



CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF

LEADERSHIP & LEGACY

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

1895–1936

In the United States, the number of school board directors exceeds the size of any other group of elected officials in the country, composed of approximately 95,000 individuals, with 4,500 located in Pennsylvania. These school directors are unsalaried and are only reimbursed for costs that result directly from performing their duties. Averaging more than 40 hours a month in some districts, these unpaid volunteers are instrumental to the everyday operation of the 500 School Districts, 84 career and technical centers, and 29 intermediate units within the Pennsylvania public school system. To ensure their schools are providing the best education possible for more than 1.7 million children, Pennsylvania school directors create a vision for their School Districts and ensure that the administration of each school submits regular and timely reports detailing the outcomes of their efforts to meet the established strategic goals. The policies set by school boards are all equally important, whether these decisions affect the length of the school day, the level of academic rigor or the accepted methods of student discipline. School directors are not always on school grounds, but their decisions influence students and their family members daily.

The value of public education is reflected in the earliest documents related to Pennsylvania's history. William Penn in 1682 authored the Frame of Government for Pennsylvania and included a clause calling for "all persons ... having children ... shall cause such to be instructed in reading and writing, so that they may be able to read the Scriptures and to write by the time they attain to 12 years of age."

The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 included a provision for the establishment of schools in every county of the commonwealth by writing laws "for the instruction of youth," stipulating that the educators' salaries would be funded by the public. Despite the repeated calls for public schooling, by 1800 there had been no effort by the legislature to implement public education. Schools did exist, but were largely operated by churches, with some "neighborhood" schools that were established by local communities. All were subscription schools that required payments by the families of the children attending.

Local school boards did not always carry the influence that they do now on public education in Pennsylvania. It would not be until the early 19th century that school boards as we know them would arise. The first school boards in Pennsylvania consisted of a 12-member board of school directors appointed by the county court. The first School District was established in Philadelphia in 1818, and the second in Lancaster in 1821. The move from court-appointed school boards to elected boards occurred with the passing of the Act of 1824. It provided for the election of "three school men" from each township to manage the pauper schools.

In 1831, Governor George Wolf appealed to the legislature to implement universal public education. He was one of a small group of politicians, including **Thaddeus Stevens**, who believed that public education was a cornerstone of democracy and social progress.



First school in Clearfield County, built in 1803 near Curwensville.

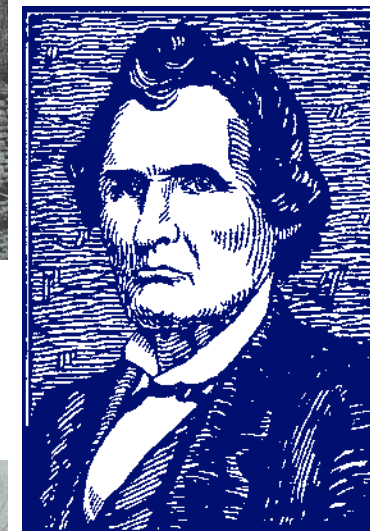


At the 100th Anniversary of the Free School Act in 1934, this was believed to be the oldest continuously used public school building in Pennsylvania. Located in Strasburg Township, Lancaster County, it was started in 1815 and supported by community families until 1834.



Uniontown School District, Fayette County, block print of Old West School House, built 1829. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)

THADDEUS STEVENS



Many politicians were elected to the Pennsylvania state legislature in the 1830s because they promised to repeal the Free Schools Act of 1834. Thaddeus Stevens, however, was different. He overcame poverty to become a prominent lawyer and member of the state House of Representatives and was known to be an ardent advocate for free public education. In April of 1835, Stevens rose to address the General Assembly, eloquently expressing his concerns in response to the state Senate's vote to repeal the act earlier that day. He urged the House

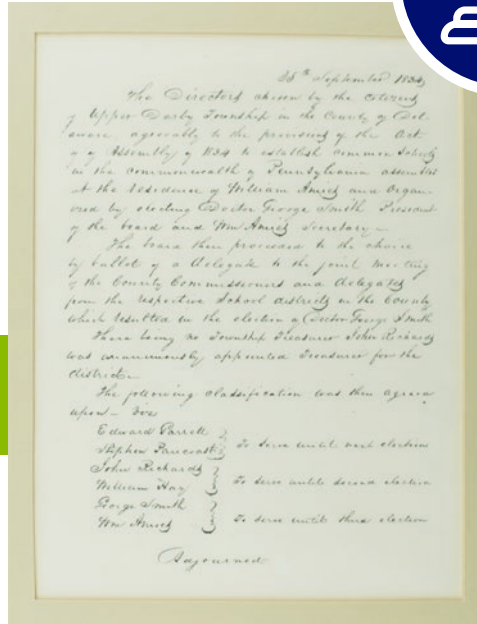
to cast their votes to ensure that the "blessing of education shall be conferred on every son of Pennsylvania, shall be carried home to the poorest child of the poorest inhabitant of your mountains so that even he may be prepared to act well his part in this land of freemen." In the end, the House decisively voted against repeal; the Senate took another vote and upheld the Free Schools Act of 1834 and allowed public school education to remain free.

Stevens also defended the right to an equal access to education for African Americans and is considered an early proponent of civil rights. Racial prejudice affected the education of many marginalized communities in addition to African Americans, particularly the Native Americans. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a segregated institution for Native American students, was opened by the federal government in 1879. The school prioritized training students to become homemakers and tradesmen and did not empower them to pursue a college education. More than 10,000 American Indians were educated there until its closure in 1918.

An unequivocal proponent of the equality of all people until his death in 1868, his tombstone reads: "I repose in this quiet and secluded spot, not from any natural preference for solitude, but finding other cemeteries limited as to race, by charter rules, I have chosen this that I might illustrate in my death the principles which I advocated through a long life, equality of man before his Creator."



In 1834 the Free School Act was adopted. It encouraged the establishment of a free school system in each community.

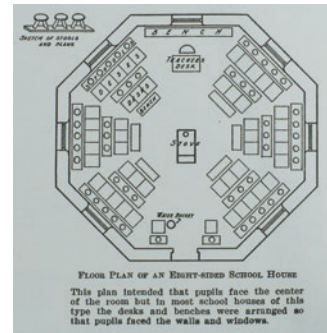


Upper Darby School District, Delaware County, handwritten document establishing the school board and organization of the school district according to the Free School Act of 1834, dated September 25, 1834. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)

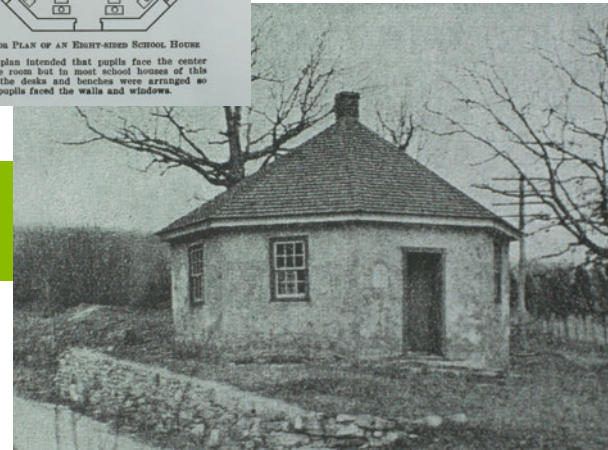


Depiction of a typical school session in 1834.

Diagram of an octagonal school.



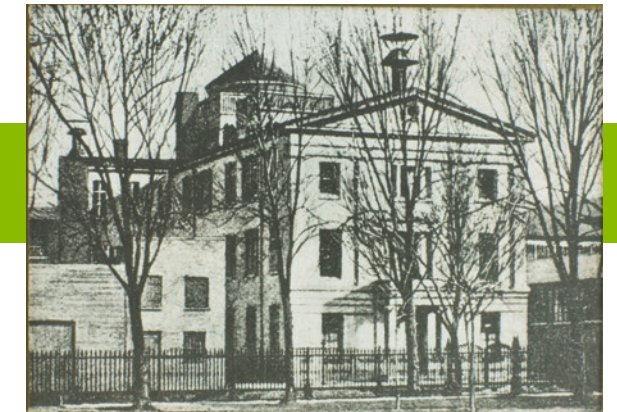
FLOOR PLAN OF AN EIGHT-SIDED SCHOOL HOUSE
This plan intended that pupils face the center of the room but in most school houses of this type the desks and benches were arranged so that pupils faced the walls and windows.



One of the earliest types of schoolhouses, the octagonal school, consisting of eight walls, seven windows and a stove in the center.



Pittsburgh School District, Allegheny County, checks written in 1853 by the Treasurer of the Board of School Directors of the South Ward School District which was one of the four school wards comprising the Pittsburgh Public Schools system. (Donated to PSBA by Christina Griffiths, PSBA chief operating officer.)



School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, copy of 1854 etching depicting Central High School. Opened in 1836, it was the first high school in Pennsylvania. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)

1833

1834

1835

1836

1840

1845

1850

1855

The opposition was concerned with the costs, and many religious groups feared free public schools would promote Protestant teachings. The battle raged until the Free School Act of 1834 was passed, which established both School Districts and school boards. Duties of those first boards included administration of the schools, plus the authority to determine the number of schools, purchase land and construct school buildings, pay necessary expenses and “appoint capable teachers at liberal salaries.” The law also required boards, who were comprised of six directors elected to three-year terms, to file annual reports to two “School District inspectors” who were court-appointed. Such reports called for school visitations, financial data, number of school days, attendance, salaries of teachers, teacher conduct and teacher qualifications.

School administration, as we currently perceive it, began in 1843 when the General Assembly changed the law that required two inspectors in each School District, to require only one court-appointed inspector of common schools. This court-appointed inspector of common schools remained active until the position was eliminated in 1849, later to be replaced by the establishment of the Office of County Superintendent in 1854.

“An Act for the Regulation and Continuance of a System of Education by Common Schools,” otherwise known as the Pennsylvania Common School Law of 1854, was passed on May 8 of that year. The act

created the Office of County Superintendent to aid local School Districts in the supervision of school teachers, certification of teachers and provision of a direct link with the state through the superintendent of common schools. The law also strengthened the powers of the local boards to select their own tax collectors and to borrow money. In addition, it started the idea of School District reorganization by allowing neighboring districts to form “jointures” – a significant development.

Public education was formally institutionalized as a state agency in 1873, when the legislature adopted the present Constitution of Pennsylvania. The Department of Public Instruction was formed, charged with coordinating responsibilities for public schools, and the state’s first superintendent of public instruction was named. A public school teacher from the age of 16, **James Pyle Wickersham** (b. 1825 – d. 1891) rose to be the inaugural county superintendent of Lancaster County in 1854. Originally from Newlin Township of Chester County, PA, Wickersham went to district schools and finished his education at the Unionville Academy. A career educator, he served as principal of the Marietta Pennsylvania Academy before assuming his post as superintendent of Lancaster County – although this was far from his first leadership position in the education field.



The Board of Directors of Carlisle Common Schools seal (Carlisle Area School District)



Carlisle Area School District, Cumberland County, graduate Annie C. Ritter's diploma, June 27, 1856. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)

In 1855, Wickersham established the “normal school” in Millersville, PA – a state-aided teacher training school known as normal because of its purpose to establish teaching standards, or norms, for teachers; he held a key role in establishing the Normal School Act of 1857.

In 1859, this school became Pennsylvania’s first state-supported normal school. In 1866, Wickersham was appointed state superintendent of public instruction, and remained in this position for nearly 15 years. He helped found the Pennsylvania State Teachers’ Association, now known as the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), and served as its fourth president in 1855. He also held a key role in forming the Lancaster County Educational Association and served as its second president in 1863. He helped organize the National Educational Association (NEA) in Philadelphia, and in 1865, was elected the organization’s seventh president. Wickersham also served two terms as president of the National Association of School Superintendents; an organization known today as the American Association of School Administrators (AASA).



William Howard Day was the first African American school board president in the United States.



WILLIAM HOWARD DAY

“We meet new hopes, new prospects, new joys and in view of the nation.” – William Howard Day, speaking at the original March on Washington, July 4, 1865.

Four years old when his father died in 1829, William Howard Day was taken in and educated by an abolitionist family. So, it is no exaggeration to consider Day as one whose life was dedicated to the abolition of slavery, and to building a new nation after the Civil War. And he managed to do this in addition to a full and eloquent career as an educator.

After earning undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Oberlin College, Day became a professor of Latin. Eventually, in Harrisburg, he became the first person of color elected anywhere in the nation as a school director. It was a role he served so well that when he attempted to retire after several years at the helm of all the local schools, the voters clamored for him to stay, and he changed his mind. He went on to serve six terms. It’s in this context — as an educator with a full a professional and political career as well — that Day’s adult life reveals a crucial chain of notable events in the story of the end

One of the major weaknesses of Pennsylvania’s early education laws was the creation of segregated schools. The 1854 act authorized a system of racially segregated public school education, which urged all School Districts in Pennsylvania:

“To establish within their respective districts separate schools for Negro and Mulatto children so as to accommodate twenty or more pupils; and wherever such schools shall be established and kept open four months in every year the Directors and Controllers shall not be compelled to admit such pupils into any other schools of the district.”

The Civil War would slow public interest in education, but following the war, changing social conditions would once again revive unresolved challenges within the Pennsylvania education system. Fighting the segregated school legislation was **William Howard Day**, the country’s first African American school board president. Day served six terms on the Harrisburg City School Board after taking up his first post in 1878 and was a member of the Pennsylvania School Directors’ Association, the predecessor of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA).

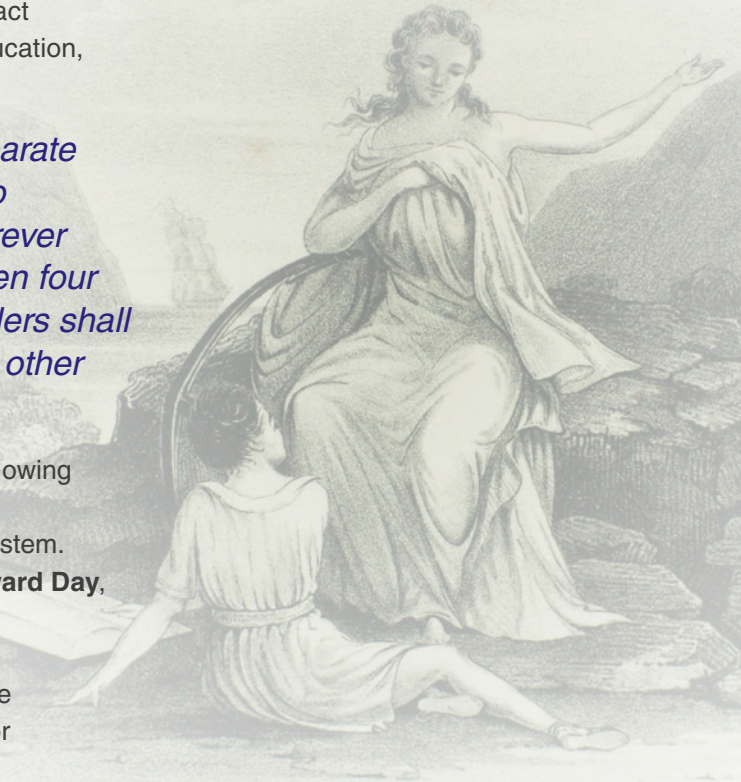


Illustration on graduate Annie C. Ritter's diploma, June 27, 1856

of slavery, and in the movement toward a more all-inclusive freedom.

Day worked with Frederick Douglass on one of the original abolitionist committees, organizing and speaking at the first of the movement’s Marches on Washington, July 4, 1865.

He traveled to London to spread the abolitionist word and helped found schools there, returning after the Civil War to continue his work, which was now beginning a new direction in earnest.

When Day was not teaching students directly, he was making their schools run better. And when he was not doing that, he was helping heal and grow the nation and the world.

Day not only helped organize the original March on Washington as part of the post-emancipation movement, he also spoke there in his much-lauded style. He was overjoyed, as he and so many other

people of his generation were able to celebrate independence together for the first time.

William Howard Day was the first African American school board president in the United States.

Day’s experience as an educator, anti-slavery champion and civil rights activist all resulted in a reputation so appreciated by his peers and contemporaries that it approached canonization after his death in 1875. Schools were named for him, and streets, and even a community in Pennsylvania. The recognition has faded over time, even as his work continues to affect American life.

However, his record endures. Looking back, Day’s 75 years of life witnessed and shaped three distinct eras of what is now known as the Civil Rights Movement: i) the peak of slavery in the United States; ii) the abolitionist movement; and iii) the ongoing struggle for equality that has spanned so many decades since emancipation.

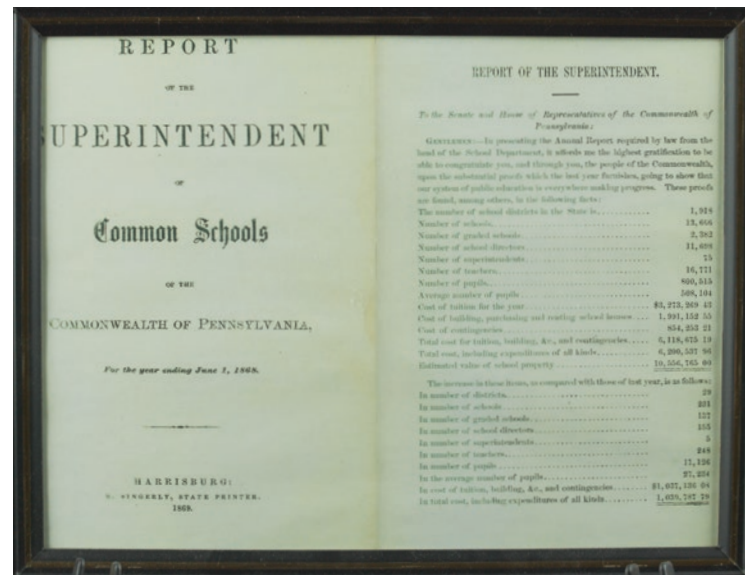
The legislature that allowed segregation was overturned by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania with the following bill: “A Further Supplement to the school laws of this commonwealth and to abolish all distinction of race or color in the public schools thereof,” thus ending misinterpretation of the legislation and amending the 1854 legislation.



It was in 1880 that the legislation was first challenged outright. Elias H. Allen, an African American in Meadville, Crawford County, attempted to send his children to South Ward School. He was unsuccessful in his efforts, and the two Allen children were unable to attend the school in their own community. When his county’s school board assigned his son to an all-Black school the following year, Allen refused to enroll him there.

Allen sued the Crawford County School Board and submitted an appeal to the Crawford County Court of Common Pleas, arguing that its decision was in violation of rights allowed by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment was ratified in July 1868 after the American Civil War, one of several signed into law in this time period. The 14th Amendment grants equality to all U.S. citizens when it comes to protection of life, liberty and property: “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without the process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Pearson Church (b.1838–d.1898), president judge of the 13th Judicial District who had been in this position since 1877, conducted Allen’s court proceedings. He ruled in Allen’s favor and recognized that education qualified as “property” as detailed in the 14th Amendment. Judge Church agreed that African American children were treated with prejudice and their experience in public schools was not equal to the experience of white children; unlike in white schools, African American students were taught all in one room instead of in separate classrooms according to grade level. Moreover, the white school was in Allen’s community, but he was only allowed to send his children to an all-Black school that was far from his residence. The school board did not offer a constitutional challenge, merely citing the “Act for the regulation and continuance of a System of Education by Common Schools,” which allowed Pennsylvania’s school districts with 20 or more African American students to establish a separate all-Black school. The judge ruled that this 1854 act was in violation of the Constitution.



Report to the Superintendent of Common Schools, for the year ending 1868.

The legislature that allowed segregation was overturned by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania with the following bill: “A Further Supplement to the school laws of this commonwealth and to abolish all distinction of race or color in the public schools thereof,” thus ending misinterpretation of the legislation and amending the 1854 legislation. The supplement passed the Senate with a vote of 30 in favor, 6 against, and the House of Representatives with a vote of 109 in favor, 25 against. When it passed the General Assembly, the act deemed it “unlawful for any school director, superintendent or teacher to make any distinction whatever, in account of, or by reason of the race or color of any pupil or scholar in attendance upon, or seeking admission to, any public or common school, maintained wholly or in part under the school laws of this commonwealth.” On June 8, 1881, Governor Henry M. Hoyt (b.1830–d.1892), who served in this office from 1879 to 1883, approved the bill and signed it into law.

Despite the passing of this law in 1881, it was largely disregarded, and segregation in Pennsylvania’s schools continued. Local governments found loopholes in the law or outright ignored state and federal legislation, even the 14th Amendment. Eventually the state legislature passed an equal rights bill in 1887, prohibiting discrimination in all facilities available for use by the public, but similarly to what happened after the passage of the 1881 law, this legislation did not successfully effect change. It was almost a century until schools in Pennsylvania were desegregated in the 1970s.

By 1895 it was becoming increasingly evident that there was a need for a state association of school board members.

The everyday demands of administering the state public school system, coupled with the ever-present questions surrounding the proper role of school boards in administering schools, created an increasingly complex situation for many school board members.

The first state School Directors’ Association was organized in 1895 under the leadership of **Henry H. Quimby**, a school director from Montgomery County, and other county association representatives from counties such as Allegheny, Chester, Delaware and Lancaster. In his letter to all county superintendents and school directors, Quimby noted that “the plan of forming a state organization has been under discussion for several years.” He called for county associations to send delegates to the first state convention of school directors in 1896. In his letter, which also outlined the agenda and purpose of the 1896 conference, he noted that if delegates could meet annually, “many reforms could be inaugurated, the wants of different sections of the state could be made known more fully, and unwise legislation could often be prevented.”



Wellsboro School District, Tioga County, photograph of Wellsboro High School, 1876. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)

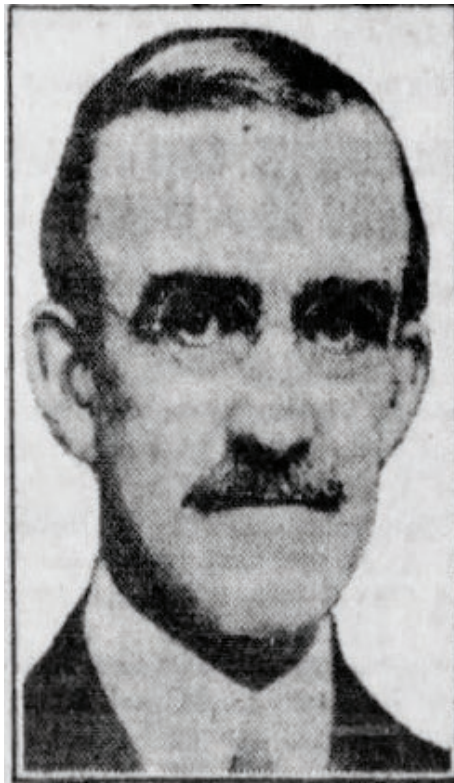


Front page of the School Gazette – an educational newspaper, September 18, 1896.

It was on Wednesday, January 8, 1896, that about 150 school directors, superintendents, and other educators from 39 Pennsylvania counties gathered for the first statewide convention of school board directors in the nation. Setting precedent for principles and guidelines that would last for over 125 years, **Isaac A. Cleaver** of Chester County set the tone for the conference when he stated, "If we are to establish a State Directors' Association that will be successful and that will deserve a long life, it must be founded upon a broad platform, and that platform, or at least its chief plank, must be the best interest of the public school system throughout our entire state without regard to our own particular section."

Delegates approved the agenda as prepared by Quimby, and his committee elected **Roland Thompson** of Mifflin County as secretary. All county superintendents and other educators were invited to be "admitted to all privileges of the association" but without the right to vote.

Most of the concerns of this first convention were the need for additional state funding, improvement of state laws governing education, consolidation of school districts and transportation of pupils. Various technical papers were presented by educators discussing the formation of joint schools and high schools, as well as reviewing the 1895 compulsory attendance laws.



A photo in the Philadelphia Inquirer from April 2, 1929, of the association's founder, "well-known engineer," Henry H. Quimby.

Other areas discussed included better teacher training and funding for normal schools; an increase in the school term from five months to seven months; a call for better supervision in rural school districts; a need for better school facilities with proper heat, ventilation and sanitary conditions; and a provision for an "equitable formula" to distribute school funds.

Another suggestion would lead to an additional milestone for the association. Stressing the educational importance of the conference and associated speeches and papers presented, a delegate suggested that they all be printed and distributed to all board members throughout the state. Unfortunately, the organization did not have the funds to do so at the time. The Pennsylvania State Teachers Association offered to print all the proceedings in the *School Journal*.

At the close of the convention, the delegates adopted a constitution and bylaws; appointed an executive committee and a legislative committee; and approved several resolutions. They also took up a donation to defray expenses. Dues were assessed at 50 cents for each member.

Officers elected were Henry H. Quimby, Montgomery County, president; **E.C. Wagner**, Schuylkill County, first vice president; **T.P. Fleeson**, Allegheny County, second vice president; **J.O. Saxton**, Cumberland County, third vice president; **James W. Howarth**, Delaware County, recording secretary; **J. Elder Peelor**, Indiana County, corresponding secretary; and **H.H. Rice**, Dauphin County, treasurer.

For the next decade, state versus local control remained a prominent issue for school districts and school board members. In 1901 the first centralization law passed, authorizing the establishment of central high schools in townships, along with providing transportation. No districts took advantage of the law and, in turn, a 1905 law deemed it mandatory. That allowed the state department to expand its staff with two high school inspectors. Now the state had to approve a high school before it could be paid state subsidies.

In 1911 the first Pennsylvania School Code was signed into law, organizing existing legislation, but also adding new provisions that classified school districts by population; established a new six-member State Board of Education; and specified teaching certificates and salaries. The 1911 code also increased the size of the Department of Public Instruction to help in the development of secondary education and issue advice on school curriculum; the state board began issuing suggested school building plans and specifications.

Child labor legislation and efforts on behalf of the School Directors' Association led to further changes in the Pennsylvania school system. The Coxe Child Labor law in 1915 mandated that minors between the ages of 14 and 16 were required to attend school for a certain number of hours per week. The law also added an additional opportunity for developing vocational programs at schools.

The first statewide convention of school board directors met to discuss some of the following:



Better teacher training and funding for normal schools



An increase in the school term from five months to seven months



Ventilation and sanitary conditions



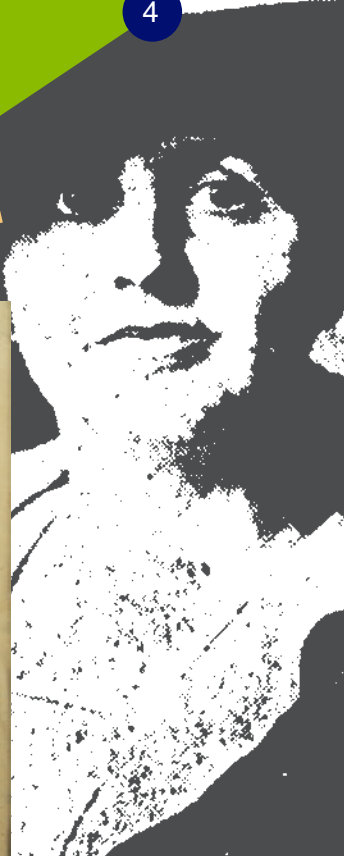
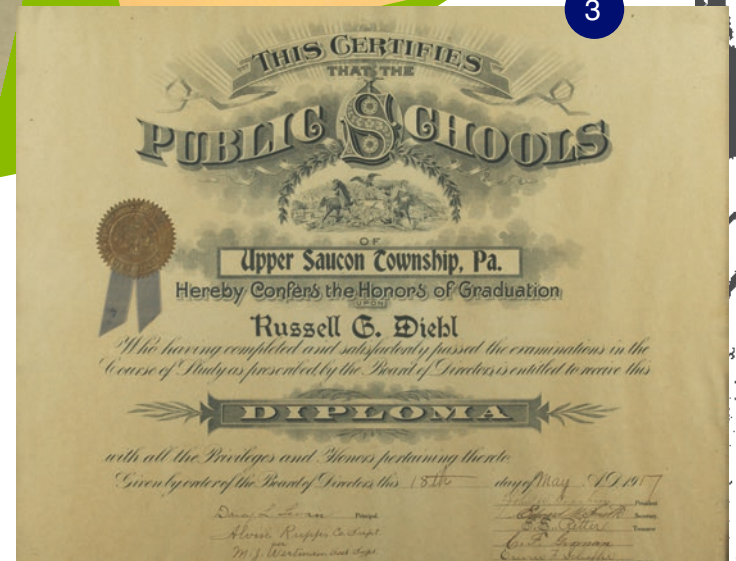
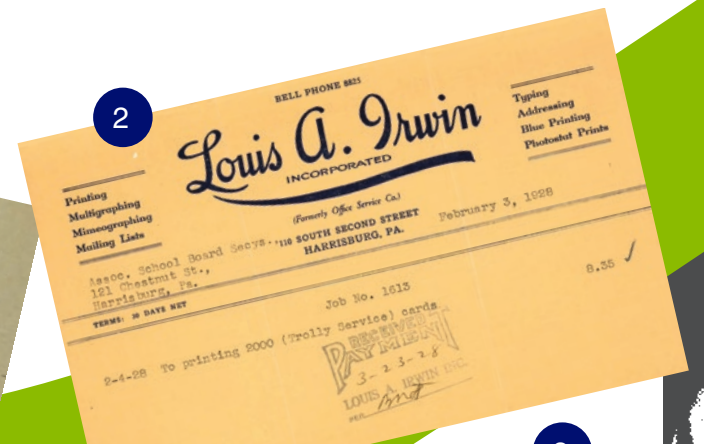
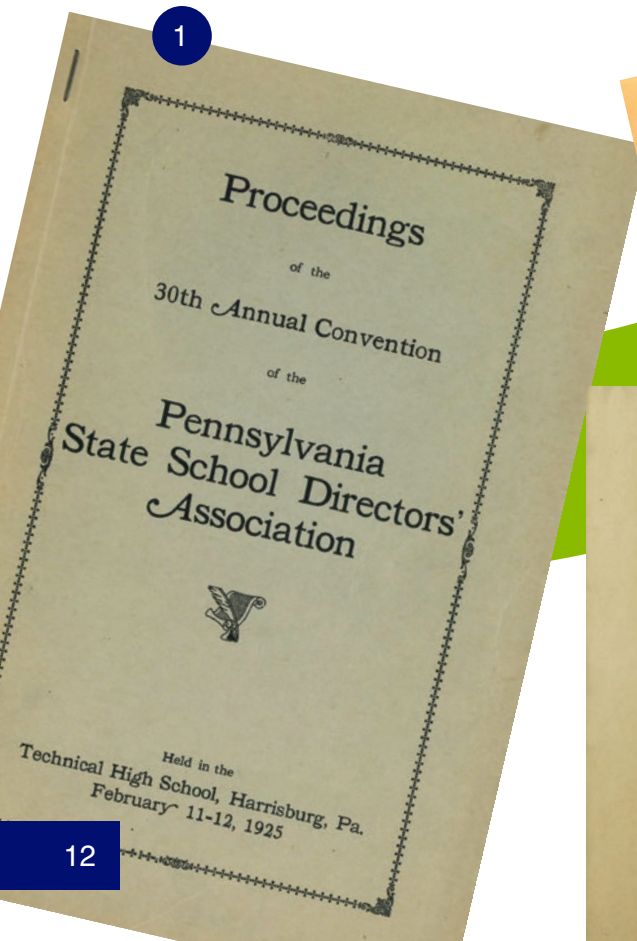
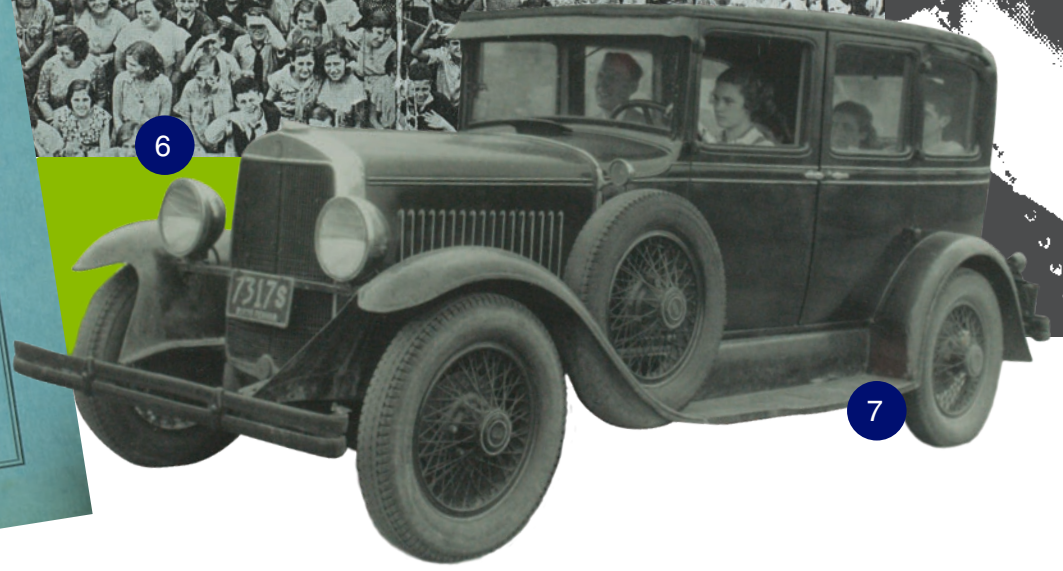
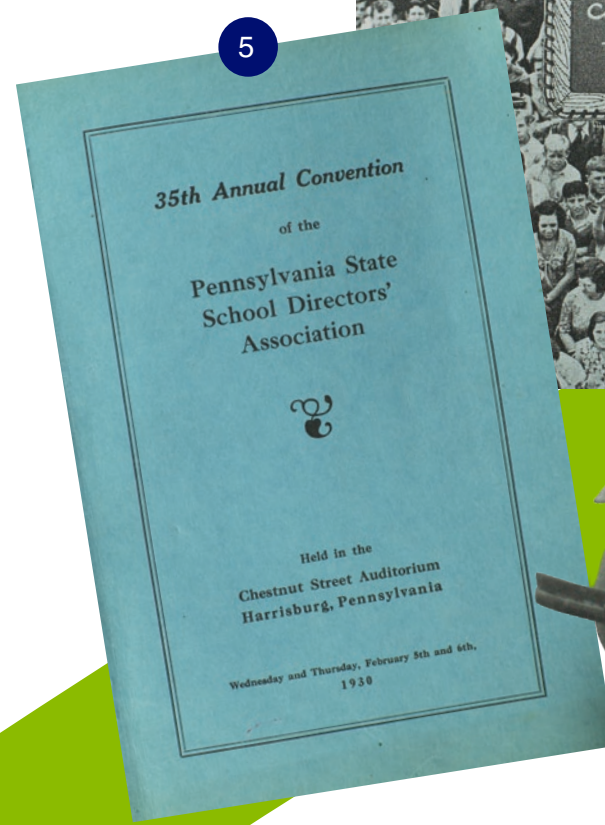
Central York School District, York County, photograph of the school directors of the 1904-1905 North York School Board (would become Central York). Pictured is 2020 PSBA President Eric Wolfgang's great-grandfather, Tobias Wolfgang, front row on left.

The Coxe Child Labor Law was followed later with the Showalter Act of 1913, which expanded vocational programs in Pennsylvania, and such programs in agriculture, trade and industrial education were organized statewide, and home economics were set up in the Department of Public Instruction. Then in 1917, the legislature voted to allow the state to apply for federal funds under the Smith-Hughes Act, which provided monies and oversight in vocational education at the secondary level.

Through continued efforts of the state School Directors' Association, teaching standards and working conditions improved significantly in the first two decades of the 20th century. Minimum salary laws were passed; the Public School Employees' Retirement Fund was established in 1917; and by 1920, all 13 normal schools, which eventually became state colleges, were purchased by the state.

In the two decades following World War I, school boards were struggling to keep up with the skyrocketing student enrollments. The 1920s witnessed the onset of school consolidation into larger, more centralized school systems. While not entirely eliminating the old one-room schoolhouse, the Pennsylvania School Code of 1911 reaffirmed the power of school directors to close schools and transport children under the public expense. Legislation was also passed to discontinue one-teacher schools if attendance fell below 10 students, and to reimburse local districts for transportation.

Passed in 1921, the Edmonds Act would make several changes in Pennsylvania schools during this period. An omnibus bill, the law gave authority for teacher certification to the Department of Instruction, instead of to county superintendents; tied subsidy reimbursement to the number of certified teachers; and created a State Council of Education, which had some responsibilities for higher education as well as for policy development for elementary and secondary education. The act also made the junior high school an official part of secondary education; increased high school curriculum requirements; and increased the movement to centralize by encouraging union school districts. Many Pennsylvania districts would oppose this infringement on local control, but the act would remain in force until the late 1940s.



In step with freedoms experienced by many women in the 1920s, the association chose its first female president. February 12, 1921, **Mrs. E. S. H. McCauley**, also known as **E. Grace McCauley of Beaver**, was chosen by school directors as the first female president. She served for the year of 1922. **Mrs. William S. Anderson** of Aspinwall, served as third vice president and became PSBA's second female president in 1930. McCauley would later go on to serve as secretary of welfare for the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare from 1927-31 and was one of the first women to serve in the cabinet of a Pennsylvania governor (Governor John S. Fisher).

As the Great Depression hit Pennsylvania in the 1930s, public schools were hit especially hard. The legislature in 1932 reduced its support for education and decreased funding for the Department of Public Instruction. Other emergency legislation was passed in 1933 permitting districts to reduce teacher salaries. Despite these hardships, Pennsylvania could proudly boast not having to disband a single school between 1931-35, although an estimated 20,000 schools closed nationally.

For its first 40 years, the Pennsylvania School Directors' Association weathered a world war, increasing governmental incursions at the local level and a crippling economic depression, and yet showed remarkable growth that would continue well into the future.

1. Cover of the 30th Annual Convention Program of the Pennsylvania State School Directors' Association, February 11-12, 1925.
2. In the 1920s, school directors had to use different methods of transportation to attend events, such as the annual conference. Pictured here is a receipt for trolley tickets for members to use.
3. Southern Lehigh School District, Lehigh County, graduate Russell G. Diehl's diploma conferred by the Public Schools of Upper Saucon Township, May 18, 1917. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)
4. Mrs. E.S.H. McCauley, known as Grace McCauley, the first female PSBA president. Her year of service was 1922.
5. Cover of the 35th Annual Convention Program of the Pennsylvania State School Directors' Association, February 5-6, 1930.
6. Cover with **Thaddeus Stevens'** quote of a 1934 publication commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Free School Act of 1834.
7. State College Area School District, Centre County, high school in 1935 became the first high school in the nation with driver education instruction. Amos Neyhart initiated and taught the course and is shown in the photograph teaching driving to student Vivian Doty Hench in the first dual-controlled driver education automobile in Pennsylvania. (Donated to PSBA by the school district.)
8. **Mrs. William S. Anderson**, the second female PSBA president. Her year of service was 1930.

TRANSITION TO FULL TIME

1937-1959



Preston O. Van Ness, PSBA's first executive director, serving from 1937 to 1959.

The year 1937 was significant for the Pennsylvania School Directors' Association, as **Preston O. Van Ness** was elected as its first full-time executive secretary. A graduate of Pennsylvania State College, now known as The Pennsylvania State University, Van Ness also completed graduate work at Cornell University and was a veteran of World War I. Van Ness taught high school in Crawford and Bradford counties, was appointed county vocational supervisor of Lebanon County and later transferred to the Department of Public Instruction as a senior adviser in the School Business Division. He was a school director in Camp Hill School District for 14 years.

Prior to Van Ness' appointment, the association was only a part-time organization under the direction of Quimby and the volunteer presidents that followed him (1895-1902). From 1902-20, the association functioned as a department of the Pennsylvania State Teachers Association. With only a limited budget of \$4,700, a full-time staff, clerical assistance, expanded research capabilities or permanent facilities could not be supported. From 1915-38, Anna Dickenson served as permanent part-time secretary. During her tenure, she instituted a permanent record system for enrollments, managed the yearly convention and saw the district membership grow to 800.

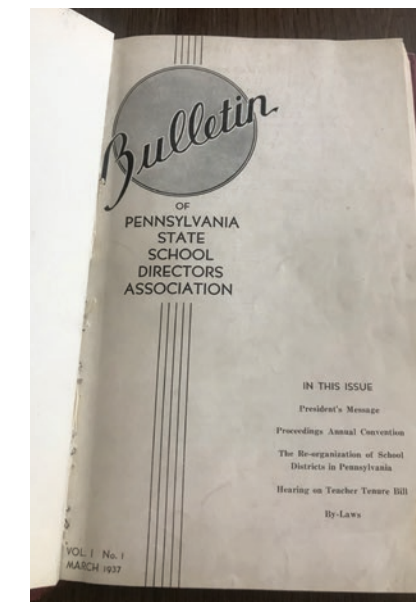
"Those early days were precarious," Van Ness remarked at his retirement in 1959. "When I took over as executive secretary, the association was \$500 in debt, and it appeared we would have to borrow money to get started. But we opened up temporary quarters in my home and set about to get more membership. We never had to borrow money."

Van Ness took on responsibility for the association with the assistance of Anna Dickenson, a duplicating machine and a cigar box in which he carried cash to handle expenses. He stated that, in those early days, the association's president would go to Harrisburg and spend an entire week assisting with pending legislation.



Certificate presented to Preston O. Van Ness, PSBA's first executive director, from the Governor's Office, to recognize his appointment to the Public Service Institute Board, signed by Governor James H. Duff on February 7, 1949.

One of Van Ness' first major objectives was to establish a method of communicating with the membership. As agreed at the very first convention in 1895, Pennsylvania State Teachers Association had been printing and disseminating the minutes and deliberations of the school directors' convention in its School Journal. In March 1937, Van Ness launched the School Directors' Association's first publication — The Bulletin. It was first issued four times a year in March, June, September and December. An annual subscription was provided to board secretaries and those school directors registered to attend the convention whose board was a member of the association. At the time, there were 2,586 School Districts and 849 were members of the association. By the second year of publication, distribution was expanded to presidents and secretaries of all non-member boards, to every school director of member boards (membership had risen to 1,325 School Districts), and to every county and district superintendent. Additionally, subscriptions could be purchased for 50 cents per year.



First issue of the Bulletin magazine, March 1937.

Van Ness' next goals were to increase membership and set up permanent offices in Harrisburg. In February 1938, he secured a small office for the association at 23 S. Front Street.

1948-49 Executive Board



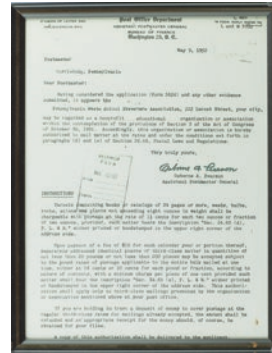
During his tenure, Van Ness reported that he had advocated for several of the association's positions on key issues. From its very onset, he voiced the association's concern with the 1937 tenure law for teachers. Women activists from Philadelphia's American Federation of Teachers, Local 192 were successful in their efforts lobbying the legislature in Harrisburg in 1937, resulting in the passage of a significant tenure law that established guaranteed due-process rights for teachers and disallowed both a probationary period and an exception for female teachers who were married. In 1938, the association urged several amendments to the Tenure Act, including a probationary period of one to three years before teachers came under the protection of the teacher tenure law. The Legislative Committee report, submitted by chairman Roland L. Eaton of Swarthmore, scored the lack of "constructive principles" in the Tenure Act, and termed it "a matter of deep chagrin that our association was so singularly ignored" in the controversy which preceded adoption.

Another position Van Ness advocated for was equity in school subsidies. At the 1950 annual convention, Van Ness stated that, "every effort be made to equalize them ... equalization should be worked out on a county-wide basis, for the greatest fairness, and urged that 'teeth be put in the law, so that the local assessor has to do his job right.'"

He also advocated for a proposal recommending a graduated income tax and relief of property taxes. In 1951-52, the association was debating on whether to recommend either a state sales or flat income tax as a means of helping to finance increasing subsidies to distressed School Districts. According to the *Greenville Record-Argus*, Van Ness stated that the association was in "agreement that we need a broad-based tax" to support increased school subsidies.

On another front, mirroring the objectives of the Pennsylvania School Directors' Association's bylaws at the time, Van Ness suggested a national association was needed to "consolidate efforts in addressing school board problems and to make a concerted effort in making far-reaching improvement in the public schools. It was also needed to advocate for important national legislation and scrutinize all national proposed educational legislation; and ask for greater commitment and actionability from school directors in order to ensure the most beneficial and effective results in the management of public schools."

Pennsylvania, Minnesota, New York and a handful of other states were the driving force in 1938 to organize what would eventually be known as the National School Boards Association. Meeting at the summer conference of the American Association of School Administrators, which was then a division within the National Education Association, state school board members proposed a "national association of public school boards."



Official nonprofit status document from the United States Post Office, May 8, 1952.



Constitution and By-Laws booklet, 1957.

1951 School Directors



1951 conference photo honoring school directors with 40 or more years of service.

Louise Henderson Nelson of Philadelphia, depicted on this commemorative plate, founded the National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP) in 1934. The Pennsylvania Association of Educational Office Professionals (PAEOP), founded in 1937, became affiliated with PSBA in 1973.



Van Ness led the organization through many achievements. First, he professionalized the association for its modern challenges and laid the groundwork for the staff that would follow. He moved the association to a more solid financial base and wrote some of the education legislation that was enacted in the 1950s. Included among the key pieces of legislation was a provision in the School Code allowing local school boards to spend funds to become members of the association and defray necessary expenses to attend the state convention and other in-service training programs.

In July 1954, Van Ness and the association's executive board started the Summer Workshop, an in-service training for school directors. The association also forged coalitions with other groups. In 1954 the Pennsylvania Local Government Conference was organized to promote "effective and efficient local government" at reasonable cost. Besides school directors, the group consisted of representatives from the boroughs' association, township supervisors, the League of Cities and county commissioners.

Van Ness also was instrumental in developing the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). Through his leadership efforts, he advanced the PIAA into becoming a highly efficient body for governing sports, developing interscholastic athletics programs and promoting their educational values. In addition to his efforts for the PIAA, he established a voting position for school directors on the Public School Employees' Retirement System Board.

At his retirement in 1959, Van Ness would proudly leave a stronger, stable and more reputable organization as his legacy. After steadfastly strengthening the association through increased membership from about 800 in 1937 to more than 2,500 in 1958, Van Ness would also see a long-term goal achieved: the purchase of a permanent headquarters, a three-story building at 410 N. Third Street in Harrisburg, across the street from the state Capitol.

At his retirement in 1959, Van Ness would proudly leave a stronger, stable and more reputable organization as his legacy.

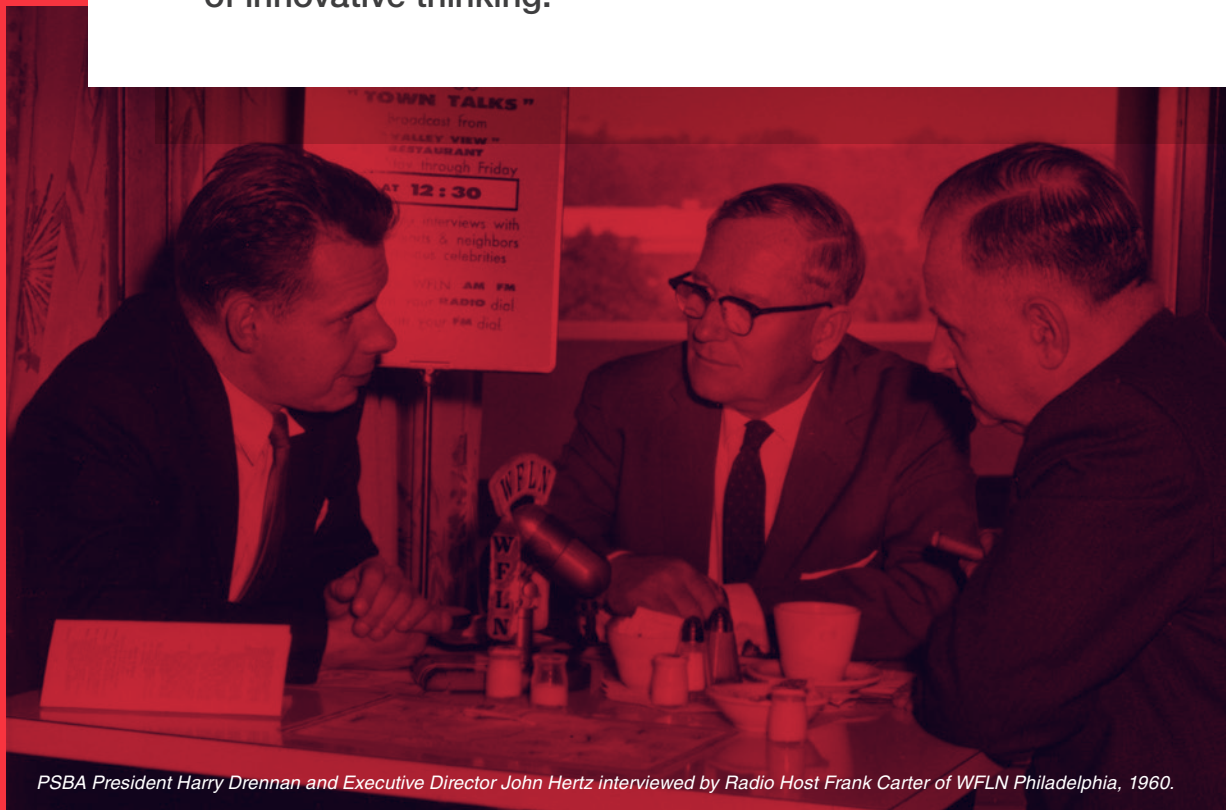


First PSBA Headquarters building, 410 N. Third Street, Harrisburg, 1958.

MERGER

1960-1981

The 1960s are often referred to as the years of greatest social change in American history. The country was on the brink of a shift – the civil rights movement was gaining momentum and a charismatic president inspired the nation to look into the skies and boost the exploration of a New Frontier. The America that emerged 10 years later was changed, and it was poised to undergo bigger transformations on the national and local levels, as the public was more than ever engaged in conversations that would bring about cultural transformation and an age of innovative thinking.



PSBA President Harry Drennan and Executive Director John Hertz interviewed by Radio Host Frank Carter of WFLN Philadelphia, 1960.



John J. Hertz, PSBA's second executive director, serving from 1960 to 1970.

John J. Hertz was appointed executive director of the association during this time. From his early beginnings in Potter County, he graduated from Mansfield State Teachers College and was a classroom teacher in the 1930s. He later was a principal at Eagles Mere in Sullivan County, and then served as superintendent in Sullivan County. He studied at Penn State University and Duke University. In 1949 he acquired the position of chief of school business in the Department of Public Instruction. Ten years later, he succeeded Van Ness at the association.

Throughout his tenure, Hertz would face many challenges – two of the primary ones were school consolidation and the controversial school redistricting question, which took Pennsylvania from 2,600 districts to 505. There had been a steady progress in school consolidations in the 1950s, but it was not until Act 561 – the Reorganization Act – was signed into law on September 12, 1961, that school reorganization became hotly debated.



Official name change notification document following the merger of the Pennsylvania State School Directors' Association and the Pennsylvania School Board Secretaries Association to become the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, November 28, 1962.

During this time, the association continued to grow. In 1962 the Pennsylvania School Board Secretaries Association merged with the School Directors' Association to officially become the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA). The secretaries' group had been a separate association since 1914, although they met at an annual convention in Harrisburg at the same time as the school directors and had combined their programs in part. The secretaries group became a department of PSBA, with voting privileges on the PSBA Executive Board. Because board secretaries were official employees of local boards, the merger brought together much needed resources and added services.

In 1963 the Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association (PSBSA) was formed. It was one of the first such groups in the nation organized to improve legal services to school boards. The same year saw the organization of the Conference of School Districts of the Second Class, comprised of larger school districts. Both groups obtained voting seats on the PSBA board.

Through Hertz's leadership, PSBA began to expand its resources and information capabilities. Additional publishing staff and equipment were introduced and in 1963, Hertz premiered a new publication, the Information Legislative Service. Published weekly, the Information Legislative Service focused primarily on legislative news, PSBA's efforts on the Hill and other PSBA news.



Fred M. Hedding, PSBA's third executive director, serving from 1970 to 1982.

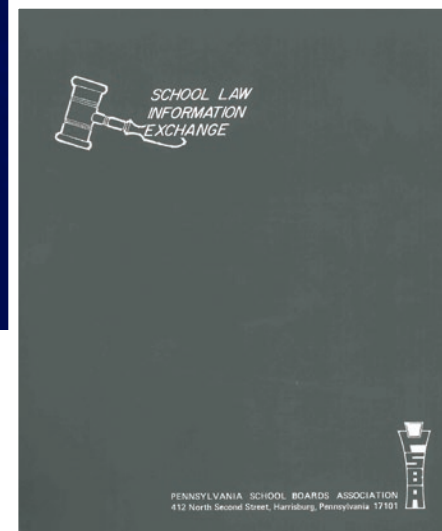
The PSBA Executive Board met at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in July 1969 to choose Hertz's successor and appointed Fred M. Hedding, a former Wilksburg school director, who brought an extensive business management background to the executive director position.

Hedding's background was quite different from that of Van Ness and Hertz. He rose quickly at Westinghouse Electric in East Pittsburgh, at one time managing developments in transistor products. He was also a founder of Pennsylvania Electronics Technology Inc. Meanwhile, with an accounting background, he served 18 years on the Wilksburg School Board and seven on the Allegheny County Board, helping to found the state's largest community college in the Pittsburgh area. Hedding, in his role as a school board director, was elected as president of PSBA in 1968, and two years later, left the business world to head PSBA as its executive director.

Hedding stepped into his new role the same year that the General Assembly adopted legislation giving teachers and certain other public employees the right to strike. On July 23, 1970, the General Assembly passed SB 1333, signed by Governor Raymond Shafer. The new Act 195, called The Public Employee Relations Act, took effect on October 21, 1970. The law established the rights of public employees to unionize and bargain collectively through selected union representatives. It also set policy and procedures for arbitration and collective bargaining and granted a limited right to strike.



First handbook, To Use These Talents, 1969. This copy belonged to Fred M. Hedding, the third executive director, who was known to write his name on the covers of his books as seen here - F.M. Hedding. He was PSBA president in 1968 and was a Wilksburg School Director for 18 years.



Binder for the School Law Information Exchange. This publication began in 1964 to provide school boards and solicitors with legal cases as quickly as possible.

In 1964 Hertz also introduced the *School Law Information Exchange*, providing news on current court cases affecting schools. By 1967, the *PSBA Bulletin* went to a bimonthly publication, and the *Information Legislative Service* was sent to every school director and superintendent, more than 6,000 copies weekly. In 1969, he published the association's first handbook, *To Use These Talents*, outlining basic school directors' duties and responsibilities.

Hertz announced his retirement in 1968 after amassing a wealth of accomplishments. He had achieved financial stability and reach for the association, overseeing the rise of PSBA's budget to \$300,000 and ensuring that the mortgage on the organization's first headquarters office building was paid off in full. Hertz's accomplishments did not end there: he brought in the first director of public relations among state school boards associations, built a uniform dues structure, and bolstered the programming and resources that served to advance local school districts.



Hertz achieved financial stability and reach for the association, overseeing the rise of PSBA's budget to \$300,000.



R. WINFIELD SMITH

Born in Albion, Pennsylvania in 1919, R. Winfield Smith graduated from Oberlin College and received his Master of Arts degree from Ohio State University. He served in World War II as an officer in the Army Medical Department. Upon his return to civilian life, he was executive director of the American Lung Association of Pennsylvania until he took early retirement in 1974. An active volunteer in public education for many years, he served on the Upper Perkiomen School Board for 28 years. He was on the board of directors of the Pennsylvania School Board Association for several years and was its president in 1962-63. His active participation in the affairs of the National School Boards Association spanned many years and he served as its president in 1968-69. R. Winfield Smith passed away on October 3, 2013.

R. Winfield Smith was the first NSBA president from Pennsylvania.



R. Winfield Smith, 1963 PSBA president; Louis Leger, 1965 PSBA president; and Isaac Wareham at the 1960 Convention.

WELCOME SIGN

This welcome sign was stationed at the entrance of PSBA's second building headquarters purchased in 1971 at 412 N. Second Street, Harrisburg.

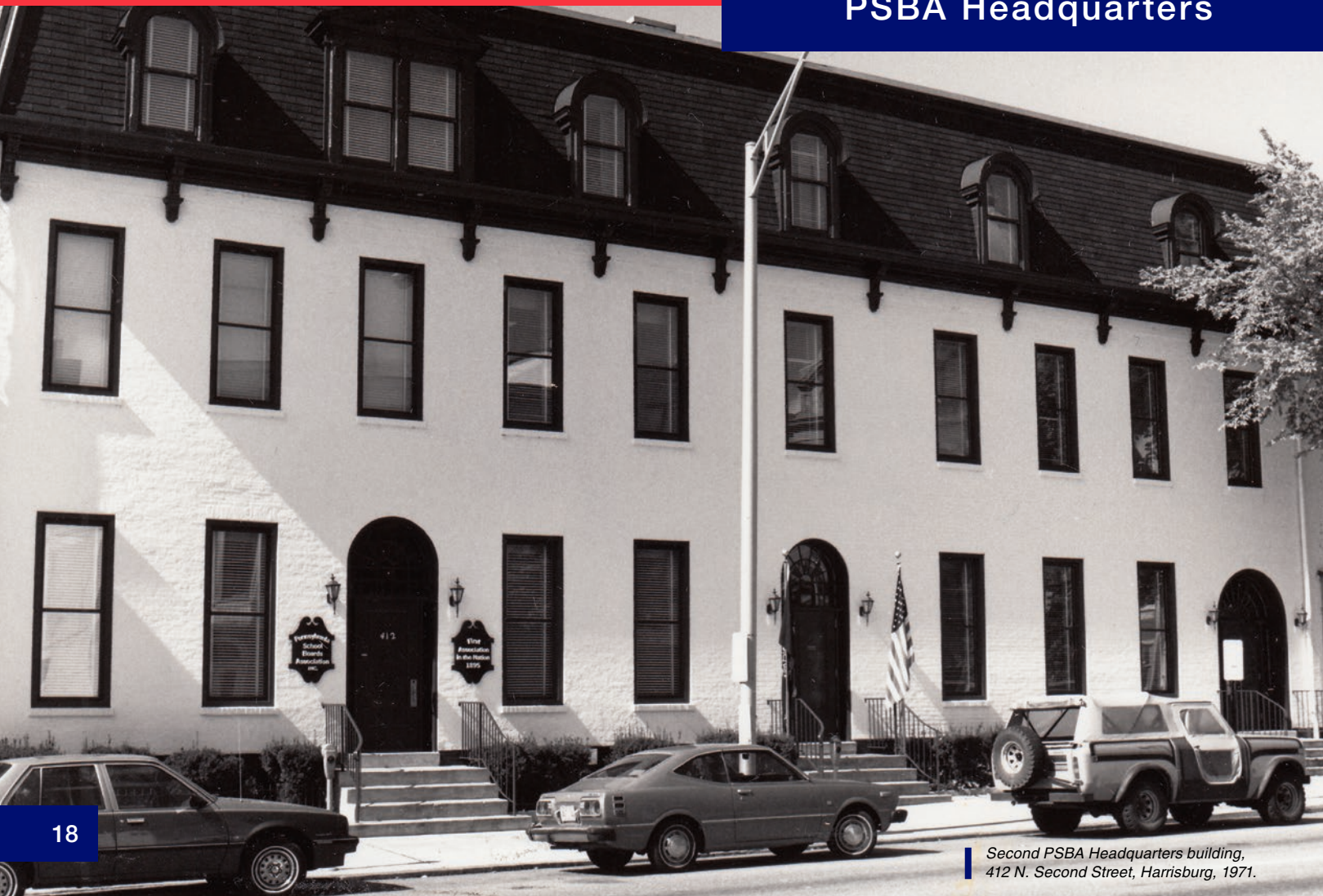
The sign incorporates PSBA's first logo, which was created around 1970 and used through 1982. It is in the shape of the numeral "1" to emphasize PSBA's status as the first school boards association in the nation and features PSBA's founding year, 1895, prominently at the top. The keystone shape is incorporated in the design of the letter "P" of the association's initials to signify the nickname for Pennsylvania. A keystone is the central piece of an arch which holds all the other stones in place and references Pennsylvania's essential role – hence the keystone – in the founding of the United States.

Most recently, the sign was on display in the 125th Museum at the current PSBA building headquarters on Bent Creek Boulevard in Mechanicsburg.



Welcome sign displayed in the entranceway of the second PSBA Headquarters, 412 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, 1971.

PSBA Headquarters



Second PSBA Headquarters building, 412 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, 1971.

With the passage of Act 195, local school boards and superintendents needed assistance to understand the workings of the new law and its impact on employee relations. In August 1970, Hedding and his small staff traveled across the state to nine regional meetings, explaining the provisions of the act and offering expert advice on public sector bargaining.

The programs were so popular that a second round of nine sessions was offered beginning in October, designed to aid boards in negotiating and administering effective contracts. The seminars attracted record attendance. In December, the association began two additional in-service programs – one on employee communications and another on effective school management. From that point forward, PSBA's in-service training program offerings expanded, and the executive board continued to keep board development a priority by bringing in new staff such as a full-time director of governmental relations and a director of research.

Hedding encouraged other state school management groups to join PSBA in cooperative training programs and share annual surveys and studies, including salary data on school personnel. In 1971, Pennsylvania associations of superintendents, principals and school business officials began sponsorship of educational seminars with PSBA.

Throughout the decade, PSBA introduced a variety of newsletters and other subscription services to better serve boards and school management: *Negotiations Guidelines* (1970) provided basic labor relations and contract advice; *Public Sector Arbitration* provided a vehicle for tracking rulings from employee contract disputes; and, to disseminate more specific information about new state and federal laws, *Pamphlet Law Reprints* and *Federal Law Reprints* was added to the *School Law Information Exchange*.

1. Binder cover with the first logo, 1970s.
2. Cover and first page of the 1971 convention program when for the first time in the nation student delegates were invited to attend a state school board association convention (conference).
3. Commemorative coin presented to 1975 conference attendees in honor of PSBA's 80th anniversary and the 200th birthday of the American Revolution.
4. Binder for the Public Sector Arbitration. This publication began in 1974 to assist school boards with labor relations.
5. Cover of the PSBA commission report, School Board Administrator Relationships, 1977.
6. First edition of the Pennsylvania School Law Handbook, 1973. Updated editions are relied on today by school officials and legal counsel with the same question and answer format made popular in this first edition.
7. Cover of the Report of the Commission to Strengthen Local Lay Control of Public Schools, 1975.
8. Cover of a 1974 booklet produced to help school directors understand their duties and responsibilities.
9. First edition of the School Board Secretary's Handbook, 1978. Current school board secretaries rely on updated editions of this handbook for guidance to conduct their duties.
10. Binder for Policy Guides for Pennsylvania Schools. In 1976, the school board policy program and policy guide manual service were implemented to provide guidance and updates based on current law and state regulations.
11. Cover of an association services booklet, *Serving the Public Interest in Pennsylvania Public Education*, 1979.
12. Cover of the report of the PSBA Commission to Strengthen the Values of Public Education, 1979.
13. Publications provided to assist school boards with labor relations, 1978.



To bolster board training programs, PSBA began publishing a series of handbooks: *Act 195 Handbook* (1971); year-round calendars covering state requirements and official actions; *Pennsylvania School Law Handbook* (1973), a question-and-answer format covering Pennsylvania school law; and *School Finance Handbook* (1976), covering effective school business management and related state law.

As PSBA continued to grow exponentially in services during this period, it acquired a new, larger office at 412 N. Second Street in 1971. Conveniently one block from the Capitol steps, it placed PSBA within easy reach of day-to-day state legislative operations.

In 1971 another important moment occurred when PSBA organized the Insurance Trust. The first of its kind in the nation, the Insurance Trust provided insurance and insurance-related services to public school entities. At the time, some boards were refused basic property liability coverage by commercial carriers until PSBA intervened. Two other insurance programs were introduced later: CREED, to reduce worker’s compensation costs; and BUCS, an unemployment compensation system. Travel accident insurance as a membership benefit was also extended to all local board members.

In 1976, PSBA launched a school board policy program and policy guide manuals for member districts. Former PSBA Executive Director Tom Gentzel likened these to the association’s “basic bread and butter services.” According to Gentzel, even though school boards are not involved in the day-to-day operations of schools, boards still need to adopt policies governing how the schools are to operate. Gentzel concurred, “That’s really sort of the legislative function of the school board. And what PSBA always did over the many years was to help school boards write their policies.” He remembered, thoughtfully, “One of the best parts of that service really was when those new laws were passed our staff would send out recommended changes. ‘The legislature just passed this new law requiring you to do this and here are our suggestions, PSBA’s suggestions, on how you update your policies to now be in compliance with the new law.’ By the time I was exec., I think we had well over 400 - 450 of the school districts in the state in that policy service. It was one of the things – now they paid extra for it, it wasn’t something that just came with their dues – but it was one of the things we did that really helped them. Later on, we helped administrators write their procedures to implement the board’s policy.”



Panelists appearing at a 1978 public forum, “Who Runs Our School?” discussing the local control of public education and to provide insight into the functions and responsibilities of local school boards.

In 1979 the PSBA Legal Assistance Trust Fund was formed to provide litigation assistance to local school boards. The association also added staff for legal services and increased its intervention on behalf of local boards on statewide issues.

Other major changes in education were occurring statewide at this time. Of particular note was the rise of district superintendents. In prior years only some classes of districts were required to have their own superintendent; it was an option for some other classes of districts; and it was not an option for the remainder. Districts with no superintendent received academic oversight from the county superintendent. By 1970, though, all districts were required to have them.

Also in 1970, the General Assembly passed Act 102, creating a system of 29 intermediate units (IUs), replacing the 67 county superintendent of schools offices which had existed since the 1850s. IUs provide special education and other educational and technical services to the school districts in their areas and are a liaison between the local schools and the PA Department of Education. School directors from the districts served by the IU comprise the IU board of directors. In this new environment, Hedding coordinated three major statewide commissions to review major concerns of the association: in 1974, on local control of public education; in 1977, on effective board-superintendent relations; and in 1981, on evaluating the federal role in public schools.



John Hertz, retired second executive director, and Fred Hedding, current executive director at the time, 1978.

Intermediate Unit Executive Directors - 1971



Intermediate Unit executive directors receiving the Oath of Office on March 23, 1971. Pictured seated are Secretary of Education David H. Kurtzman (on left) and Governor Milton J. Shapp (on right).

Legislative Tracking - 1978



Legislative tracking by chalkboard before the advent of technology, 1978.

Several additional laws passed in the 1970s also posed challenges to PSBA and its member boards. Among them were a new state agency dealing with teacher certification and qualifications: the Professional Standards and Practices Commission; new contractual agreements for superintendents; a change in the terms of school directors from six years to four; revisions to the state’s “Sunshine Law” that opened board meetings to the public and gave the public the right to comment on issues “that are or may be before the board;” and a new Ethics Law, requiring additional disclosure statements for public officials.

One of the last major hurdles during Hedding’s tenure was the 1973 proposed recodification of the Pennsylvania Public School Code. The first such attempt since 1949, PSBA maintained that the recodification process should not be “new law,” but should be a process basically organizing and restating current law, complementing the role of school directors and administrators in conducting local school district affairs. PSBA also contended there should be no new costs or mandates to add employee benefits that would otherwise be bargained for at the local level under Act 195.



Montage of photos from the 1979 conference and various in-service training programs.

Mobile Field Station - 1978



In 1978, PSBA purchased a “mobile field station” — a 16-foot van, complete with small conference area, telephone, and data retrieval capability allowing staff to provide on-site support to members. Barbara Hippensteel Andrews, PSBA director of policy and 2004 PSBA president, presents a policy manual to Dr. Barry O. Smith, superintendent of Mid-West School District in 1979 next to the PSBA van.



PSBA’s mobile field station featured a small conference area, telephone, and data retrieval all within a 16-foot van.

Numerous School Code bills entered the General Assembly floor for voting after a series of statewide hearings, many of which had been amended up to a hundred times. PSBA persevered in navigating the obstacles, setting up the association for success by preparing it for rapid social changes and positioning it to properly respond to legal and legislative action that would impact Pennsylvania’s public education.



Presenter at the 1981 conference.

ASSISTANCE IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

1982–2000

Joseph V. Oravitz



Joseph V. Oravitz, PSBA's fourth executive director, serving from 1982 to 2001.

By June 1982, PSBA had grown from a handful of employees in 1970 to a staff of 43 full-time professional and support personnel. Shamokin-born **Joseph V. Oravitz** was appointed PSBA's fourth executive director in 1982. Oravitz, a graduate of Bloomsburg State College, was a business teacher, department chairman, and business manager in Hanover Public Schools. He had joined the staff of PSBA in 1970 as director of research and management services, where he developed much of PSBA's research capability and employee relations support systems.

Oravitz's first goal when he was appointed was to structure a five-year outlook for the organization. Approved by the PSBA Executive Board in 1982, the plan built on the accomplishments of the previous 10 years and focused on ensuring member needs. The goals in this plan were achieved in three years, leading to the development and adoption of a new five-year strategic plan for 1985–90.

In addition, Oravitz, in his vision for PSBA's new role, challenged, "Think of our purpose in representing local school boards, so that nothing happens in public education unless it comes from PSBA, with PSBA or through PSBA."

He also maintained PSBA's attention to upholding the board management team philosophy. In 1983, together with representatives from the state's school administrator associations, PSBA released a task force report on its assessment of school management. In the following year, the same group conducted its first joint meeting at PSBA's Summer Workshop at Bucknell University, which came to be known as the Leadership Liaison Committee, a group composed of PSBA, school leadership and business representatives.

"Think of our purpose in representing local school boards, so that nothing happens in public education unless it comes from PSBA, with PSBA or through PSBA."

- Joseph V. Oravitz

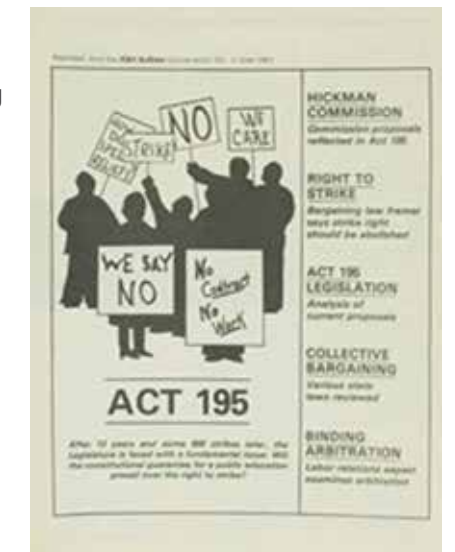


Executive Director Hedding's retirement dinner; pictured: 1982 President Robert Eshleman, Joe Oravitz (next executive director), Fred Hedding and 1975 President J. Scott Calkins Esq., May 21, 1982.

PSBA launched a number of new programs and member services during this time in the association's history, with a focus in the labor relations realm – assisting districts with negotiations and fact-finding work, legal assistance, research, and data collection on collective bargaining agreements.

In 1984, PSBA launched The Legislative Action Program, a grassroots advocacy initiative, with the goal to increase the participation of school board members with the association's legislative efforts. The program connected school board members with their legislators at county-level meetings to discuss important issues impacting public education. It also created a process for school board members to select top legislative priority issues to take to the Capitol. County-level school board groups would nominate issues and a body called the Legislative Action Council would meet in January or February to select the top priorities for the year.

Developing a legislative platform for the association was an intensive grassroots effort, with school directors across the state joining together to determine the legislative issues and positions most important to them. Proposed items from member school boards were first reviewed by the Platform Committee before moving forward to the full membership. The recommendations of the Platform Committee were brought before the Legislative Policy Council, now called the Delegate Assembly, for a final vote – a procedure still in place today. Representatives from every PSBA-member entity may serve as voting delegates to the Delegate Assembly. The assembly makes the final determination on which recommended proposals will be incorporated into PSBA's legislative platform for the coming year.



Reprint of collective bargaining articles from the PSBA Bulletin, June 1983.



PSBA logo lapel pin, 1982.

REV. CLARICE CHAMBERS



■ Standing room only at a program session of the 1985 conference, Philadelphia.

Roberta Marcus, a past PSBA president from Parkland School District, remembers serving on the committee: “I served many times on the Legislative Platform Committee. We draft the proposed platform, and it is voted on by the membership. The platform contains what PSBA needs to be advocating most for the school district. It’s a really good process.”

In 1986, the association established a new Service Associate Membership (SAM) program to create greater networking opportunities for school officials and businesses that provided goods and services to districts, particularly those that participated in the exhibit program at PSBA’s annual conference. Selected from the more than 225 SAMs, a 15-member advisory council assisted PSBA by providing suggestions and critiques on the annual conference exhibit program. The council was led by a chairman and vice chairman and included the PSBA president and president-elect as members.

It also became apparent at this time that PSBA’s continued growth warranted a larger facility. In 1986 PSBA’s Executive Board purchased a 20,000-square-foot building, a former DuPont engineering facility, at 774 Limekiln Road in suburban New Cumberland, west of Harrisburg. The board also approved an addition to the existing building to house PSBA’s printing operation and to serve as a warehouse. The new location enabled PSBA to host meetings with more organizations and expand the association’s functions.



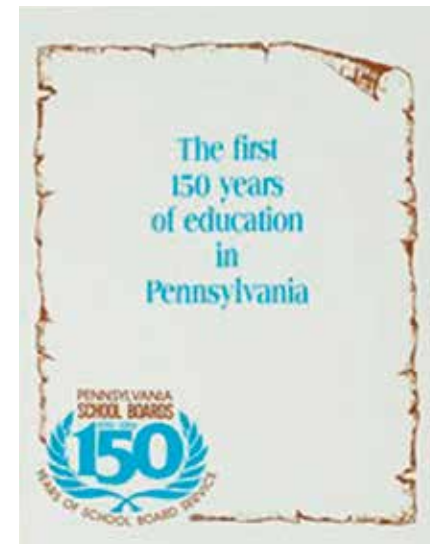
■ Purchase of the third PSBA Headquarters building, 774 Limekiln Road, New Cumberland. Pictured: Executive Director Joe Oravitz and Deputy Executive Director Nick Goble, September 1985.



■ In honor of PSBA’s 90th anniversary, the PSBA Insurance Services sponsored exhibit hall guest greeter, the Philadelphia Phillies mascot, at the 1985 conference, Philadelphia.



■ Roundtable discussion session at the 1985 conference, Philadelphia.



■ Booklet produced in 1984 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Free School Act of 1834.



■ Cover of the Open House and Dedication Ceremony program for the third PSBA Headquarters, May 16, 1986.

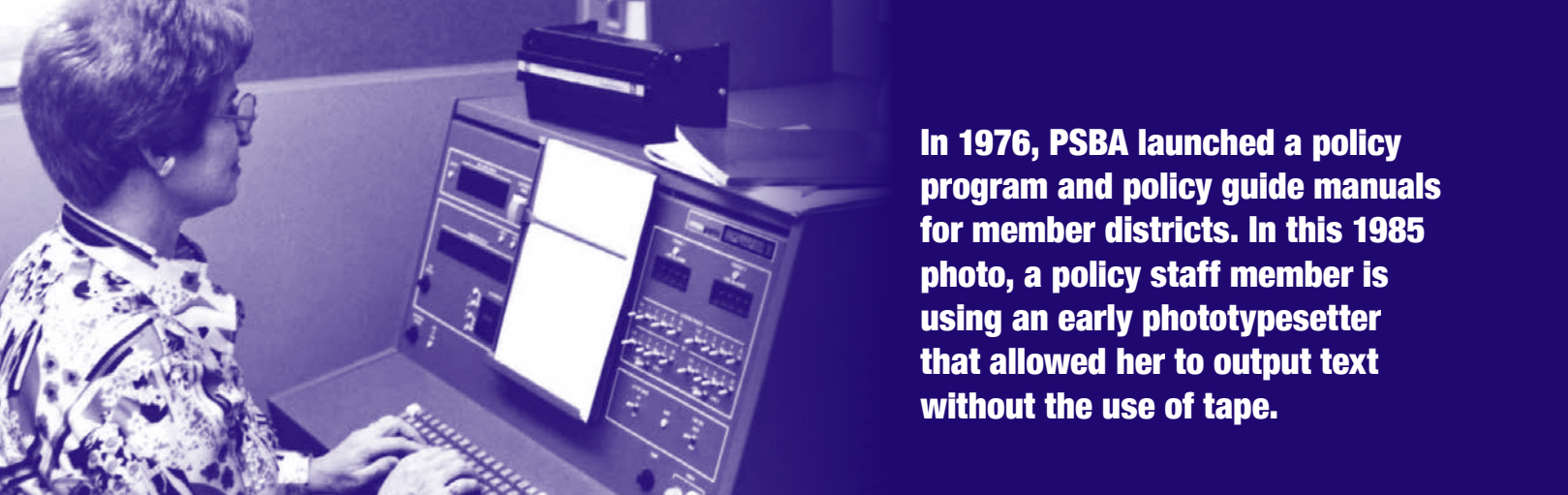


Likened to “an iron fist in a velvet glove,” **Rev. Clarice Chambers** worked tirelessly to foster equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership. Born in Ossining, NY, on October 7, 1938, her father died before she was 3 years old, and when Chambers was 10, she moved with her mother to Newark to live with her oldest sister. After about two years, they moved to Philadelphia to live with Chambers’ oldest brother, where she later graduated from Germantown High School. She worked after high school in data entry for seven years at the Philadelphia Navy Depot.

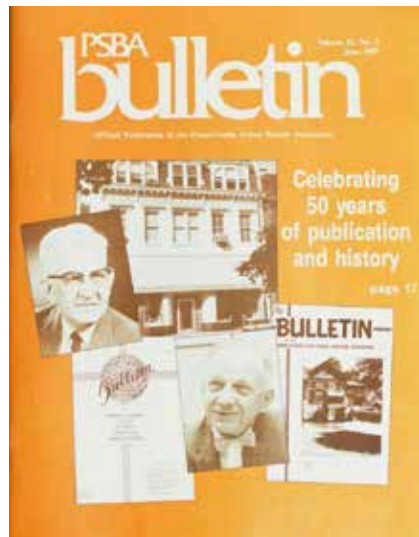
Following her marriage, she and her husband moved to Harrisburg in 1965, after he accepted a new job at Fort Indiantown Gap. As her children grew, Chambers noted huge changes in education with the implementation of civil rights during the late 1960s and early 1970s and was determined to be part of the solution in Harrisburg. “By then, I’d had it,” Chambers declared. “After talking with district officials and attending board meetings, I decided to stop complaining and go in and try to make a difference and contribute. To do that, I needed to be on the inside so I could really understand the programs they were trying to implement, and the reasons decisions were made.”

Starting in 1975, she continuously served on the Harrisburg Board of Education and served as president from 1983 to 1990. She was also active with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association beginning in 1988 and served as its first African American president in 1992. In 2000 she was elected the first woman African American president of the National School Boards Association.

On Sunday, July 4, 2010, Chambers died, leaving a long legacy of educational stewardship.



In 1976, PSBA launched a policy program and policy guide manuals for member districts. In this 1985 photo, a policy staff member is using an early phototypesetter that allowed her to output text without the use of tape.



Cover of the PSBA Bulletin celebrating 50 years of the publication of the magazine, June 1987.



The association purchased computers, increasing its operational and research capacity and also improving its ability to communicate with members more effectively.

In addition, the facility allowed for more streamlined technology. The association purchased computers, increasing its operational and research capacity and also improving its ability to communicate with members more effectively.

The association also broadened its role in providing legislative and legal assistance to its members through various meetings and trainings. The successful Summer Workshop program and the annual School Leadership Conference continued to grow. For a time, the annual conference location rotated between Pittsburgh, Hershey and Philadelphia.

PSBA also implemented a new training program for school directors called The School Board Academy in 1992. It held other training programs that delved into new laws or other important topics in locations across the state, and held regional meetings to bring additional networking opportunities for members and PSBA staff to share topics of interest. In addition, PSBA provided new handbooks, white papers and research reports, legislative updates and alerts, state pamphlet law reprints, and other materials in addition to the weekly *Information Legislative Service*.

PSBA's expansion of training opportunities, grassroots legislative activity, and legal assistance in the 1980s and 90s was due in part to numerous legislative developments affecting education at this time. As in the decade before, school strikes continued to be a problem for school boards and policymakers. While the number of strikes had decreased, Pennsylvania still led the nation. PSBA advocated for changes to the collective bargaining process, and in 1992, Act 88 was passed containing many of the provisions sought by the association to level the playing field during negotiations. Act 88 of 1992 brought new procedures and rules governing school district-employee negotiations and imposed limits on the allowable duration of strikes.

This was a time of great change for education funding. Pennsylvania abandoned most of its school funding formula in the early 1990s, leaving funding to be an annual ad hoc legislative question for much of the next two decades. This included a shift in special education funding which abandoned the promise of full reimbursement for added costs of special education services. That, in turn, led many districts to "take back" special education classes and programs from intermediate units in the hopes of saving money, and dramatically changed how many IUs operated.

At the same time, courts and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission made clear that sexual harassment in the workplace is against the law and can serve as a basis for lawsuits. As a result of these rulings, student sexual harassment lawsuits under Title IX become viable and common, so the association needed to place its attention on the problem and effectively handle complaints.

A rise in school violence prompted a focus on school security and new legislation, including the Safe Schools Act (Act 26 of 1995) and Act 30 of 1997, which established the Office of Safe Schools in the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Subsequently, state Attorney General Mike Fisher created a statewide task force on school safety in 1998.

Throughout all of the changes, PSBA kept members updated on new federal and state guidance and provided schools with guidance and policy in order to assist them with compliance.

PSBA also expanded its insurance programs. School Claims Services LLC (SCS) was chartered in February 1998 and began operations in May 1998. The company provided third-party claims administration services to the various programs for PSBA member school entities, operated through the PSBA Insurance Trust. In addition, it provided other insurance and risk management services to participants in the PSBA Insurance Trust programs, including loss control services and employee benefits consulting and marketing.

As a result of Oravitz's efforts throughout this period, PSBA was in position to lead a proactive agenda on behalf of local school boards heading into the 21st century.

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

PSBA's *Weekly Legislative Report* has evolved considerably over the last 40 years. Prior to the advent of email and social media, the report was faxed, and a sound recording made where people could call in a designated number to hear the content over the phone.

Cynthia Eckerd jokingly admitted the difficulties in finding a quiet area to record the *Weekly Legislative Report* in the 2nd Street location in the 1980s, "The only quiet place for me to record the legislative report was the broom closet. So, I would take my copy, sit on a little stool in the closet, and shut the door. There was a phone in there and I recorded the legislative report."

The process was quite cumbersome and not very productive. Reports were faxed and mailed out on Friday, which meant that many did not receive the timely legislative news until the following week, when it was already outdated. The phone recording was the fastest method available.

In time the weekly report was phased out as alternative means of communication such as email and the internet allowed quick dissemination of information to members. Today, PSBA currently uses the *Daily Edition*. This daily email newsletter includes links to newspaper articles and other information on top education issues, in addition to PSBA events and news.



DIAL UP MACHINE – 1985, used by Cindy Eckerd for the Weekly Legislative Report as referenced in her interview.



PSBA 100th anniversary medallion presented to conference attendees, 1995.

100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

PSBA President **Richard N. Rose** reflected on October's PSBA Centennial Conference in Hershey in 1995, attended in record numbers, as a celebration of the association's contribution to public education and a challenge to all members to record what "those who follow [will] remember about you." He enumerated the changes in the role of PSBA, including as a host of school district forums, and positioned the association's work as a direct influencer of their districts' success. He urged PSBA to continuously improve the performance of their schools and never quit working toward a better future for the schools. Rose concluded his address with a call for PSBA to "lead the way," together.

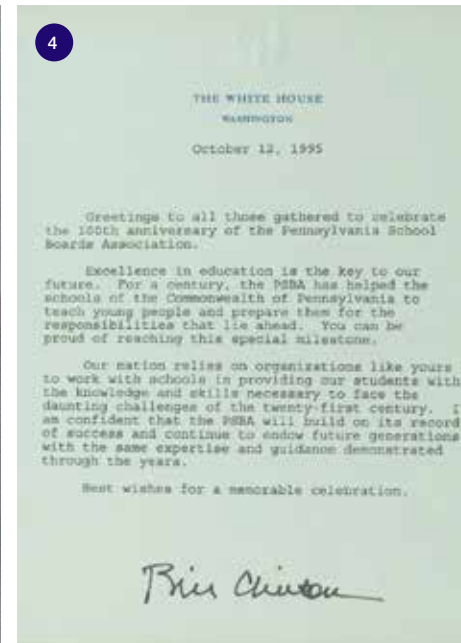
The Centennial Conference was rated by delegates as "outstanding." It featured a sizeable educational exhibit with over 130 suppliers, educational workshops and student programs, such as the "mock" school board meeting with participation from more than 240 high school students and their advisors. It also celebrated PSBA's leadership and members with events such as the gala Centennial Banquet and the Kick-Off Dinner, in which **Gov. Tom Ridge**, Secretary of Education **Eugene Hickok**, and Congressman **William Goodling** inspired the attendees to continue serving and adapting to meet the needs of Pennsylvania's children. Three hundred and thirty-two delegates elected the 1996 PSBA officers, and the PSBA Legislative Policy Council announced a new platform for the upcoming years, addressing topics such as real estate, tenure, unions, educational programs and reforms, finances, administrative governance, and more. Other highlights included the appearance of "Benjamin Franklin," portrayed by **Ralph Archbold**, and humorist **Jeanne Roberts** at general sessions, as well as performances by school musical groups from four communities across the commonwealth. Overall, there was much pride expressed in PSBA's past, and great excitement for its future service to education.

"Benjamin Franklin" encouraged all in attendance to foster the spirit of cooperation during the first session. At the second session, President Eisenhower's daughter **Julie Eisenhower** stressed the need to provide mentorship opportunities to encourage youth to continue their education, and the president's grandson **David Eisenhower** called for a stakeholder-centric approach to building educational policy, quoting his grandfather that "education is the key to the world's ills." **Rocky Bleier**, former Pittsburgh Steelers running back and a Vietnam veteran who battled his combat injury, inspired the attendees to overcome the challenges of mental barriers by setting goals and following their dreams. Former PSBA President **Clarice Chambers** performed "God Bless America," closing the conference on a high note with a standing ovation.



PSBA 100th anniversary lapel pin, 1995.

PSBA Executive Director Joseph V. Oravitz called the Centennial Conference "a huge success," citing the value of this conference as a host to access expertise and information about public education.



1. Binder clips given to attendees of the 2002 PSBA Summer Workshop.
2. This rainbow spring toy was a popular conference giveaway.
3. Design on the 2000 conference tote bag.
4. Letter from President Bill Clinton expressing his greetings and best wishes to those gathered for the PSBA 100th celebration, dated October 12, 1995.
5. Blue ribbon to proclaim the excellence of school directors as champions of public education.
6. Pennants given to attendees of the 1989 and 1992 annual conference.
7. A collection of PSBA pins.