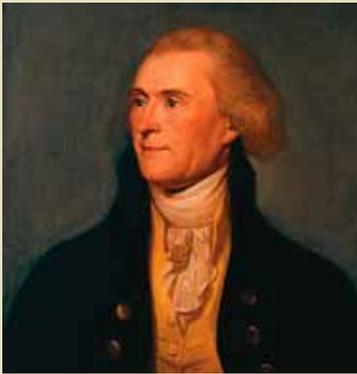


# Education Policy **TIMELINE**

## Jefferson Proposes Funding Public Schools

1779

Thomas Jefferson proposes a system of free schools for all children in Virginia supported through taxes. Although Jefferson's plans for universal education are not adopted at the time, his idea will form the basis of public education developed in the 19th century.



Portrait of Thomas Jefferson

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Mass. Leads the Way on Public Schools

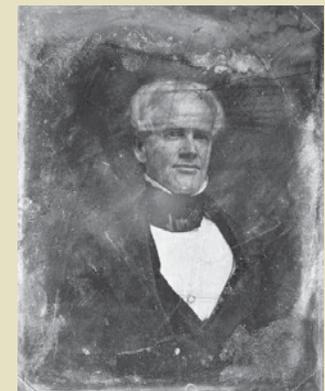
1827

Massachusetts requires all towns with 500 or more families to set up free, public high schools. Other states follow Massachusetts' example. In 1837, educational reformer Horace Mann supervises the creation of a statewide common-school system that provides schooling for all white children with a uniform curriculum. In 1855, after a decade-long effort by African American parents and their white allies, Massachusetts requires public schools to be racially integrated.

## Federal Office of Education Created

1867

The Federal Office of Education is established to help states develop stronger schools. The office, now known as the U.S. Department of Education, today administers federal funding for schools and federal education laws. It ensures that education is accessible to all people, regardless of race, sex, economic status, or physical or mental disability.



Portrait of Horace Mann

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## First Vocational School Opens

1868

The nation's first vocational school, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, opens in Massachusetts. Its founders want to create a school that combines academics with hands-on learning in science and engineering to prepare young men for careers in the many growing industries. The vocational education movement will grow in the early 20th century as federal laws provide funds for training and paying teachers.



Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Local Taxes Can Pay for Public Schools

1874

The Michigan Supreme Court, in a case known as "The Kalamazoo Case," upholds the right of local governments to tax its citizens to pay for public education. Other communities across the country will begin to impose local taxes to pay for schools.

## Testing Programs Developed

1926

The College Entrance Examination Board, formed in 1902 by a consortium of Ivy League colleges, introduces the Scholastic Aptitude Test, or SAT, which is designed to help predict a student's chance of success in college. In 1935, the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests, now called the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, is a voluntary testing program for kindergartners through eighth graders provided by the University of Iowa's College of Education. The tests allow administrators to compare their students' achievement with students around the country.

# Education Policy TIMELINE

## Education Aid for WWII Veterans

1944

Congress passes the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the GI Bill of Rights, which provides World War II veterans with unemployment benefits, home loans and education grants for those who want to continue their education after military service.



President Roosevelt signs the GI Bill of Rights  
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## School Segregation Struck Down

1954

The Supreme Court unanimously overturns its 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that "separate but equal" is constitutional and rules that segregation violates the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the court holds that racially segregated schools are inherently unequal. The court's opinion, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, says that to segregate students "solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."

## Impact of Cold War

1958

During the Cold War and after the Soviet Union launches the spacecraft Sputnik, policymakers fear that U.S. students are falling behind in math and science. In response, Congress authorizes the National Defense Education Act, which provides federal aid to state and local school districts to improve the teaching of math, science and foreign languages. The act also creates the first federal loans for higher education.



Protest against school segregation  
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Head Start Is Launched

1965

Designed to help break the cycle of poverty, the federal program Head Start provides education enrichment for low-income preschoolers so they can enter school with similar skills as higher-income students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides funds for textbooks and other services in public and private schools to ensure that children from low-income families have access to sufficient educational materials.



Lady Bird Johnson reads to children enrolled in Head Start  
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## Nation's Report Card Starts

1969

The National Assessment of Education Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card, is a nationally representative, continuing assessment of what American students know and can do in various subjects. The U.S. Department of Education conducts assessments in reading, math, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts.

## Title IX Prohibits Sex Discrimination

1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance which prohibited discrimination against students on the basis of gender." The law has a significant impact in equalizing educational opportunities for women, particularly in athletic programs.

# Education Policy TIMELINE

## School Inequity Violates N.J. Constitution

→ 1973

In *Robinson v. Cahill* and *Abbott v. Burke*, the New Jersey Supreme Court rules that the inadequate educational opportunities provided to students in poor urban school districts violate the state constitution's guarantee of a "thorough and efficient" education. Eventually, the state is ordered to improve the education system and provide additional funds to urban districts. These cases, and the resulting legislative reforms, become a model of school funding reform.



**Malcom X Shabazz High School in Newark, N.J.**

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

## 'A Nation at Risk' Report

→ 1983

The National Commission on Excellence in Education releases "A Nation at Risk," a report highly critical of the declining performance of students in U.S. public schools. In response, states and local districts adopt initiatives to raise student achievement. The federal government supports some of these efforts by focusing public attention on school reform and providing improvement grants.

## Private School Management Introduced

→ 1990s

Chris Whittle begins Edison Schools Inc., a private firm that contracts with school districts to manage all aspects of their schools: administration, curriculum and technology. In 1992, Baltimore, Md., is the first large urban school district to hire a private firm, Education Alternatives Inc., to manage some of its public schools and contracts with Sylvan Learning Systems to tutor students. The concept gains popularity, and in 1993, Minneapolis hires Public Strategies Group Inc. to run all of its 75 public schools. The superintendent is replaced by the company's CEO.

## Debate Grows Over Tuition Vouchers

→ 1990s

The concept of tuition vouchers gains traction as a way to help parents of children in "failing" schools and low-income parents transfer their children to better schools. But because parents often choose religious schools, the programs are challenged as violating the First Amendment's mandate on separation of church and state. Court rulings on state laws are mixed. In 2000, voters in Michigan and California turn down proposals calling for tuition voucher programs. In 2002, the Supreme Court rules that families should be allowed to use vouchers for any public, private, religious or nonreligious school they choose.

## Minn. Passes First Modern Charter School Law

→ 1991

In an effort to increase public school choice, Minnesota adopts legislation that allows the creation of public charter schools – schools that receive public funds but are run separately from the larger school system and are not required to meet all of its regulations. The idea is that freedom from government regulation results in important curriculum innovations, increased community involvement, and overall improvements to public education.

## No Child Left Behind Act

→ 2002

President George W. Bush signs the No Child Left Behind Act, a sweeping education reform law that requires states to develop a plan to identify poorly performing public schools and establish educational standards that all students must meet. Schools that fail to make "adequate yearly progress" toward state proficiency standards must permit students to transfer to better-performing public schools. Schools that persist in low performance must then implement corrective actions, such as replacing certain teachers, or they risk being restructured or taken over by the state.



**President George W. Bush signs into law the No Child Left Behind Act**

Photo: Wikimedia Commons