

A Guide to the Newport News (Va.) School Board Records, 1896-1973 (bulk 1950-1970)

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 1017409, 1017410, 1017412
Library of Virginia
2011

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History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

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Subtitle: Newport News (Va.) School Board Records, 1896-1973 (bulk 1950-1970)

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Publication Statement

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Publisher: Library of Virginia

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MARC record, created by Catherine O'Brien, 2011 Jul 25.

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Barcode numbers

1017409, 1017410, 1017412

Language

English

Creator

Newport News (Va.) School Board

Physical Characteristics

3.00 cu. ft. (3 boxes)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Newport News Circuit Court.

These items are located at the State Records Center. Contact Archives Research Services for access information, directions and hours.

Preferred Citation

Newport News (Va.) School Board Records, 1896-1973 (bulk 1950-1970). Local government records collection, Newport News Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Historical Information

Newport News was located in Warwick County, which is now extinct. It was established as a town in 1880 and incorporated as a city by act of the General Assembly in 1896, without ever having been incorporated as a town. The Newport News (Va.) Board of School Trustees was established in 1896 when the city was incorporated. It was replaced by the School Board in 1921. Newport News was enlarged by consolidation with the city of Warwick in 1958. The Newport News City Public Schools District was established in 1958 when the Old City of Newport News and the former city of Warwick (Warwick County prior to 1952) were consolidated.

During World War II, the federal government supported a nationwide program of child-care centers, intended to boost war production by freeing mothers to work. The centers had a peak enrollment near 130,000 children in 1944. The federal subsidy ended in February 1946. During World War II, the federal government offered grants for child care services to authorized community groups that could demonstrate a war-related need for the service. The program was justified as a war expedient necessary to allow mothers to enter the labor force and increase war production. Funding authorization came through the 1941 Defense Public Works Law (Title II of the 1940 National Defense Housing Act), popularly known as the Lanham Act. The law was designed to assist communities with water, sewer, housing, schools, and other local facilities' needs related to war industry and growth. The federal government granted 52 million dollars for child care under this Act from August 1943 through February 1946. Communities, mostly through user fees, contributed an additional 26 million dollars. At its July 1944 peak, 3,102 federally subsidized child care centers, with 130,000 children enrolled, were located in all but one state and in the District of Columbia.

In 1960, U.S. District Court Judge Walter E. Hoffman approved a pupil placement plan submitted by the Newport News Public School District and dismissed a suit challenging it (Sharon Adkinson, et al v. the School Board of the City of Newport News, et al), in 1962. In 1965 Newport News voluntarily submitted a freedom-of-choice plan to the U.S. Commission of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The Department accepted the plan as meeting all of its requirements for compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. During the summer of 1970, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People filed a suit in Federal district court on behalf of black plaintiffs alleging that Newport News was operating a dual school system. In August 1971 Judge Hoffman ordered a new assignment plan for both students and faculty that created attendance zones to which they would be assigned. The Federal district court approved a reorganization plan for the 1971-1972 year.

Scope and Content

Newport News (Va.) School Board Records, 1896-1973 (bulk 1950-1970), document management and expansion of school buildings and grounds, 1935-1973; administration of the Nursery School Project, a federally subsidized daycare program, 1943-1951; school integration, 1958-1968; the development of a kindergarten program, 1963-1973; financial audits, 1959-1971, and appointments to and resignations from the Board of School Trustees, 1896-1921, and the School Board, 1921-1958.

Schools, buildings, and grounds records, 1935-1973, contain correspondence, memoranda, deeds, plats, building plans, excerpts of city council minutes pertaining to school buildings and grounds issues, and financial records. The records include three general files and individual files on 37 elementary schools and high schools and a technical college. Correspondence includes letters between the Superintendent of Schools

and the City Manager.

Nursery School Project records, 1943-1951, document administration of a federally funded daycare program. Records include memos and correspondence with the Federal Works Agency pertaining to the grant application and the rationale for the program, the hiring of staff and rental of property and purchase of supplies; correspondence with the City Manager pertaining to the city appropriation for the program; a letter of support for the program from the War Department, Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, and reports on the number of mothers with children in various civil defense zones who were working and needed childcare or who had children and wanted to work and needed childcare. The records also document discussion of efforts to continue the program after federal funds were withdrawn in 1946.

Integration records, 1958-1968, contain correspondence, memoranda, excerpts from city council minutes, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and broadsides pertaining to school desegregation. They include memos about public safety and police presence, policies for the assignment and transfer of students, copies of legislation and court opinions, and correspondence and memos pertaining to implementation of a pupil placement plan approved by the Federal district court in 1960. Also included are memos about a lawsuit challenging the plan, dismissed in 1962; and a letter, 1968, from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office for Civil Rights about threatened enforcement procedures. These files also contain letters from the Executive Board of the Newport News chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. about inequities in the schools, a letter from the Peninsula Christian Ministers Association celebrating the peaceful transition to integrated schools, newspaper clippings of editorials about integration, Southern Regional Council literature, and examples of racist propaganda from the period.

Kindergarten Program records, 1963-1973, document development of a kindergarten program that was implemented in the fall of 1972. They contain correspondence, including letters from citizens advocating for a kindergarten, newspaper clippings, excerpts of city council minutes, and directories of nursery schools and kindergartens in Newport News.

Audits, 1959-1971, contain financial audit reports of the School Board and related correspondence.

School Board appointments and resignations, 1896-1959, contain correspondence and city council minutes pertaining to appointments, resignations, recognition, and dismissal of appointees to the Board of School Trustees and the School Board.

Index Terms

Personal Names:

Hoffman, Walter E., 1907-1996.

Corporate Names:

Federal Works Agency.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People -- Newport News Branch.

Newport News (Va.) School Board.

Peninsula Christian Ministers Association (Newport News, Va.)

Southern Regional Council (Atlanta, Ga.)

United States Commission of Education -- Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

United States District Court -- Eastern District of Virginia.

United States War Department -- Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation.

Virginia -- State Board of Education.

Subjects:

Bonds -- Virginia -- Newport News.

City managers -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Daycare centers -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Government aid to education -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Hate speech -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Kindergarten teachers -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Kindergartens -- Virginia -- Newport News.

School boards -- Virginia -- Newport News.

School buildings -- Virginia -- Newport News.

School integration -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Segregation in education -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Technical education -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Working mothers -- Virginia -- Newport News.
World War, 1939-1945 -- Women -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Geographical Names:

Newport News (Va.) -- History -- 20th century.

Genre and Form Terms:

Audits -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Budgets -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Building plans -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Clippings (information artifacts) -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Contracts -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Correspondence -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Editorials -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Judicial records -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Legislation -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Local government records -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Memorandums -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Minutes -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Pamphlets -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Plats -- Virginia -- Newport News.
Reports -- Virginia -- Newport News.
School records -- Virginia -- Newport News.

Added Entry - Corporate Name:

Newport News (Va.) -- Board of School Trustees.