

Guide to Curriculum Materials

**In the Records of the
New York City Board of Education**

Municipal Archives
New York City Department of Records and
Information Services

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What to teach and how to teach it are among the fundamental questions for teachers and for anyone studying the educational enterprise. How these issues played out in the past is a critical element in understanding the educational experience of students and teachers in New York. Among the most difficult questions for educational historians is: what actually happened in the classroom, what was the actual educational experience of a child? Archival resources on curriculum provide part of the answer.

The obvious strength of curriculum materials, as tools for understanding the educational life of the schools, is their detailed presentation of the topics, ideas, facts, or skills that were supposed to be taught in the classroom. The limitation of curriculum materials lies in the inevitable uncertainty as to how they were implemented by actual teachers in actual classrooms. Teachers may have structured all their teaching around the standard outline; or they may have been selective in what to use, combining the formal curriculum with other content and activities; or they may have ignored the instructions entirely.

The formal curriculum—courses of study, syllabi, and other curriculum materials—is certainly one place to start in the effort to understand what school was like. Fortunately, the records of the Board of Education at the Municipal Archives include a wealth of such materials. Description of the intended content of instruction has taken many forms over the years. In the nineteenth century, the required course of study was sometimes attached to the annual report of a board of education or included with the bylaws of the board. After the Consolidation of Greater New York in 1898, the courses of study were most often issued as printed booklets devoted to a particular subject area and grade level. Very often, production of a curriculum guide was motivated by introduction of a new or experimental approach to a subject; others appeared as part of a general process of periodic updating of curricula.

This guide aims to facilitate access to curriculum materials, broadly defined. These include courses of study, which outline the subjects to be covered, and syllabi, which typically provide more details. Also included are resource guides, providing informational resources to teachers to help in designing their teaching. Other curriculum materials include guides to help teachers in curriculum development; records of curriculum policy-making; reports of experiments and research studies relating to curriculum; and even some materials intended for student use.

A variety of administrative units of the Board of Education produced curriculum materials. These included the Board of Superintendents, the Division of Curriculum Development, the Division of Elementary Schools; the Bureau of Community Development; the Bureau of Research, Reference, and Statistics; and many others. Often, the curriculum guide was a cooperative effort of two or more bureaus. The archives collections have been organized taking this into account while seeking to make the materials as visible and convenient to use as possible.

Beyond the specifically curriculum-related series described in this guide, researchers should also consider some of the more general series that sometimes include important curriculum records. These include:

- Records of individual members of the Board of Education. (For example, Series 373 Luis O. Reyes Papers, includes substantial material on the HIV-AIDS curriculum of 1990-1991.)
- Annual reports of the Superintendent of Schools. For most of the 20th century this report provides the superintendent's discussion of programs and policies, including curriculum. (In the period 1934-1946 these reports combine description of school programs with photographs of classroom activities.)
- Subject files created by various agencies often include material on curriculum and textbooks. (For example, Series 753, Bureau of Reference, Research, and Statistics, Pamphlet Collection, 1888-1966, and Series 755, Bureau of Reference, Research, and Statistics, Vertical File, 1888-1966, both contain files on each of the major curriculum areas.)
- Records of the several Chancellors. These extensive files cover curriculum topics especially when they involved policy issues demanding the Chancellor's attention. (An example is Series 1125, Chancellor Nathan Quinones, Central Files, 1984-1988, which includes substantial files on the sex education curriculum.)

The listings in this Guide should be used in conjunction with the "Guide to the Records of the Board of Education" (available on the Municipal Archives web site) which provides a concise description of each series, and with the detailed finding aids and inventories available for most series at the Archives which provide information at the folder level and item level when appropriate. Arrangement and description of much of the curriculum material was made possible by a grant from the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund.

Public School Society of New York:

Series 1. Public School Society of New York. Records. 1835-1853.

1 cu. ft.

The Society operated schools from 1805 to 1853, when their schools were merged with those of the Board of Education. The Archives holds a limited number of documents from the Society, one of which is a Record of Students for Grammar School 15 for 1835-1850. For each student the record indicates basic directory information and also the subjects studied. [A fairly extensive literature exists on the schools of the Public School Society. These schools operated on the Lancasterian System, in which the teacher taught a group of student “monitors,” each of whom taught a squad of students, permitting a very high student/teacher ratio.]

Nineteenth Century Brooklyn (before 1898):

Series 2. City of Brooklyn. Board of Education. Manual and Course of Study. 1867-1887.

0.35 cu. ft.

The Manual combines directory-type information with some or all of the following types of material: the bylaws of the board, related legislation, history of the school system, course of study, and listings of schools with their teaching staff. The course of study, with detailed instructions for implementation, was included in the 1873, 1877, and 1880 Manual and a revised course of study was printed separately in 1887. Among the information provided is the time allotted to each subject and the specific textbooks to be used.

Series 5. City of Brooklyn. Board of Education. Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. 1858-1897.

2.5 cu. ft.

The printed annual report of the chief administrator of the Brooklyn schools. The report includes extensive statistics on school attendance and finances, together with a narrative presentation of the major policy and administrative issues facing the school system. Included also is school-level information, including names of principals and teachers, grades taught, and class registers. The superintendent’s narrative often contains commentary on aspects of the curriculum, methods of teaching, and ideas for improvement in these areas. Occasionally a formal course of study is included: the 1863 report includes a presentation of the course of study together with explanation of recent improvements. Other years may contain related material, such as the course of study for evening schools.

Other nineteenth-century school districts:

Series 16. Long Island City. Board of Education. Records. 1871, 1893

0.1 cu. ft.

The series consists of two printed documents. The “City Charter Relative to the Department of Public Instruction of Long Island City” (1871) consists of Title IX of the charter (Laws of 1871, Chapter 461). The “Rules and Regulations of the Board of Education” (1893) includes, besides the rules, the course of study and “general suggestions to teachers.”

Series 18. Town of New Utrecht. School District No. 2. Trustees. Minutes. 1849-1894

0.1 cu. ft.

Minutes of the School District Trustees of School District No. 2, Town of New Utrecht, Kings County. (The town of New Utrecht was annexed by the City of Brooklyn in 1894 and included in Greater New York in 1898.) The trustees were elected by the district voters and had responsibility for overseeing the district’s affairs including, especially, budgets, school taxes, and financing of school buildings, and preparation of an annual report to the Town Superintendent of Common Schools. Included in annual reports, besides financial and attendance statistics, are the names of all parents in the district and the titles of school books in use.

Nineteenth century New York City Board of Education (before 1898):

The primary sources for description of the nineteenth-century course of study are the annual reports of the Board of Education and the Teachers Manuals. However, a number of other series provide supplementary material and distinctive glimpses into the actual educational life of the schools.

Series 22. Annual Report of the Board of Education. 1843-1896

7 cu. ft.

The annual report of the Board of Education provides both substantial data on the school system and a narrative discussion of the administrative and policy issues affecting the schools. The annual reports also generally include the annual report of the superintendent of schools and detailed listings of the schools and teachers, and often include the course of study for the various subjects and grades.

Researchers should use the set of annual reports available on microfilm. A set of the films is available through the Library and Archives Reading Room, Room 111. A printed guide to the microfilm set of annual reports is also available there. Another set of the films is available in Room 103.

Series 30. Documents of the Board of Education. 1851-1868

2.5 cu. ft.

The series includes a variety of documents issued by the Board, including annual reports of the board and of its committees, special committee reports, reports of the city superintendent, and speeches by board officials. Many of the reports relate to the Free Academy. Lists of the documents in each year's volume (for most years) are at the front of the volume. Included in the reports on the Free Academy are detailed descriptions of the general course of study and the specific subjects studied in the various grades and classes. Included among the reports of committees and officials are reports on topics such as adoption of a uniform course of study for the grade schools and adoption of an official list of approved textbooks.

Researchers are requested to use the set of this series in the City Hall Library whenever possible, but volumes in the Archives set may be needed for full coverage.

Series 35. Manual of the Board of Education of the City of New York. 1844-1897

3.5 cu. ft.

The Manual contains the basic information required by officials of the school system. Generally, the manual includes a list of board members and their committee assignments, the legislation affecting the schools, the bylaws of the Board of Education, and the rules and regulations governing the teachers and students. The manuals for the 1840s to 1860s also contain detailed information on schools, including the names and residence addresses of the teachers. (Similar information was also published in the Directory of the Board of Education.) Included in the Manual is the basic course of study for the various grades, as prescribed in the Bylaws.

Series 46. Committee on Instruction. Minutes. 1897

0.1 cu. ft.

The printed minutes of the Committee for February to December 1897. The committee dealt with appointments of teachers and supervisors, organization of schools and classes, and curricular issues. The volume is not indexed. Topics handled by the committee included proposed changes in the course of study and proposed addition of the teaching particular subjects in specific schools.

Series 49. Teachers Manual. 1873, 1884

0.2 cu. ft.

The series includes two manuals, 1873 and 1884. Each combines description of the course of study with very detailed instructions and suggestions for teachers. The 1873 manual covers both primary and grammar grads. The 1884 manual is for grammar grades (upper grades) only.

Series 67. Ward School 14. 21st Ward. Boys Department. Record of Students. 1851-1866

3 vols. (1.0 cu. ft.)

A continuous register of pupils containing facts of admission, discharge and other pertinent information. Records of pupils are arranged alphabetically by letter of the alphabet, then chronologically by date of admission. For each pupil, the entries show name, date of admission, age, parents name and occupation, residence address, previous school, subjects studied, dates of completion of reading levels, and date of discharge, with an indication for students transferring to other grammar schools or going on to the Free Academy.

Borough School Boards (1898-1902)

In the first few years after Consolidation of Greater New York, the public schools were governed under a partially decentralized system, with four borough “school boards” (for Manhattan and the Bronx combined, Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond) and a central “board of education” made up of representatives from the borough boards. Records of the borough boards include some documentation of the course of study which varied among the many jurisdictions that had been combined in Consolidation. For the period 1898 to January 1902 the borough boards continued to have authority over the course of study.

School Board for the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx

Series 82. School Board for the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx. Bylaws. 1898

0.1 cu. ft.

Sets forth the “Bylaws, Rules, and Regulations” of the borough school board. The regulations provide for the organization and procedures of the Board as well as the responsibilities of principals, teachers, and students. The Bylaws also includes the courses of study for elementary schools, high schools, and evening schools. Includes an index.

Series 84. School Board for the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx. Committee Records. 1898-1902

0.6 cu. ft.

The series consists of minutes of three committees of the borough board with combined jurisdiction of the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx: the Committee on Sites and Buildings the Committee on Teachers, and the Committee on Studies, Bylaws, and Legislation.. The new organization under the Consolidation Law went into effect February 1, 1898, so the minutes for meetings in January 1898, included in these volumes, are actually for the committees of the old New York City Board of Education. The minutes for the Committee on Sites and Buildings and the Committee on Teachers are printed, in bound volumes for each year, now in protective phase wrappers; the minutes for the Committee on Studies, Bylaws, and Legislation are in one manuscript volume.

School Boards for the Boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond

For these boroughs, only limited records of the course of study in force during 1898-1901 have been located. For each borough, the proceedings or minutes of the school board include entries relating to approval of changes in the course of study. For Brooklyn there is also a volume of minutes of the Committee on Physical Culture which includes some references to curriculum policy.

Series 93. School Board for the Borough of Brooklyn. Proceedings. 1898-1902

2 cu. ft.

These minutes of the school board include entries relating to changes in the course of study, and additions to lists of approved textbooks.

Series 96. School Board for the Borough of Queens. Journal. 1898-1902

1.5 cu. ft.

These minutes of the school board include entries relating to changes in the course of study, and additions to lists of approved textbooks.

Series 99. School Board for the Borough of Richmond. Minutes. 1898-1900

1.0 cu. ft.

These minutes of the school board include entries relating to changes in the course of study, and additions to lists of approved textbooks. The 1899 minutes contain the full texts of the teachers manual and the course of study.

Twentieth Century New York, Before Decentralization (1900-1970)

The system of borough boards ended in 1902 and was followed by a division of responsibilities between the city Superintendent of Schools and a large central Board of Education of almost 50 members, representing the various boroughs. This was replaced in 1917 by a small central board of 7 members. On a formal level, the adoption of the course of study was the responsibility of the Board of Education, while the detailed elaboration of the course, or the syllabus, was the area of the Board of Superintendents (the Superintendent of Schools and the Associate Superintendents). Under this system, the Board of Education began to produce numerous curriculum publications, generally combining course of study and syllabus, for a wide range of subject areas and grade levels.

The context for development of curriculum evolved as the school system grew to take on broader functions and more specialized management. The specific distribution of responsibilities among associate superintendents changed often, but through the 1930s, it appears that the associate superintendents who supervised the divisions of high schools, vocational schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools had responsibility for curriculum development in their areas. This work was coordinated through two committees of the board of superintendents, one on curriculum and one on textbooks.

A different focus on curriculum was adopted in 1942/43, with the re-definition of one of the associate superintendents' divisions as a division of Curriculum Development. The curriculum and textbook committees were placed under the same superintendent. And the publication of curriculum materials was systematized into a serial set titled "Curriculum Bulletin" containing anywhere from about 5 to 20 publications each year which continued right up to the early 1970s. In 1949, a Bureau of Curriculum Research was established and in subsequent years a large Bureau of Curriculum Development evolved (the names and responsibilities of such bureaus changed frequently over the years).

For the earliest of these twentieth-century curricula, the best source is a compilation of courses of study and syllabi published in 1903 but compiled for display at the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 (Series 236). Most of the individual curricula produced in the period 1900-1942 are organized into Series 666, arranged by general subject area. The main body of curricula produced from 1942 forward, the "Curriculum Bulletin" series, is organized into Series 667, arranged according to the structure of the serial publication.

However, substantial quantities of curriculum materials were produced in other forms, by other bureaus, or in special projects, not necessarily through formal adoption by the two boards. Additional materials represent discussions of curriculum policy, including reports of committees,

curriculum conferences, minutes of the curriculum council, and similar materials. The series containing such materials are described after the three basic series.

Series 236. St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. Board of Education Exhibition. 1903

0.2 cu. ft.

The series consists of an exhibition of the curriculum of the New York City schools in the form of a compilation of the printed courses of study and syllabi adopted in 1903. Included in a single bound volume are a general course of study and also specific syllabi, in various levels of detail, for many subjects in the primary and grammar grades: Ethics, English, History and Civics; Mathematics; Geometry; Drawing, Constructive Work, Sewing, and Cooking; Kindergarten, Music, and Physical Training.

Series 666. Board of Superintendents. Courses of Study and Curriculum Resource Materials. Non-Serial Publications. 1900-1942

9 cu. ft.

Courses of study, syllabi, and related curriculum resource materials. In the period prior to 1942, curriculum development and the revision of the course of study were the shared responsibility of the several associate superintendents and were coordinated by a committee of the Board of Superintendents. (The committee had various names, including Committee on Research and Course of Study; as of 1942, the committee was known as the Committee on Curriculum.) Courses of study were prepared for each of the subjects taught, at all grade levels. Generally, courses of study and syllabi remained in effect for several years, and might be reprinted unchanged or with limited changes. Revision of the courses of study was based on perceived need, rather than any schedule.

A folder list provides basic information on each item, including subject, short title, date of adoption, dates of publication, and grade level. When there were multiple dates of adoption it generally resulted from adoption of the course of study by the Board of Education in one year and adoption of the syllabus by the Board of Superintendents in a later year. Multiple dates of publication generally indicate reprint dates.

Series 667. Division of Curriculum Development. Curriculum Bulletin. 1942-1979.

34 cu. ft.

A serial publication of curriculum materials for use of teachers. Courses of study, teaching guides, and similar resource materials were issued for each subject and for the various grade levels. Revision was done on a varying schedule based on need. Each numbered bulletin was published separately, in a series for the school year (e.g. "Curriculum Bulletin, 1947-1948 Series,

Number 1”). Access to these materials is primarily through an item level list, generated as a “Report” from an Access database.

Series 140. Committee on Instructional Affairs. Records. 1946-1961

4 cu. ft.

Records of a committee of the Board of Education. Included are calendars (agendas) of meetings, action calendars (indicating actions taken), supporting documents, and correspondence. The Committee on Instructional Affairs dealt with both instructional programs and instructional staff. Topics range from the program of requirements for a new school building to consideration of courses of study and textbooks, to promotion of students and admissions to high schools. The committee minutes regularly show approval by the committee of textbook recommendations submitted by the Board of Superintendents.

Series 147. Committee on Studies and Textbooks. Minutes. 1902-1917

3 volumes (0.3 cu. ft.)

Manuscript minutes of a standing committee of the Board of Education. The committee reviewed and approved or modified recommendations from the Board of Superintendents for approval or disapproval of textbooks and other supplies. The committee also discussed and reviewed changes in the course of study.

Series 172. Committee on the Study of Vocational Education and Mechanic and Industrial Arts Classes in Secondary Schools. Report. 1942.

0.1 cu. ft.

The series consists of the committee’s published report, *Vocational Education and Mechanic and Industrial Arts Classes in Secondary Schools* (1942). The committee was co-chaired by James Marshall, president of the Board of Education, and Harold G. Campbell, Superintendent of Schools. It included other members of the board, school administrators, labor union officials, employers, government agency officials, and university professors. The report analyzes the course of study, aims, and methods of various vocational programs. The report notes that the commission was planned at a time of peace but that conditions are vastly changed by the war, and suggests that the report’s findings may become useful after the war is over.

Series 176. Committee on the War Industries Training Program. Records. 1940-1944

0.5 cu. ft.

Reports and other records of a special committee established to oversee the Board of Education’s efforts in the War Industries Training Program, part of the crash mobilization efforts at the

beginning of World War II. The committee was chaired in succession by several board members, and included board members and senior staff, while the training programs were headed by Associate Superintendent George F. Pigott, Jr. The programs provided initial training for workers in war industries in vocational high schools, sometimes on a 24-hour a day basis. In its later phases the program also included supplemental on the job training of workers in arms factories. The largest categories of training provided were in machine shop skills, shipbuilding trades, and aviation trades. The series consists primarily of two reports describing the program from its inception in 1940 through 1943 and two volumes of course outlines developed for use in the program.

Series 235. Paris Exposition of 1900. Board of Education Exhibition. 1900.

3.0 cu. ft. (18 volumes)

Original classwork of public school pupils. For the Paris Exposition of 1900 the Board of Education prepared an exhibition of the regular classwork of public school pupils, to demonstrate the curriculum and the progress of the pupils through the course of study. The pupils' work was systematically collected in representative classrooms and bound in 18 volumes, together in some cases with explanatory introductions by teachers and photographs of classroom activity.

Arranged by borough and subject of study.

Series 550. Puerto Rican Study Records. 1953-1960.

3.5 cu. ft.

The series consists of the records of the Planning Committee and Advisory Committee of the Puerto Rican Study. The study was established in order to help the Board of Education develop policies, programs, and curriculum appropriate for the increasing number of students arriving from Puerto Rico. Included are correspondence, agendas, minutes, drafts of reports, subject files, a large group of curriculum materials, and a final report titled "The Puerto Rican Study."

Arranged by types of material and then chronologically.

Series 611. Board of Superintendents. Minutes. 1902-1939

38 volumes (22 cu. ft.)

Minutes of the highest administrative unit of the school system. The Board of Superintendents consisted of the Superintendent of Schools together with the several Associate Superintendents. The board's approval was required for many actions, large and small. Significant matters before the board included location and design requirements for new school buildings and adoption and revision of courses of study and syllabi. The board also dealt with matters as minor as approval of sabbatical leaves and acceptance by schools of items donated by parents associations. There is an index at the end of each annual volume of minutes.

Series 637. Committee on Commercial Education Research. Report. 1923

0.1 cu. ft.

Report of a special committee in the high school division. The committee consisted of representatives of English teachers in the high schools and representatives of five major businesses that employed high school graduates. The report considered ways to modify the English instruction program to better prepare graduates with the skills needed in the business world.

Series 652. Division of Vocational High Schools. Proposal for the School of the Performing Arts. 1946

0.1 cu. ft.

The series consists of the proposal to create the School of the Performing Arts, "School of the Performing Arts: Aims, Curriculum, and Organization." The proposal was prepared in 1946 by Franklin J. Keller, principal of Metropolitan Vocation High School. It provided for the School of the Performing Arts to begin as an annex of Metropolitan Vocation High School and eventually to become independent. This plan was followed. Ultimately, the School of the Performing Arts was merged with Music and Art High School to create Fiorello LaGuardia High School.

Series 658. Division of Elementary Schools. Reports and Publications. 1950-1965

1.0 cu. ft.

The series consists of publications by the Division of Elementary Schools designed to assist teachers in various phases of instruction. Included also are publications specifically intended for parents and for newly appointed teachers.

Several groups of publications were issued in serial form, including several years of the "Handbook;" a series of "Teaching Guides" in language arts, social studies and art; an annual publication on "Guiding the Gifted," and a periodical "K-Six." All of these represent a contribution to instructional support designed to supplement the main curriculum guide series, the Curriculum Bulletin (Series 667). Arranged by type of publication and chronologically.

Series 661. Bureau of Curriculum Research. Curriculum Research Reports, 1954-1970

2.5 cu. ft.

The research reports issued by the Bureau of Curriculum Research were "intended for staff use in developing programs." From the diversity of their subjects and formats it is apparent that their uses might vary from serving as a resource to a curriculum development committee to serving as a source of ideas for a teacher planning a unit of activity with her students.

In addition to reports on specific topics, the series includes some materials of general usefulness, such as the lists of Curriculum and Research Publications; the Directory of Curriculum Committees; and the guide to Curriculum Centers and Library Resources for Curriculum Workers. Most of the materials in the series are individual reports, in folders, arranged alphabetically by title. There is also a bound set of the reports, in three volumes, at the end of the series. The materials in this series are displayed in an item level list, generated as a “report” from an Access database.

Series 662. Curriculum Committees, Reports, Conferences, 1901-1968

1.5 cu. ft.

The philosophies, goals, and conceptions of education inherent in the process of curriculum development may best be approached through materials in this series. In speeches, committee reports, and conference exchanges, leaders and active participants in the design of the content of education gave direct attention to some of the broader problems that they faced. The materials brought together here vary from two critical reports by principals in 1901 and 1902 to a report of discussions on the role of curriculum in school integration in 1964.

The materials in this series were created by a variety of agencies within the school system, including superintendents, special committees, and specialized bureaus. In many cases other copies of these reports exist and have been included in series based on the creating bureau and its place in the organization chart. The reports have been brought together here for the convenience of research and comparison, and are arranged chronologically. They are displayed in an item level list, generated as a “report” from an Access database.

Series 663. Division of Elementary Schools. Public School 500 (Speyer School) Curriculum Experiment. Records. 1938-1941

0.5 cu. ft.

The Public School 500 (Speyer School) experiment was a cooperative program of the Board of Education and Teachers College, Columbia University to develop and implement specialized curriculum for two distinct groups of children: slow learners and fast learners. The series consists of publications of the project: curriculum bulletins for special units of study, and a final report. The final report provides a bibliography of articles and other publications relating to the experiment.

Series 664. Division of Curriculum Development. “Strengthening Democracy.” 1949-1965.
0.3 cu. ft.

A serial publication addressed primarily to teachers and staff. Although the themes of “Strengthening Democracy” included the discussion of the role of the United States in the world, as a democratic nation versus totalitarian challenges, the contents were primarily focused on democratic education and human relations issues in the schools. A sub-theme was the ongoing program of investigating teachers suspected of communist affiliation.

Series 665. Division of Curriculum Development. Curriculum Council. Minutes. 1958-1963
0.2 cu. ft.

Minutes of a council convened by the Division of Curriculum Development. Chaired by the associate superintendent responsible for curriculum development, the Curriculum Council included curriculum officials and also assistant superintendents from each of the other divisions. The minutes reflect the council’s function in general curriculum planning, in approval of the plans for the annual series of curriculum bulletins, and in consideration of other specific curriculum materials needs. The council’s recommendations went to the Board of Superintendents for approval before implementation. Mimeographed with manuscript additions.

Series 668. Curriculum, Other, 1942-1971
9 cu. ft.

Although the Board of Education issued its most widely used curricula as numbers within the Curriculum Bulletin serial set (Series 667) it also produced a large number of curricula, often of a specialized nature, outside that set. These, “other” curricula, as they were designated, constitute this series.

Some of these curricula were issued in groups, relating to special projects or experimental programs. These groups are reflected in the arrangement of the series: a group of curricula on “education through recreation,” developed by the Bureau of Community Education; a series of materials for CRMD (Children with Retarded Mental Development) classes; a variety of “materials for students,” including those in adult education; a series of “curriculum reports” describing various curriculum experiments; a set of curricula generated by the Intermediate Schools Task Force and a series of programmed learning curricula in mathematics and English.

Also issued were a large number of individual curricula or resource guides on diverse school subjects. These have been arranged by general subject and, within each subject, chronologically. Access to these materials is through an item level list, generated as a “report” from an Access database.

Series 678. WPA Project Records. 1936-1943

7 cu. ft.

Records of several projects carried out by the Board of Education under the federal work programs, initially the Works Progress Administration, later the Works Projects Administration. Included are correspondence, memoranda, reports, and publications generated by the projects. The records are organized by project and by material type. Federal funding permitted the employment of educators and related professionals in projects aimed at otherwise unmet educational needs.

These projects included an Adult Education Project (1936) to develop new curricular content and another Adult Education Program (1939-1942) which produced manuals, courses of study, and reading materials; the Remedial Reading and Arithmetic Program (1937-1942), which produced 80 new reading units; the New Reading Materials Program (1938-1942), which wrote and printed dozens of story books and other readings targeted to current interests and needs; and programs for Comprehensive Testing in junior high schools (1940), Lip Reading (1939), which produced a manual for teachers; and a Summer Play School Program (1938).

The Elementary School Activity Program (1936-1940), primarily aimed at in-service teacher training, was a component of a larger program throughout the Board of Education, to experiment with a “progressive” activity program, to evaluate the progress of the students, and then to implement the program more widely.

Series 682. Bureau of Educational Vocational Guidance. Directory of the Public High Schools. 1964-1970

0.1 cu. ft.

Printed directories providing information about each high school. The directories were intended to serve students about to complete the lower grades and to apply to enter high school. Included are descriptions of each high school, its programs of study and special features, and any special application and admission procedures. Holdings include directories for 1964-65 and 1969-70. See also Series 1311, containing directories published 1970 and later.

Series 687. Bureau of Libraries. Publications. 1930-1950

0.3 cu. ft.

The series consists of publications of the Bureau of Libraries designed for use by school librarians. The publications include guides for librarians in establishing basic library collections and in providing library instruction to classes in elementary and high schools. The linkage of

school libraries to curriculum is reflected in such publications as “Library Books Helpful in Planning Units of Work in the Elementary Schools” (1946).

Series 825. Bureau of Supplies. Textbook Lists. 1963-1987

0.5 cu. ft.

The series consists of printed lists of textbooks that were available for requisition by school principals. The lists included textbooks, charts, maps, tests, etc. that had been approved for school use by the Committee on Instructional Materials. These approvals were implemented by supply contracts administered by the Bureau of Supplies.

The lists tended to include comparable standard textbooks in each subject area, published by most of the major publishers, along with supplementary materials in many subject areas. All materials approved during the previous five years remained on the list and available for principals to order, based on the specific needs of the schools, the schools’ existing stocks of textbooks, and the availability of funds in their budgets.

The Era of Decentralization (1970-2002)

The decentralization of the school system, with the creation of community school districts, the creation of the position of Chancellor, the election of community school boards, and the role of those boards in appointment of community superintendents and principals, involved extensive reorganization of the administrative structure and changes in the processes of curriculum development and implementation. Most of the archival series are divided approximately at the point of decentralization (an exception is the group of series of board members’ files).

In the area of curriculum the central administration, through the Office of Curriculum Development and Support and other offices and bureaus, continued to produce curriculum materials. These were most often experimental or innovative curricula, presumably created as part of the ongoing effort to reform and improve the schools. It is not always clear how these curricula were implemented or if they survived beyond the experimental stage. Curricula developed in such efforts are grouped in two main series, Curriculum, 1970-2001 and Curriculum Project Reports, 1967-1978.

Some curriculum areas were the subject of major policy initiatives and generally became topics of major policy debate in the school system and in the city generally. These included sex education, HIV/AIDS education, bilingual education, and multicultural education. As indicated

earlier, important materials on such controversial topics are found in the files of chancellors and board members. In the litigious atmosphere of the late 20th century, the files of the Office of Counsel and the Office of the Secretary also became locations for such material.

Series 1262. Curriculum. 1970-2001

14.5 cubic feet

The Board of Education, in the period after decentralization, continued to issue some curricula as numbered items in its long-standing Curriculum Bulletin serial (Series 667). However, most of the curricula produced in the period 1970-2001 were issued as free-standing, non-serial publications, and are included in Series 1262.

The subjects and grade levels varied widely. Included are many experimental or innovative curricula, such as the “Children of the Rainbow” guides for multicultural education in kindergarten and first grade. Also included are several sets of materials for upgrading mathematics education, including the “Gates to Learning” for elementary grades and the “Fundamentals of Mathematics” for ninth grade.

These curricula have been arranged by general subject and, within each subject, chronologically. Access to these materials is through an item level list, generated as a “report” from an Access database.

Series 1263. Curriculum Project Reports. 1967-1978

4.0 cubic feet

Curriculum materials, primarily innovative or experimental, produced as “Curriculum Project Reports” by the Bureau of Curriculum Development and Support. The subjects and grade levels vary widely. Included are a project in English which generated reports on “Folk and Fanciful Literature” and “The Study of Biography” for 6th grade. Also included are a number of curricula in vocational education, such as “Maritime Trades, Marine and Power Engineering.”

These curricula have been arranged by general subject and, within each subject, chronologically. Access to these materials is through an item level list, generated as a “report” from an Access database.

Series 1045. Office of the Counsel. Major Issues Files. 1965-2000

54.5 cu. ft

Files of the Counsel, who was responsible to the Board of Education directly (while the separate Office of Legal Services reported to the Chancellor.) The files relate to policy and

administrative concerns and to specific legal cases of significance; many of them were designated as “major issues” by the office of the Counsel. A large group of files relate to the proposed HIV/AIDS curriculum and its implementation.

Series 1107. Michael Costelloe, Special Assistant to Chancellor Anker.
Aspira Compliance Records. 1974-1975.

4 cu. ft.

Michael Costelloe served as a special assistant to Chancellor Irving Anker. During 1974 and 1975 he was responsible for preparation of compliance reports relating to the Aspira Consent Decree. This was a court-supervised agreement to provide bilingual education to all children for whom it was appropriate. The Board of Education submitted monthly reports of the status of its compliance efforts and also regular reports of its efforts to obtain necessary funding for bilingual services.

The records in this series include handwritten drafts and revised versions of reports prepared for submission to Judge Marvin Frankel, together with related memoranda. Included are final versions of the reports, as submitted to the court by Chancellor Anker, and memoranda transmitting copies of the reports to the members of the Board. Arranged by type of report and then chronologically.

Series 1311. Division of High Schools. Directory of the Public High Schools. 1970-1991.

1 cu. ft.

Printed directories describing the public high schools. The directory provides information and instructions for students about to complete the lower grades and to apply to enter high school. Included are descriptions of each high school, its programs of study and special features, and the school's applications and admissions procedures.

Series 1342. Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). Reports. 1987-1988

0.7 cu. ft.

Evaluation reports on educational programs. OEA prepared statistical and analytical reports on such major issues as school dropouts and curriculum innovations. Notable are reports that develop the “cohort” method for analyzing dropout statistics, evaluations of dropout-prevention programs in elementary and middle schools, and an analysis of the implementation of the Family Living/Sex Education curriculum. OEA was succeeded by the Office of Educational Research and Assessment.

Series 1343. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA). Reports. 1989-1995
13.5 cu. ft.

Evaluation reports on educational programs. OREA prepared statistical and analytical reports on such major issues as high school dropouts, reading and mathematics achievement, and bilingual education. The majority of the over-600 reports were prepared as required evaluations of annual progress of specific funded programs. Arranged in approximate chronological sequence, as issued. OREA was the successor to the Office of Educational Assessment (see Series 1342).

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Reminder: Curriculum and methods of teaching are necessarily intertwined with all other aspects of the public school system. Thus, researchers should consider the full range of archival materials, described in the *Guide to the Records of the Board of Education*, as potentially of usefulness. This *Guide to Curriculum Materials* highlights only the main curriculum-related resources, and some hard-to-find sources, which, however, will meet most research needs.