

Progressive Education in the Black High School: The General Education Board's Black High School Study, 1940-1948

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I

I hope . . . that black secondary schools in American will make careful and serious study of the progressive movement in education and [create] an association of black schools in serious experimental groups for the careful and thoughtful formulation of an educational philosophy and for experimentation with and evaluation of progressive school practices. W. A. Robinson, "Progressive Education and the Negro," 1937¹

While my primary work at the Rockefeller Archive Center was focused on the Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored American Film Center and the Film Associates' 1940 documentary, *One Tenth of Our Nation*, a tangential and closely-related topic of research was the General Education Board's Secondary School Study, also known as the Black High School Study. In fact, this experimental project led to the discovery of the *One Tenth* film since, arising from my earlier archival explorations, I learned that this first documentary on African American education was shown at various participating schools. While I spent most of my time examining American Film Center and Film Associates materials, I continued to notice new information of this remarkable secondary school project in the field of progressive education.

The Secondary School Study, sponsored by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes (ACSSN) and funded by the General Education Board (GEB), was established in 1940 to assist high school teachers to experiment with their administrative,

curricular, and instructional practices. While the ACSSN sought to achieve accreditation for its member schools and to make strides for equitable support—separate and equal—for black education, some educators believed black teachers were not involved in progressive education’s “stream of educational ideas” and, thus, were placing too much emphasis on existing, traditional practices. With direct participation from members of the Progressive Education Association (PEA), principals and teachers were encouraged to reconsider the basic purposes of secondary education and to reevaluate the needs of students in relation to their social setting in America.

During previous visits to Pocantico Hills, I had spent time reviewing Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) files related to the Black High School Study, and a 2007 Spencer Foundation Grant allowed me to visit (and continue to visit) the sites of participating schools in order to locate additional archival materials and to conduct oral history interviews with participating teachers, staff, and students. As of now I have interviewed over two hundred fifty individuals with one more scheduled school visitation (and a number of sites calling for my return).² Yet, my 2011 Scholar-in-Residence position at the RAC permitted the greatest research gift—an occasion to explore GEB materials widely, to re-examine documents after my on-site visits, and to ascertain and locate concomitant materials related to African American education and progressive education. While I submit this RAC Research Report as part of my responsibilities for the residency, my scholarship continues and in 2013 I will publish a Secondary School Study exhibition catalog, funded by the Daniel Tanner Foundation and distributed through the Museum of Education, and later a full-length manuscript about mid-twentieth century progressive education in African American high schools and in the American public secondary school.

I must add, however, that my efforts to convey the importance of this project will be strained. The Secondary School Study was innovative and insightful, thoughtful and profound;

yet, conventional measures of success do not convey its significance. As I immersed myself in the research, I realized that the meaning of the study emerged not from some period documentation asserting increased student test scores or a narrowing of the achievement gap. In accord with its parent project, the Progressive Education Association's Eight Year Study (also funded by the GEB), a premise of the Black High School Study underscored "the need to engage in site-based, context sensitive, ongoing school experimentation. The PEA supported the view that all school faculties should be actively engaged in such exploration as they conceived their own adventures in teaching and learning."³ Experimentation served as a basic and foundational need, not a luxury. In essence, the director of this study, along with those directors of the Aikin, Thayer, and Keliher Commissions of the Eight Year Study, believed that a healthy school was an experimental school. While such an assertion pales in comparison to today's claims of the Texas Miracle and charter school's "waiting for superman," our public schools would be much stronger if administrators had listened to the lessons of these GEB studies.

II

The selection of the participating schools, as one would expect, proved quite important and difficult for administrators of the Secondary School Study. Unlike the Eight Year Study where a number of the high schools did not share the guiding curricular and instructional principles of the project, the Black High School Study schools were seemingly more in accord with the efforts and educational orientation of their central administrative staff.⁴ The project director, William A. Robinson, intentionally diverted from the then-prominent direction for educational reform of black high schools—namely, to fight for increased and adequate funding in order to improve physical facilities. In contrast, Robinson recognized the importance of professional development as a form of educational reform (having attended the legendary Sarah Lawrence College summer workshop of the Eight Year Study). He maintained that "our schools

and our teachers must have the continued guidance of capable and experienced students of education. Without this, educational programs are not likely to enjoy much success; and Negro schools will hardly be able to make, with assurance, wise and needed adaptations in their programs.”⁵ Robinson was shrewd enough to recognize that the battle for equal funding and any subsequent expansion of school buildings was beyond his (or any individual’s) imagination, abilities, and political maneuverings.⁶ His familiarity with the programs of the Progressive Education Association and the GEB, however, would have suggested to him that an experimental curriculum project, similar to the Eight Year Study, could be adequately funded and would greatly further the significance and impact of secondary school education for blacks in the South.

With an interest in curriculum and administration and in developing a distinctive progressive philosophy for black secondary education, Robinson knew that identifying schools whose prominence was defined primarily by new and/or elaborate physical structures would have done a disservice to the direction and the acceptance of the program. As with the Eight Year Study, some of the most interesting, innovative work was conducted at modestly-funded public schools, thereby suggesting that progressive education reform was within the capabilities of any willing staff and not the exclusive domain of posh, private schools. While selecting participating sites for the Black High School Study, Robinson sought to include “the most promising” schools whose staff had “good fundamental training and an intellectual approach to their work with materials, with boys and girls, and with community problems.” Wealth and recognition were not leading factors nor were facilities where prominence was achieved through size and large student enrollments.

Internal GEB correspondence indicates that identifying “the most promising” schools proved to be highly interpretive, and Robinson’s decisions seemed influenced primarily by his

sense of school leadership, “the school should have as principal one of the most promising principals in the state from the standpoint of his training, energy, capability and general alertness to educational progress.”⁷ Sixteen school sites ultimately participated in the Secondary School Study and were selected according to the distinctiveness and quality of their programs and the willingness of school staffs to engage in program experimentation. In addition, efforts were made to include a cross-section of primarily public schools representing rural-town and urban settings and large and small size programs from the eleven states that represented the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (the regional accreditation agency). From a geographic point of view, participating schools were located as far east as Newport News, as far west as Forth Worth, as far north as Covington and as far south as Tallahassee. Each school is listed in the accompanying appendix with a brief description of the students and staff’s curricular focus.

One point must be noted after any mention of “place” and schools in the South. Most educational historians will view any GEB project as an example of the Rockefeller Foundation’s (RF) efforts to assist the education of blacks in the South. While the GEB’s Southern Secondary and Elementary New Southern Program was certainly related to the work of the Secondary School Study, one must not overlook the significance of the words “general education” in the GEB name and the existence of the Division of Humanities. I believe the Black High School Study conceived itself not solely as a southern program but, rather, more as a curriculum project to reexamine and develop secondary school general education. The emphasis seemed to remain upon the importance of an integrated core curriculum as much as an integrated society.

III

The Secondary School Study was directly linked to the experimental efforts of other GEB-funded projects—not only the Eight Year Study but also the American Council on Education’s Cooperative Study and the Southern Association’s Southern Study.⁸ During this

period an extensive vernacular for school experimentation and research was developing—*implementative studies, status studies, deliberative studies*, and other types of inquiry. The Eight Year Study pioneered a new approach to research: an *implementative study*, the first of its kind in the United States as noted by the GEB staff.⁹ Implementative studies tested no formal hypotheses, upheld no specific models to be implemented, and established no set of predefined outcomes. Rather, this type of research sought programmatic solutions to complex educational problems and engaged in experimentation to determine the validity of educational practices at specific sites. Thus, program development occurred within the context of classroom settings and certain curriculum and instruction interventions could prove to be more successful than others; however, the intent was not to establish a program’s reliability in order to suggest that such practices would be equally successful elsewhere. The validity of an educational experience’s success was sufficient without any burden of reliability. Interestingly, Robinson and his assistant director, William H. Brown, quite specifically decided not to establish a “control” group, no doubt having learned from the criticism of the Eight Year Study. They recognized the difficulties and misperceptions when comparing student success of experimental school programs to traditional school programs.

With direct involvement from the PEA Curriculum Associates and other key Eight Year Study teachers, the Secondary School Study viewed educational reform as guided discourse among school staff in order to construct common beliefs and values and to build an integrated philosophy of education that articulated the meaning of schooling in a democracy and examined the nature of learning and the relationship among student, teacher, and society. Coupled with this perspective was a lesson from the Eight Year Study, “the importance of creating in each participating secondary school a culture of inquiry, a fragile phenomenon whose painfully slow

birth accentuated differences across experimental sites while fostering an underlying and recognizable faith and confidence in school experimentation.”¹⁰ These research projects, experimental and exploratory in nature, placed considerable attention upon professional dialogue among faculty from participating sites. Much emphasis was placed on educators coming together to engage in “cooperative discourse” as a form of “democracy as a way of life” (a defining concept of 1930s progressive education) and the free exchange of ideas. For this to happen, of course, there must be trust in the ability and sensibilities of principals and teachers, thereby creating even greater stress on Robinson’s ability to select “promising” school faculty.

Implementative research represented a rather remarkable act of faith in the value of school experimentation and, implicitly, with trust in the capabilities of educators. Yet, such faith seemed quite warranted since GEB studies were guided by one of the leading assessment-evaluation experts of the twentieth century, Ralph Tyler, who worked as a resource person for the GEB. Tyler proclaimed an “essential faith” in the foundational perspective on which these studies were based: “the belief that freeing schools [staffed] by well-trained [educators] provided with ample facilities and motivated by a desire to make secondary education more effective is likely to yield significant results.”¹¹ If committed, thoughtful teachers experimented in the classroom, and if the GEB studies provided guidance and venues for educators to examine and discuss their work, then good outcomes would occur. As there is confidence today in school accountability and standardized test scores as an indicator of good teaching, there was trust then in experimentation and the Secondary School Study was based upon this belief.

The “results” of the Secondary School Study may not prove satisfying to contemporary educators, however, strong school communities were developed at many of sites where teachers created general education programs organized around conceptions of adolescence, teacher—

pupil planning, and staff development. Teachers and staff attended national and regional workshops, including Eight Year Study workshops and, later, their own project workshops, and developed resource units for use in the participating schools. Beginning in 1944, the Black High School Study staff broadened their work in curriculum and staff development beyond the sixteen sites and began offering assistance to approximately one hundred other “contact” black secondary schools in the South.

IV

Teachers of the Secondary School Study began the project by reexamining the purposes of education and “promoting the development of school experience that will serve better the critical needs of Negro youth.” Robinson did not see the conventional practices of white high schools as providing a solution to the inadequacies of the black secondary school curriculum. Traditional forms of education for both black and white students were “largely of a non-functional academic type offering meager training in health, vocation, leisure, worthy home membership or citizenship, but apparently aimed at, if anything, the acquisition of a cheap type of superficial erudition, such as may be obtained from the limited verbal mastery of poorly understood husks of learning, robbed of all richness and crammed within the covers of cheap text books.”¹²

Yet, while traditional education was dismissed, I cannot state that the glories of progressive education were readily proclaimed by Study participants, even though Robinson was clearly a progressive and in his role as principal of the Atlanta University Laboratory School he had guided the development of an innovative program that would have compared favorably to the “most experimental” schools in the Eight Year Study. My interviews with participating Secondary School Study teachers did not typically include discussions of progressive education theory nor did they proclaim themselves as progressives; however, “codes” were clearly in use

and, on one occasion, I was told that the word “innovative” was used as an alternative term and as a way of concealing progressive education beliefs. My conversations with teachers and students abounded with references to “teaching the whole child,” and the name of John Dewey was often invoked. Yet, from period documentation I never discovered a specific statement of “common progressive education beliefs” nor was there a definition of progressive education for black high schools in Secondary School Study documents.

I then came upon a rather startling realization—albeit, one that certainly will not be accepted by all: contemporary images of progressive education are too simplistic to portray the progressive education research of Robinson, Brown, and that of many participating teachers and principals at these black schools. Further, their work—deliberations and planning—fell naturally into a different conception of progressive education, not as conceived by John Dewey in the late nineteenth century at his Chicago living room school with elementary school children but, instead, as forged in the high school classrooms of the Eight Year Study schools during the 1930s and guided by the writings of Boyd Bode, Harold Albery, and the Curriculum Associates.

One of the many difficulties in defining the term “progressive education”—then as well as now—is that anyone could proclaim himself or herself as a progressive. Ben Wood, the founder of the Cooperative Testing Service that led to the current non-progressive, high-stakes testing movement, maintained that he was a progressive whose work was guided by Dewey’s writings. Yet, Wood would never be considered a progressive educator today. Further, part of the problem remains in the articulation of a clear definition of progressive education that was consciously adopted by all. In *The Transformation of the School*, Lawrence Cremin warned against formulating any capsule definition of progressive education, maintaining that no common description exists nor could exist partly because of the character of the movement that

necessitated conceptual diversity and differences. At the 1938 annual PEA meeting, a committee reported on its efforts to define the term and, although a statement was produced, nearly the entire group objected, explaining that progressive education is not a definition but “a spirit.” Even in the final report of the Eight Year Study, Wilford Aikin never used the term progressive education except once in reference to a quotation.¹³

This has not stopped contemporary educators from simplifying historical discussions by formulating a conceptual scheme—a scaffold—to clarify period practices. Such current designations, while perhaps helpful, have of course also become quite limiting. Thus, progressive educators are now typically reduced to a one-dimensional dichotomy between child-centered progressives who attended to the interests of children versus those society-centered/social reconstructionist progressives who sought to change the social order. William H. Kilpatrick and his project method became the emblem of child centered progressives, while George Counts with his 1932 PEA conference presentation, “Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive” is now the archetypical society-centered progressive—social reconstructionist. Unfortunately, this reductionist narrative has not been helped by educational historians who often follow another equally simple view of competing groups—pedagogical progressives versus administrative progressives. I must add that the most refreshing aspect of studying the Secondary School Study and implementative research of the 1940s was that I was relieved from any discussion of administrative progressives, a useful concept for late nineteenth century education, but totally inappropriate for mid-twentieth century work.

As I reviewed RAC documents, I realized that the prevailing conceptions of progressive education in these black high schools was neither child-centered nor society-centered. These are definitions, in part, more for teachers to pronounce their primary interests than to describe the

curriculum; in essence, I came to see these constructs as meaningless. Those black secondary school teachers who were child-centered would not have permitted the curriculum to revolve exclusively around the interests of the child, as this definition has become viewed within the context of PEA elementary-level schooling. Such a position would have been too self-indulgent for the student and too irresponsible for the teacher. Albeit, the mantras of “learning by doing” and “the whole child” were noted, but not stressed by the participating high school teachers with many experimental sites incorporating teacher-pupil planning, integrated core curriculum, and the project method. Further, the catchphrase of “dare the schools change society” and whether teachers should engage in cultural indoctrination and the imposition of values seem rather meaningless when social injustice was so readily apparent in black communities and when teachers would have been dismissed for merely posing the question of equal pay or maintaining membership in the NAACP.

Rather than attempting to force the schools of the Black High School Study into irritating caricatures of progressive education, I realized that the defining conception of their experimental efforts related to the conception of needs and the Eight Year Study Thayer Commission’s development of social-personal needs.¹⁴ Instead of focusing on students’ interests or societal change, student “needs” were forged together as individual and social in nature. I came to realize that the four areas of adolescent needs as developed by the Eight Year Study—personal living, immediate personal-social relationships, social-civic relationships, and economic relationships—served as a foundation for the participating school’s curriculum development. These were not students’ interests or teachers’ gestures of social agency; rather, the four areas of student needs became “personal-social in character.” As Thayer maintained,

[Needs] do not exist “under the skin” of the individual or in a vacuum. They arise and work themselves out in living, dynamic events which can only be described as

interactions between the individual and the social situation.¹⁵

Thus, when Secondary School Study teachers drew upon the phrase “living in a democracy” and quoted text from the U. S. Constitution’s Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the words became more grounded since student interests and needs were conceived as being personal-social in nature and attention was given to the wider social context of learning. Those personal qualities that were to be developed by students—for example, social living—were conceived in relation to the student finding an appropriate role in their communities.

These traits and characteristics helped define what were the shared aims of general education in a democratic society. Thus, reference to Dewey and democracy by participating teachers was not just an idle gesture of mentioning a few words. Black High School Study educators were building communities among the participating sites as well as in their specific locales, and adolescent needs served to bring together students and teachers to learn and to forge their roles in society. Child-centered and society centered progressivism were superfluous in contrast to the important work—the implementative study—in which teachers, staff, and students were engaged. This is not to suggest that the Secondary School Study program did not recognize or address the social injustices of the time. Rather, I came to find the simple-minded child-centered/social reconstructionist portrayal to pale in comparison to those schools that had balanced a conception of personal-social needs where the interests of the students were naturally and appropriately directed to societal issues.

V

The Secondary School Study officially ended in 1948, lingering for a few years and then falling into obscurity, as would later occur with the “progressive education” movement, the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, and even the General Education Board. The PEA was closed in 1955, the ACSSN dissolved in 1964, and the GEB was officially

closed in 1965. Yet, while the General Education Board terminated its funding for all “general education” and implementative research projects, the Black High School project must not be viewed as a failure. Melaine Carter, a leading scholar of the history of the ACSSN, argues that the impact of the study was profound with the teachers “exposed to a new level of professional development support from which they and their students benefited greatly.”¹⁶ As Robert Bullough and I have maintained with the Eight Year Study, these implementative research projects were not unsuccessful because they did not change the course of educational thought and school practice. “No specific educational changes endure forever. Knowing this, the leaders of the Eight Year Study focused on people rather than on programmatic permanence, recognizing that the most direct and powerful way to improve education is through educating educators and then working to create organizational systems that support and sustain their continued development.”¹⁷ I have learned from my oral history interviews that the impact of the Secondary School Study may well have been the strength of cooperative discourse and the teachers’ belief in the importance of experimentation.

As I have stated in other RAC Research Reports, my work continues and, for this reason, any conclusion becomes perilous. I wish I could assert grand claims about these schools and their subsequent influence upon the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. Rather, the careful examination of these participating sites displays the importance of school experimentation, a form of research that has lost its admired quality if not lost altogether its meaning. Yet, I am left with one remarkable impression pertaining to the importance and faith in experimentation. Presently, the field of education accepts many policies and practices as a matter of faith. We accept pronouncements from federal bureaucrats, with their omnibus reforms, mandating regulations based on little data other than a belief in efficiency. We adopt policies endorsed by politicians

who pepper their rhetoric with “bottom lines” and common-sense clichés. Furthermore, we seem entranced by any corporate leader, who, with philanthropic glee, turns to education to help the overburdened teacher and non-MBA principal bring a “much-needed” corporate mentality to schooling. These are all examples of faith, yet such policy-making demonstrates little confidence in educators. Fortunately, the General Education Board recognized the significance of “an essential faith” and, in its own way, trusted the efforts of Robinson, Brown, Tyler, Eight Year Study educators, and the many hundreds of teachers who participated in these implementative studies.

Appendix: Participating Schools of the GEB’s Secondary School Study

As a form of advocacy research for these individual school sites, Museum of Education web exhibitions have been developed and offer opportunities to read accounts about the schools from teachers and students. Further, these exhibitions are conceived within a tradition of progressive education where a fruitful experience raises as many questions as it answers. Thus, the information on the various sites has been crafted intentionally to be *suggestive*—to allow important questions “to float” through the exhibitions rather than to be answered with questionable certainty. These exhibitions are works-in-progress and represent an “educational research charrette” as additional historical material is discovered and fresh memories, recollections, and insights come forth from participants and other researchers.

Drewry Practice High School of Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama

Drewry High School was primarily a training site for Talladega College’s teacher education students rather than an experimental demonstration-laboratory school. As a reflection of the traditional mission of the college and the integrated nature of the community, the school sought “to develop the habit of using intelligence and tolerance rather than emotion in judging racial, political and religious groups other than his own,” and its publications note the significance of democracy while also underscoring the importance of academic training. During the study, the school maintained a teaching staff of 12 teachers for over 100 students. Drewry High School administrators were quite proud of the cooperative effort on the part of teachers and pupils to establish a school library and to review and select books.

<http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/drewry.html>

State Teachers College Laboratory School, Montgomery, Alabama

The Laboratory School was located on the campus of the Alabama State Teachers College and served as a demonstration school for the teacher education program with most student teachers placed at other sites. Grades 8-12 enrolled approximately 150 students with a faculty of 8 full-time teachers and other instructors drawn from the college staff. The curriculum sought to embody a core curriculum approach with emphasis upon democratic thinking and the fostering of student traits of “honesty, critical-mindedness, self-control, social sensitivity, and freedom from prejudices.”

<http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/astcls.html>

Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, Florida

Lincoln High was closely affiliated with Florida A&T College and served as a student teacher practice school. The school was guided by its gifted principal, G. L. Porter, who was closely aligned with national efforts in progressive education. A combination elementary and six-year high school, Lincoln enrolled over 450 secondary school students with a teaching staff of 19 teachers. Curricular planning attended to social, economic, health, and recreational goals with a strong guidance program for students and teachers. The GEB program afforded the school the opportunity to study the needs and interests of students in order to develop a Unified Functional Reading Program, the use of teacher-pupil planning in classroom activities, and the comprehensive evaluation of school activities.

<http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/lincoln.html>

Staley High School, Americus, Georgia

Selected as an original participating site from Georgia, Staley High was one of the more innovative, rural-town schools in the study. The modern brick building served as a center for the African American community with its auditorium and library. The high school enrolled 275 students with a staff of seven teachers and a principal. The curricula consisted of four core periods (including “problems of living” units for health, citizenship, and earning a living) with emphasis upon Home-Room and an Activity period. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/staley.html>

Atlanta University Laboratory School, Atlanta, Georgia

The Laboratory School closed in 1942, thereby requiring the study to seek a replacement site in Georgia. Accounts suggest that this program may have been the most innovative of the participating programs—the curricula consisted of a unified and social problems core (with, seemingly, a no preplanned structure core in the upper levels). No grades were assigned as the staff incorporated narrative assessments. With a staff of 11 teachers for a 200 student enrollment in grades 7-12, the Lab School was a true experimental school site as encouraged by the Eight Year Study.

<http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/auls.html>

Moultrie High School for Negro Youth, Moultrie, Georgia

This school was added in 1942 after the closing of the Atlanta University Laboratory School. While the school represents a rural-town school, the teachers were closely aligned with Albany State College, although Moultrie did not serve as a student teaching site. With a secondary school faculty of 8 full time teachers, high school enrollment numbered around 165 students. One reason for the selection of this school may be due to the American Council on Education’s efforts to foster curricular reform at both the white and black high school in Moultrie. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/moultrie.html>

Lincoln Grant School, Covington, Kentucky

Grant High School enrolled 135 students with a teaching faculty of 11. The school represented the only public high school for blacks in Northern Kentucky and, being a suburb of Cincinnati, maintained close connections with the University of Cincinnati. Grant High School administrators were quite proud of their efforts to establish a guidance program and to document “student growth.”

<http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/grant.html>

Natchitoches Parish Training School, Natchitoches, Louisiana

This rural-town school included over 800 elementary and high school students with a teaching staff of 23. Parish Training School administrators were quite proud of their efforts to establish "a functioning democracy" in their school. Guided by Natchitoches Parish Training School Principal F. M. Richardson, the secondary school teachers sought to develop a comprehensive reading program, an integrated core curriculum with an instructional focus around the Deweyian concept of experience and social growth, and a cooperatively planned health program. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/natch.html>

Southern University Demonstration School, Scotlandville, Louisiana

The Demonstration School, located on the campus of Southern University, served as both a demonstration and practice school. In the view of certain Eight Year Study teachers, the curricular development was some of the most innovative among participating sites. The high school enrollment consisted of approximately 150 students with 8 full time secondary school teachers augmented by college teachers and practice teachers on a part-time basis. The school was known for its core curriculum, and administrators were quite proud of their efforts in establishing "a functioning democracy," determining of student needs, and developing a school wide testing program. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/southern.html>

Magnolia Avenue High School, Vicksburg, Mississippi

Magnolia High enrolled approximately 300 students with 12 full time secondary school teachers. A town school, the curricular program balanced a strong academic-college preparatory course of study with vocational courses, and the school was known for its strong activity-project method program (including activist projects stemming from studies in sociology and community health programs). With an interest in pupil-teacher planning in social studies, the faculty prepared a massive educational philosophy statement which, alas, has been lost. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/magnolia.html>

Dudley High School, Greensboro, North Carolina

Dudley represented more of a city-urban setting with over 800 students in grades 8-11 with a staff of 29 teachers. The school was engaged in the creative use of audio-visual aids, and techniques were developed for measuring pupil growth, including "attitude", "appreciation", "habits" and "skills." Of all of the participating sites, Dudley High suggests the strongest level of social agency and direct links to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The school's principal, John Tarpley, held a unique role in the town and, as often noted by alumni, the Greensboro Four consisted of the Dudley Three. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/dudley.html>

Booker T. Washington High School, Rocky Mount, North Carolina

With 600 students in grades 8-11 and a faculty of 17 teachers, Booker T. Washington represented a rural-town high school engaged in instructional planning and core curricula development arising directly from the Eight Year Study. Guidance, social dialogue, and student responsibility were specific themes that ran through the academic programs. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/btw-rm.html>

Booker T. Washington High School, Columbia, South Carolina

Booker Washington was a public city/urban high school with 45 teachers serving approximately 1,200 pupils in grades 7-11. The school developed a general philosophy to guide curriculum development

that focused on growth for “knowledge, skills, habits, attitudes, and appreciations” with the goal of developing an integrated personality and foster a democratic way of life. The faculty attempted to introduce teacher-pupil planning and to “deemphasize subjects as *ends* in themselves and to reveal them as *means* of solving problems.”

Pearl High School, Nashville, Tennessee

Perhaps considered the leading city school in the study, Pearl High School was closely affiliated with Fisk University and offered opportunities for practice teaching. Pearl High enrolled over 1100 students in grades 10-12, with a faculty of 36 teachers. The curricula was primarily a traditional academic course of study for college and non-college bound, and Secondary School Study planning was focused primarily on students’ oral and written composition, health and safety needs, and American citizenship. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/pearl.html>

I.M. Terrell High School, Fort Worth, Texas

Terrell High School, representing a city school, enrolled over 900 students in grades 9-11 with a faculty of 26 teachers. Teachers sought to develop an integrated core program based on personal and social problems, and special efforts were taken to initiate pupil and teacher participation that led to student growth and professional development of teachers. Faculty were also experimenting with pupil-teacher planning. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/terrell.html>

Huntington High School, Newport News, Virginia

Huntington High was one of the leading black high schools in Virginia due, in part, to the thoughtfulness and stature of its principal, L. F. Palmer, who was recognized nationally and served as president of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes. During the Secondary School Study, Palmer and teachers became embroiled in political-racial tensions with Hampton Roads business leaders, and Palmer was dismissed as principal of the high school. For this reason, Huntington teachers were not as involved in curricular development as other sites; however, the school program was known for activities designed to develop a functioning democracy and for its strong general education program. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/hunt.html>

D. Webster Davis Laboratory High School at Virginia State College, Ettrick, Virginia

D. Webster Davis was the teacher training school for Virginia State College. With a high school enrollment of over 250 students, 6 full-time teachers (15 part-time teachers from the college) oversaw a vocational and academic high school curricula while providing instruction for college teacher cadets. A rural and town school (of the city of Petersburg), the school was known for its efforts to develop a core program that included free reading. <http://www.ed.sc.edu/museum/davis.html>

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and are not intended to represent the Rockefeller Archive Center.

ENDNOTES:

¹ W. A. Robinson, "Progressive Education and the Negro." *Proceedings of the ACSSN* (1937), p. 65.

² www.ed.sc.edu/museum/second_study.html.

³ Craig Kridel and Robert V. Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight Year Study: Rethinking Schooling in America*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2007, p. 14.

⁴ The Eight-Year Study (also known as the Thirty-School Study) was an experimental project conducted between 1930 and 1942 by the Progressive Education Association (PEA), in which thirty high schools redesigned their curriculum while initiating innovative practices in student testing, program assessment, student guidance, curriculum design, and staff development. See Kridel and Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight Year Study*.

⁵ See Kridel and Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight Year Study*.

⁶ W. H. Brown and W. A. Robinson, *Serving Negro Schools*. Atlanta, Georgia: Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, 1946, p. 74.

⁷ W. A. Robinson correspondence to Fred McCuistion, (January 23, 1940) GEB, Box 391, Folder 4088, Series 1-3.

⁸ A direct outgrowth of the Eight Year Study, The Cooperative Study in General Education was conducted between 1939 and 1945, and funded by the General Education Board; however, the American Council of Education (ACE), as opposed to the PEA, served as its fiscal agent. For this particular program, Tyler coordinated the participation of twenty-five colleges that sought to redevelop their general education programs. The Southern Study (1938–1945), sponsored by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and funded by the GEB, was established to assist thirty-three high schools in eleven southern states to experiment with their academic programs.

⁹ Robert J. Havighurst and Flora M. Rhind, *1940 Annual Report*. New York: General Education Board, p. 19.

¹⁰ Kridel and Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight Year Study*, p. 224.

¹¹ Ralph W. Tyler, "Evaluation: A Challenge and an Opportunity to Progressive Education." *The Educational Record* 16: 1 (January 1935), p. 122.

¹² Harl R. Douglass, "The Education of Negro Youth for Modern America: A Critical Summary." *The Journal of Negro Education* 9: 3 (July 1940), p. 543.

¹³ Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the Schools*. New York: Knopf, 1961, p. x; Harold Albery, "The Report of the Committee on Philosophy of Education." New York: PEA, September 1938; Wilford M. Aikin, *The Story of the Eight-Year Study*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942.

¹⁴ Committee on the Function of Science in General Education, *Science in General Education* New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1938.

¹⁵ Committee on the Function of Science in General Education, *Science in General Education*, p. 26.

¹⁶ Melanie Carter, "From Jim Crow to Inclusion." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbus: Ohio State University, 1996, p. 140.

¹⁷ Kridel and Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight Year Study*, p. 8.