

Public Education- Part 1: Introduction ^[1]

Public Education

by Benjamin R. Justesen and Scott Matthews, 2006

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See also: [Community Colleges](#) ^[2]; [Literary Fund](#) ^[3]; [Pearsall Plan](#) ^[4]; [Department of Public Instruction](#) ^[5]; [Pupil Assignment Act](#) ^[6]; [School Consolidation](#) ^[7]; [Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education](#) ^[8]; [Textbook Commission](#) ^[9]; [University of North Carolina System](#) ^[10]; [Private Higher Education](#) ^[11]



School Bus, 1936. From the Barden Collection, North Carolina State Archives, call #: N.53.15.6645, Raleigh, NC.

^[12][Part 1: Introduction](#)

[Part 2: The Literary Fund, the Education Act, and the Growth of Common Schools](#)^[13]

[Part 3: The First Graded Schools, the State Constitution of 1868, and Legal Segregation](#)^[14]

[Part 4: Expansion, Consolidation, and the School Machinery Act](#)^[15]

[Part 5: Desegregation and Equality in Public Education](#)^[16]

[Part 6: Reform, Innovation, and the Modernization of Public Schools](#)^[17]

Part 1: Introduction

The history of public education in North Carolina reflects the state's development from its primarily rural, agrarian beginnings to its position in the early 2000s as a national leader in [agriculture](#) ^[18], [technology](#) ^[19], and [industry](#) ^[20]. Turning points in the growth of the public school system include the establishment of common schools in the early nineteenth century and of the first graded schools in the [Civil War](#) ^[21] and [Reconstruction](#) ^[22] eras, actions taken in the early twentieth century to improve schools through the use of public funds and to fully extend public education to [African American](#) ^[23] children, integration of schools during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and introduction of numerous educational reforms and programs that formed the basis of the modern North Carolina public school system. In the realm of higher education, North Carolina's 16-campus [University of North Carolina System](#) ^[10] and 58-campus community college system represent some of the finest such institutions in the nation, serving a huge number of the state's children and adults.

Keep reading >> [Part 2: The Literary Fund, the Education Act, and the Growth of Common Schools](#)^[13] ➡ ^[13]

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Subjects:

Education [24]

Authors:

Colomb, Nayda Swonger [25]

Johnson, K. Todd [26]

Justesen, Benjamin R. [27]

Latta, E. Michael [28]

Matthews, Scott [29]

Mazzocchi, Jay [30]

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