further accruals expected.