

African-American Education in Indiana
State of Indiana
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The African-American experience in the United States includes a vast array of social, cultural and political injustices during the past four-hundred years. Slavery most famously represents the hardships African-Americans faced, but their plight went beyond the typified southern plantation fields. African Americans endured the rigors of an unequal social system in various forms, such as the absence of suffrage. Indiana never legally installed slavery as an institution, but the state tolerated slave owning, and blacks still suffered from racist attitudes and unfair laws within its boundaries.¹ An example of Indiana's racial bias is this short case study of the state's educational legislation and school segregation.

Since the state's admission to the union in 1816 to the present day African-American education has been an issue debated in numerous township halls, school board meetings and the Indiana General Assembly. The 1816 Constitution of Indiana stated "as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law for a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation from township schools to a State University, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all."² In theory, a vast systemized educational system was a much needed program in the budding new state, but little progress materialized. Instead, according to historian Emma Lou Thornbrough, Indiana became one of the most backward states in providing necessary resources for public schools before the Civil War. White children received limited educational opportunities: while colored children were denied antiquate public educational facilities.³ In 1850, once Indiana outgrew the 1816 State Constitution, members of the constitutional convention debated about the needed revisions to the state's governmental system. On November 1, 1851, Indiana's second constitution went into effect, but little changed for the state's educational system.⁴ The 1851 Constitution of Indiana again declared "to provide, by law, for a general and uniform system of Common Schools, wherein tuition shall be without

¹ Indiana Historical Bureau, *The Northwest Ordinance*, Article Six
<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/resources/docnword.html> (accessed August 9, 2007). Logan, Esarey, ed., *Governors Messages and Letters: Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, (Indianapolis, 1922) 275-6.

² Indiana Historical Bureau, *Indiana's First Constitution*, 1816-Article IX
<http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/resources/doconst1816artIX.html>
(accessed August 1, 2007).

³ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana: A Study of a Minority*. (Indianapolis, 1957). 161

⁴ Indiana, *Special and Local Acts of Indiana*, 1852, 27.

charge, and equally open to all.”⁵ As in the 1816 Constitution lawmakers never mentioned race, and by 1860 the public school system was still inadequate and still exclusively for white children.⁶ 65 percent of white children were enrolled in some sort of school public or private, while fewer than a quarter of colored children attended school.⁷ The state’s failure to make provisions for African-American education created this wide statistical margin.

The first school law, implementing the 1816 constitution, made no mention of race. For the first few years of the state’s educational system, black and white children had equal privileges in the few schools that existed, but it is likely only a minimal percentage of African-American children attended early township schools.⁸ This changed in 1832. During the Indiana General Assembly session that year the Senate Judiciary committee questioned whether “colored” persons, who were householders or freeholders, were eligible to participate and “express their assent or dissent” in support of a common school in the district in which they resided.⁹ Ultimately the Senate Judiciary committee asserted every free inhabitant, without regard to color, had participatory rights in attending and supporting schools while voicing concern over the allocation of school funds. The Senate Judiciary’s decision upset some Hoosiers, and the General Assembly corrected this perceived racial oversight by 1837. A law passed that year expressly stated “the white inhabitants of each congressional township” constituted a body politic and corporate for carrying out the provisions of the township schools.¹⁰

Four years later more laws helped ensure minimal participation by African-Americans in the educational system. An act approved in 1841 levied a special tax for financial support of public schools, but contained a proviso that the “property of negroes and mulattoes shall not be assessed for school purposes.”¹¹ The act did not specifically ban African-American children from attending public schools, but the law clearly implied their exclusion from the common school system.¹² To ensure the barring of blacks in public schools, Solon Robinson, a popular civil servant for the State of Indiana, presented a petition to the state Senate, asking for a law “to prevent Negro and mulatto children from being forced into the district schools contrary to

⁵ Indiana Historical Bureau, *Indiana’s Constitution of 1851 Article 8-Education*, <http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/resources/constarticle8.html> (accessed August 7, 2007).

⁶ Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 162.

⁷ *Ibid.*

John D. Barnhart., Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth*, (New York, 1979) 127.

⁸ Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 162.

Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1941) 237.

⁹ Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1831, 239.

¹⁰ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1837, 15.

¹¹ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1841, 82.

¹² Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 162.

the will of the people concerned.”¹³ This petition signified some African-Americans still contested public sentiment and attended public or private schools. Soon after Robinson submitted the petition, a bill was proposed “to regulate the admission of negro and mulatto children into the public district schools,” which passed the Senate but not the House.¹⁴ During the next session of the Indiana General Assembly (1843) a law passed with a provision specifically making a distinction that public schools were open only to white children of the state between the ages of five and twenty-one.¹⁵

Though African-Americans lacked political power at the ballot box, they attempted to influence the new policy on public education in other ways. After the passage of such laws, African-Americans contested these new restrictions by circulating petitions and creating a political resolution within the Liberty Party declaring virtue and intelligence are strong bulwarks of a republic, “education should therefore be diffused through all classes of the community, without regard to condition or color.”¹⁶ Though these highly restrictive measures were in place, some African-American children still attended integrated district schools. In Wayne County, African-American families paid a special tuition, and administrators allowed their children admittance to the school. In 1850 this issue was taken to the Indiana Supreme Court: the Court decided the law limited attendance at public schools to white children, and that African-American children could not attend though their families paid their tuition.¹⁷

Ratification of the 1851 Constitution did not eliminate the educational limitations placed on the African-American community. The racial message within the laws created during the 1830s and 1840s still lingered in the Indiana General Assembly. Two acts (1853 and 1855) produced soon after the new constitution’s adoption only reinforced earlier education laws. The laws barred black children from any education benefits while not taxing African-Americans for school finance.¹⁸ With these laws in place, little educational opportunities existed for “Negroes,” except for private schools organized by religious organizations like the Quakers, until 1869.¹⁹

¹³ Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1842, 521-22.

Indiana, *House of Representatives Journal*, 1842, 788.

¹⁴ Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1842, 521-22.

Indiana, *House of Representatives Journal*, 1842, 788.

¹⁵ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana (Revised Statutes)*, 1843, 320.

¹⁶ “State Liberty Convention,” *Free Labor Advocate*, June 14, 1844.

The Non-Slaveholder (Philadelphia), 3 (1848) : 88, quoted in Heller, Herbert Lynn, “Negro Education in Indiana from 1816 to 1860” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1951), 63.

¹⁷ Indiana Supreme Court, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined*, 1853, 332-35.

¹⁸ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1853, 124.

Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1855, 161.

¹⁹ Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 166-7.

Six years after the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), Governor Conrad Baker, in his annual message to the Indiana General Assembly, asked for a change in the laws denying Indiana was the only northern state, besides Illinois, that failed to provide educational opportunities for its black citizens.²⁰ Four months later on May 13, the Governor approved a law proclaiming all children of proper age, without regard to race or color, could attend segregated public schools.²¹

Though the state law presented new educational opportunities to African-Americans, throughout the state school officials interpreted this clause in different ways. Fort Wayne admitted black children into already established white schools. Some communities like Evansville, created separate schools for their African-American population. In smaller towns, where the small black populace did not justify the establishment of a separate school, children were denied access to their rightful educational opportunity.²² The loophole various communities exploited in such instances was found in the law stating that the trustee should provide “other means” of education without defining the alternative educational possibilities.²³ Some school districts sent black students to private schools, gave the children books to read, or returned the parent’s tax money; but in many cases the law was ignored.²⁴ According to the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction, James H. Smart, “The ‘other means’ employed is to let the colored children grow up in ignorance.”²⁵ Eight years later (1877) state lawmakers finally attempted to clarify the situation by amending the 1869 law. The new act still made the organization of segregated schools lawful, but if a township could not provide the necessary facilities then African-Americans must attend white schools. Also, if an African-American student surpassed the grade level allotted by the “colored” school then, “he or she shall be entitled to enter the school provided for the white children of a like grade.”²⁶

Though the new law allowed the creation of colored schools throughout the state, the newly formed schools only taught elementary education. During the early 1870s few black students went on to non-segregated public high schools.²⁷ Building a segregated school for purposes of providing education to a small percentage of blacks was not financially feasible for Indiana townships, including the City of

²⁰ Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1869, 57.

²¹ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana (special session)*, 1869, 41.

²² Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Eighteenth Report*, 1970, 161.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 232-5.

²³ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana (special session)*, 1869, 41.

²⁴ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Fourth Report*, 1876, 23.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 326.

²⁵ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Fourth Report*, 1876, 23

²⁶ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1877, 124.

²⁷ A. C. Shortridge, “The Schools of Indianapolis-III,” *Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History*, 8 (September 1912) 128

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 340.

Indianapolis. In 1872, the State Superintendent of Public Schools, Abram C. Shortridge, and a "committee of colored men" decided to test the city's racial boundaries. Shortridge told members of the black community to send one of their "brightest children" to Indianapolis High School (which became Shortridge High School) on the first day of school. On opening day Mary Alice Rann and Shortridge confronted the school's principal, George P. Brown. Without incident Mary Rann was admitted and received a diploma four years later.²⁸ The school remained integrated until the opening of the all black high school, Cripus Attucks, in 1927.²⁹

After the adoption of the 1869 education law two other important issues quickly arose. What constituted a "colored" child? Indiana law had never defined the parameters of race and school admission. During the early 1870s, the New Albany school system denied two visibly white children from enrolling in classes on the grounds that they were colored. After a genealogical investigation it was determined that "the taint of negro blood in their veins was only in the sixty-fourth degree."³⁰ The county superintendent concurred with the school's decision, but the State Superintendent, M.B. Hopkins, believed school systems should consult the Indiana marriage law for the definition of a colored person. Since the law prohibited marriage between a white person and one-eighth African-American blood, Hopkins concluded any amount less than one-eighth was suitable for school admission.³¹

Also, once "colored" schools began opening it became a matter of racial pride that townships employed African-American teachers, since teaching was one of the limited occupations for educated blacks.³² No African-American group besides ministers enjoyed greater prestige among the community. In Indianapolis, school leaders attempted to appease the black residents. The staff of colored schools was usually entirely black, but no African-Americans taught at white schools. A small number of African-Americans began teaching when the first black schools were opened in 1869. By 1902, fifty-three of the 585 elementary teachers in the city were colored. In fact, during the early twentieth-century, keeping the school system segregated became an argument to preserve jobs for educated blacks.³³

²⁸ Shortridge, "The Schools of Indianapolis-III," 128-29.

²⁹ Stanley Warren, *Cripus Attucks High School*, "Hail to the Green, Hail to the Gold," (Virginia Beach, 1998) 32.

³⁰ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Indiana School Journal*, 1874, 26-7.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Social and Industrial Activities of School No. 26 Show How Pupils and Teachers May Aid Community," *Indianapolis News*, June 4, 1914.

"Greater Interest in education is Shown," *Indianapolis News*, June 23, 1919.

"Need of Education Realized by Negro," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1914.

"Two Colored Girls, Age 14, Are Shortridge H.S. Graduates," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1915.

³³ Indianapolis Public Schools, *Annual Report*, 1902, 19.

Shortridge, "The Schools of Indianapolis-III," 127.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 33-34.

Between the years 1877 and 1949, African-American education improved, but at a snail's pace. In Evansville, a total of eighteen teachers staffed three schools by 1887. Though far from adequate for a school population which numbered close to two-thousand African-American students the township required all African-American children to attend.³⁴ Unfortunately, fewer than half of the black school aged children enrolled. In other cities with a large black population and separate school systems, black enrollment remained low. For example, only 36 percent in Mount Vernon, 45 percent in New Albany and Jeffersonville, 50 percent in Madison and 56 percent in Richmond of eligible African-Americans attended school in 1888.³⁵

The limited facilities and the dreary surroundings in most segregated schools discouraged children.³⁶ Besides the unequal educational opportunities, there were various other reasons why a large percentage of colored children did not succeed academically. Children regularly left school to work and supplement the family income. Also, the lack of schooling tradition in African-American households contributed to educational indifference.³⁷ Those within the African-American community that received a proper education usually did not obtain any higher economic success because most occupations remained closed to them.³⁸ By early 1990s many schools only focused on service related training for African-Americans.³⁹ These factors contributed to the disillusionment many African-Americans felt at the turn of the century, and the number of colored high school

Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, 2000) 140-41.

³⁴ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Thirty-Sixth Report*, 1888, 101.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 336.

³⁵ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Thirty-Sixth Report*, 1888, 29, 41, 58, 84, 108.

³⁶ Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 339.

³⁷ Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report*, 1905, 263.

"Many Negro Pupils Complete Course," *Indianapolis News*, June 16, 1916.

"Need of Education Realized by Negro," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1914.

"Two Colored Girls, Age 14, Are Shortridge H.S. Graduates," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1915

³⁸ "Need of Education Realized by Negro," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1914.

"Many Negro Pupils Complete Courses," *Indianapolis News*, June 16, 1916.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 339.

Thornbrough, *Indiana blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 140-41.

³⁹ "Social and Industrial Activities of School No. 26 Show How Pupils and Teachers May Aid Community," *Indianapolis News*, June 4, 1914.

"Greater Interest in education is Shown," *Indianapolis News*, June 23, 1919.

"Need of Education Realized by Negro," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1914

"Two Colored Girls, Age 14, Are Shortridge H.S. Graduates," *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1915

graduates remained low.⁴⁰ Educational opportunities for African Americans slightly enlarged in 1898 when several Marion county teachers created a free night school declaring it open “to any person of any race, color, age or sex, who is capable of doing work along high school lines.”⁴¹ Afterward African-American enrollment increased, but by 1919 only 406 black students attended school out of a total of 40,00 African-American people residing in Indianapolis.⁴²

In 1896, the landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, upheld the legality of segregated public spaces throughout the country.⁴³ During this time period in Indiana many in the African-American community tolerated segregation, but protested against the obvious inequalities of educational resources. A serious legislative effort for the equalization of schools happened in 1897. Gabriel Jones, an African-American lawmaker and Marion County educator, proposed a repeal of the 1877 law regarding colored schools by adding the provision that every child, regardless of color, shall have equal educational facilities. The bill passed the House of Representatives, but was “indefinitely postponed” by the State Senate.⁴⁴

Not until the late 1920s did some black students have separate high schools with equal or even better facilities than white schools. The three most legendary segregated schools in Indiana were Crispus Attucks High School (1927) in Indianapolis, Lincoln High School (1928) in Evansville and Roosevelt High School (1931) in Gary.⁴⁵ Though the long commutes inconvenienced many of the students (these schools served the entire African-American population within their designated cities) the high schools serviced and enriched the entire black community through the employment of black educators, athletic achievement, extra

⁴⁰ “Many Negro Pupils Complete Coursed,” *Indianapolis News*, June 16, 1916.
“Greater Interest in education is Shown,” *Indianapolis News*, June 23, 1919.
“Need of Education Realized by Negro,” *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1914.
“Two Colored Girls, Age 14, Are Shortridge H.S. Graduates,” *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1915.

Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, 339.

⁴¹ Indianapolis Public Schools, *Annual Report*, 1902, 107-9.

⁴² “Greater Interest in education is Shown,” *Indianapolis News*, June 23, 1919.

⁴³ National Archives, *Transcript of Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896
<http://www.ourdocuments.gov> (accessed August 6, 2007).

⁴⁴ Indiana, *House of Representatives Journal*, 1897, 489, 746, 751-54, 842, 1011, 1301.

Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1897, 1143, 1261.

⁴⁵ Warren, *Crispus Attucks High School*, 32.

Central Attendance District, *Times Never Forgotten: A History of the Central Attendance District*, (Evansville, 1994). 37.

Roosevelt High School Website, *History*,

<http://www.garycsc.k12.in.us.roosevelt/html/history.html> (accessed August 12, 2007).

curricular activities and numerous cultural events like plays and operettas.⁴⁶ Excluding protests in Indianapolis and Gary pertaining to separate school issues, most blacks generally tolerated segregated schools.⁴⁷ During World War II complaints and racial tension increased, because African-Americans acknowledged the hypocrisy of fighting for liberation in Europe while still maintaining racist segregation policies in the United States.⁴⁸ In 1949, the Indiana General Assembly enacted a law prohibiting segregation and discrimination “in the public kindergartens, common schools, colleges, and universities of the state.” This law provided a time-span of five years during which no segregated schools could be built, and black children starting school in 1949 could attend white schools within the district they resided. In addition the law made it illegal to “discriminate in hiring, upgrading tenure or placement of any teacher on the basis of race, creed or color.”⁴⁹

The last year (1954) for legalized segregated schools in Indiana coincided with the United States Supreme Court decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case which made segregation illegal throughout the United States.⁵⁰ In Indianapolis, the integration of teachers did not begin until 1951.⁵¹ By October 1954, 27 of the 396 black teachers employed by the Indianapolis school system worked in integrated schools.⁵² While racial friction still loomed throughout the country, some Indianapolis newspapers drew a distinction between desegregation developments within Indiana and the southern United States, noting “how well Negro and white pupils have mixed in Indianapolis schools.”⁵³ The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision resulted in student strikes in Washington D.C., Baltimore, Maryland and

⁴⁶ Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 144.

Central Attendance District, *Times Never Forgotten*, 37-8.

“Roosevelt in Second Game,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 19, 1955.

“Attucks Wins State Title,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 20, 1955.

“New Colored High School is Urged,” *Indianapolis News*, April 1, 1936.

⁴⁷ Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 141.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

United States Military Website, *A Chronology of African American Military Service From WWI Through WWII: Part II*,

<http://www.redstone.army.mil/history/integrate/chron3b.htm> (accessed August 14, 2007).

⁴⁹ Indiana, *Senate Journal*, 1949, 506, 508, 711-12, 814.

Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1949, 603-07.

⁵⁰ Indiana, *Laws of Indiana*, 1949, 604.

National Archives website, United States Supreme Court, *Judgement, Brown v. Board of Education*, <http://arcweb.archives.gov> (accessed August 6, 2007).

National Archives, United States Supreme Court, *Judgement in the Supreme Court Decision for Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al.*, <http://arcweb.archives.gov> (accessed August 6, 2007).

⁵¹ Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 149.

⁵² “Pupils Erase Racial Issue Here,” *Indianapolis Times*, October 10, 1954.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

throughout Georgia, according to the *Indianapolis Times*, but the newspaper celebrated Indiana's cultural foresight by stating "Indianapolis schools quietly continued the gradual racial integration which began five years ago."⁵⁴

The white press in Indianapolis was self-congratulatory on the process of desegregation, but their views sharply differed from the opinions of members of the black community as reflected in the African-American newspaper, the *Indianapolis Recorder*. Many questioned the Indianapolis School Board's actions after the 1949 law. The loudest complaint came from parents, church leaders and other concerned African-American citizens about the Indianapolis school board's attempts to gerrymander the school districts.⁵⁵ In the 1960s, African-American leaders protested the Indianapolis school board's choice for building sites of new high schools. As the school population grew and African Americans began moving into formerly white neighborhoods, the city schools became overcrowded while the school board authorized the building of three new high schools on the edges of the city's perimeter where all the residents were white. What occurred was resegregation or "de facto" segregation as a result of changing residential patterns. In response, state lawmakers amended the 1949 act stating "officials may take any affirmative actions...to effect greater integration and to reduce or prevent segregation."⁵⁶ With such a mandate, busing became a central issue in Indiana and the entire country.⁵⁷ In 1971, the case of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* the United States Supreme Court validated busing as a tool for desegregation. The ruling stated school boards could not place newly constructed schools in strategic districts to reintroduce school segregation, and ordered a halt to

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "School Board Election is No Contest", *Indianapolis Times*, November 3, 1955.

"Right Comm. Director to 'Advise' NAACP School Bias Charge Here," *Indianapolis Recorder*, April 8, 1967.

"Pupils Erase Racial Issue Here," *Indianapolis Times*, October 10, 1954.

"City Schools Reduce Color Line Sharply in 4 Years," *Indianapolis News*, November 25, 1953.

"Negro teacher Shows Race Unity Can Work," *Indianapolis News*, November 24, 1953.

"Adults Are Big Barrier in School Color Fight," *Indianapolis News*, November 30, 1953.

"End Segregation in Schools Now, Brownell Asks Court," *Indianapolis News*, November 27, 1953.

"Coffin Used to Protest School Being Crowded," *Indianapolis Recorder*, November 4, 1967.

"NAACP asks School Board Policy for 'Forthright' Integration Steps," *Indianapolis Recorder*, June 5, 1965.

"Inner-City Group Question Board's Plan for Shortridge," *Indianapolis Times*, September 15, 1965.

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yearly adjustments in school enrollment once desegregation had been accomplished.⁵⁸

During the 1970s pending litigation concerning a guarantee of an implementation of desegregation policies within Indianapolis lingered throughout the decade. On May 31, 1968, the United States Attorney General, Ramsey Clark, charged the Indianapolis School System of segregationist policies. By June 20 of that year Indianapolis school attorneys denied the allegations. They claimed all “one-race schools existing in Indianapolis are the result of neighborhood characteristics.”⁵⁹ Federal Judge S. Hugh Dillin was assigned the case.⁶⁰ Soon after, superintendent of public schools, Stanley C. Campbell, and Crispus Attucks principal, Earl Donaldson, urged Donaldson’s “one-race” high school to integrate immediately. Despite claiming their innocence, IPS began taking limited steps toward further desegregation.⁶¹ These measures sparked opposition from members of the white community who considered federal interference with local schools unwarranted.⁶² By July 1972 the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners fired Campbell for this desegregationist view.⁶³ Eleven months earlier the long-awaited trial (*United States v. Board of School Commissioners, Indianapolis, Indiana*) began on August 3, 1971. At the trial, Justice Department lawyers presented an eighty-two-page report showing IPS “officials attempted to perpetuate segregation that existed officially before 1949.”⁶⁴ Judge Dillin found IPS guilty and followed closely the guidelines created by Chief Justice Warren Burger in the *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* case. The final decision ended with an affirmation to use buses ship students from Indianapolis to township schools as a remedy for segregation in Indianapolis.⁶⁵ A small-scale version of busing for desegregation began in 1973, but large-scale busing procedures did not happen until 1980. With rare exceptions suburban schools opened their doors to African-American students without issue.⁶⁶ The result created a reduction in the number of black high school age students and secondary schools in the Indianapolis Public School System.⁶⁷

Many race related obstacles within Indiana’s public school system have been overcome with the help of numerous individuals and groups, but questions about equality within the school system still arise. In 1995 the Indiana Department of Education began working on a five year schedule “to return students to IPS, subject

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to approval of the plan by the federal district court.”⁶⁸ Over twenty years after Judge Dillin’s ruling, Indiana’s capital city still struggled with desegregation regulations. As of 2006, Indianapolis still transferred tuition costs and paid for student transportation at an annual rate of almost 11.2 million dollars for integration purposes.⁶⁹

African American education in Indiana has changed drastically since the founding of the state. Educational prospects for African Americans in public schools went from statewide exclusion to an encompassing effort to insure desegregation. In 1979, Indiana Department of Public Instruction superintendent, Harold H. Negley wrote, “Indiana school desegregation trends cover the gamut found on the national scene; from consistently working to maintain a highly successful integrated system, to advancing voluntary plans, complying with court orders, and struggling to delay court orders.”⁷⁰ Though some have tried to hinder progress, many championed educational equality and helped in the public school system’s evolution. Debate still exists whether the current desegregation measures should change, but if the past is any indication, then educational advancement opportunities will continuously grow in numbers for African Americans.

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⁶⁹ Indiana Department of Education, *State Board of Finance Minutes*, June 27, 2006, <http://www.in.gov/auditor/pdfs/sbfinance/meetings/06272006.pdf> (accessed September 10, 2007).

⁷⁰ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Indiana School Desegregation: A Brief Historical Overview*, 1979, v.