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## Chapter I: History, housing and schools

# A Brief History of Baltimore City Public Schools



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# The Forming of a School District

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- Baltimore Public School System was established by the mayor and city council in 1829
- Free blacks were taxed for schools their children could not attend
- In 1865 the city council passed an ordinance supporting the education of black students
- No African American teachers were hired throughout the 1870s and 1880s
- By 1907 the black schools were operated by an all-black staff

# School Equalization Program

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- Maryland adopted a school equalization program in 1922
  - Minimum educational program
  - local property tax rate
  - Any subdivision that could not raise enough money will receive state aid to fill the gap
- Baltimore actually helped its less wealthy suburban neighbors fund their school system
  - 1950, Maryland contributed \$90 per pupil to its suburban schools and only \$71 per pupil to Baltimore
  - 1964, suburban schools received \$199 per pupil from Annapolis and Baltimore only \$171

# Before Brown in Baltimore

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- African American students attended The Colored Schools of Baltimore
  - Under the leadership of Dr. Francis Marion Wood
    - The Colored Schools grew tremendously
    - Improvement in instruction in all schools
    - Douglass High and Samuel Coleridge Taylor High were completed
    - Organized the Baltimore City Teachers Association
      - Professional growth of his teachers with partnership with Columbia University
      - Extension courses for principals and supervisors at Morgan College and The University of Maryland
- While African American students did not have the same resources as their White counterparts in segregated schools, African Americans were committed to education.
  - Success Stories
    - Lucy Diggs Slowe, Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Carl J. Murphy, Reginald Lewis, Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Kurt Schmoke, Howard Pete Rawlings, and many more...

# Brown in Baltimore

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- The Baltimore schools took the Brown decision with relatively good grace
- However, in 1963 fifty-three of the city's 189 schools still had all-white faculties, and sixty-seven schools had faculties that were all-black
- Roland Patterson, the first African American superintendent was forced by U. S. Civil Right Commission to develop a desegregation plan
- One-thousand people, nearly all of them white, packed a desegregation task force meeting and shouted their opposition to busing

# A School District In Conflict

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- In the 1970s, the Baltimore Sun ran several stories on racial conflict
- This heightened middle-class fears, primarily among whites, that the schools were in serious decline
- A survey conducted in 1977 showed that about one-third of those households said that their “main reason for moving was some negative feeling about the city-taxes, schools, and neighborhood conditions”
- White Flight in Schools
  - Between 1950 and 1990, the number of white school-age children dropped from 140,061 to 41,294, a decrease of 70 percent.
  - During the same period, the number of black children rose from 52,337 to 101,399, an increase of 94 percent

# A Call for Reform

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- *A Nation at Risk* (1983)
- *Baltimore 2000* (1986)
  - “ineffective, undisciplined, and dangerous... The fact remains that, on leaving the school system, very few Baltimore students have been pressed to the limit of their intellectual potential, many are unprepared for any but menial employment, and some are unready for jobs of any kind.”
- In 1987, Maryland’s governor asked the MSDE to appoint a commission to conduct a detailed study of the preparedness of Maryland’s students to perform in the modern economy
  - BCPSS students’ MSPAP scores were at the bottom of the state’s 24 districts in every subject area and every grade.
- BUILD began to investigate the shortages and disparities in supplies in the BCPS
  - This report reinforced with African American leaders and school activists that action was needed to reform the city’s schools

# Three Phases of Reform

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- **Accountability Phase I**
  - setting standards, publishing school- and district- level results of tests of those standards
  - identifying individual schools that were not scoring well or producing measures of progress
  - encouraging districts to improve the limited numbers of low-scoring schools
- **Accountability Phase II ( Senate Bill 795)**
  - nine-member board appointed by mayor and governor
  - increased state funding for BCPSS
  - master plan,
  - establishment of new positions (CEO, CAO DR, CFO)
- **No Child Left Behind**
  - standards, accountability and AYP

# Small Schools in Baltimore

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- In 2002, Baltimore began implementing the Blueprint with more than \$20 million pledged by local and national foundations
  - BCPSS opened 18 small high schools between 2002 and 2006
  - 6 innovation schools (i.e., new school school)
  - 12 break-out high schools (i.e., small schools created from large, comprehensive schools)
- Reflect three guiding principles
  - Small supportive structures
  - Strong academic rigor
  - Effective accountable instruction and leadership
- Students did demonstrate improvement
  - English and algebra HAS scores
  - Attendance
  - Graduation rates
  - Innovation high schools had higher test scores and attendance rates than the other, nonselective high schools in the city

# Fair Student Funding

- In April of 2008, the Board of School Commissioners approved a decentralization plan called Fair Student Funding
- The Fair Student Funding Plan
  - Schools receive more resources and more flexibility over those resources
  - Decisions about students can be made by leaders rather than the central office
- The district offers school choice fairs and an open enrollment application process for middle and high school level students in Baltimore
- Students can apply directly to schools of interest and over-subscribed schools hold lotteries to determine student enrollment

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