

Education in New York State (1784-1954) Harlan Hoyt Horner, the University of the State of New York (State Education Department) Albany, New York 1954

- 1784 - Creation of “the Department of the University of the State of New York.”
- 1787 - Under inquiry of A. Hamilton, J. Jay, etc. -- “a revised act enlarged the powers of the Regents towards the future establishment and supervision of colleges, academies and other schools.” (cf. p. 13 and John Jay quote!!!)
- John Jay - 1787 (p. 13) - “proposed reorganization of University of State of New York: “But before your committee conclude they feel themselves bound in faithfulness to add that the erecting of Public Schools for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic is an object of very great importance which ought not to be left to the discretion of private men but be promoted by public authority.”
- 1805 - Establishment of a common school fund -- prescribed in the Constitution
- 1812 - Provision for the office of Superintendent of Common Schools
- 1854 - Creation of a State Department of Public Instruction
- 1895 - Regents “became a constitutional body. Their powers were greatly enlarged by the ..... Fink Act of 1904.”
- Constitution noted: (Art. XI, #1) The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated.”
- 1904 - The establishment of the State Department of Education

Early years-Reports urged Legislature “to make provision for the promotion of elementary education.”

King’s College - established in 1754 by royal charter and closed during the Revolution. .... to Governor George Clinton -- first session of the Legislature after the Revolution on January 21, 1784 -- ..... of ..... for “revival and encouragement of seminaries of learning.” Propose enactment of Chapter 51 of the Laws of 1784, May 1, although name and charter of King’s College -- changed name to Columbia College -- created a corporation -- “The Regents of the University of the State of New York” -- gave Regents the powers and ..... formerly held by the Governor of King’s College. In addition -- Regents given authority to found other schools and colleges -- to confer the degree of “Bachelor or Arts.” Regents given authority to “hold and possess estates, real and personal. The annual amount of 40,000 bushels of wheat.” Also empowered to confer in their own name such degrees as “are or may be conferred by all or any of the universities in Europe.”

- 1795 - Regents incorporate Union College }
- 1812 - Hamilton College }
- 1825 - Geneva College (Hobart) } Private
- 1863 - Manhattan College }Institutions
- 1875 - St. Bonaventure’s College }
- 1883 - Niagara University }

Regents also empowered to incorporate and supervise academies: Erasmus Hall -- 1787 -- first. Eventually the “old line academies gradually gave way to public high school.” (1.7)

Regents -- power to confer honorary degrees (LL. D.) to: William Cullen Bryant, Nicholas Murray Butler, Peter Cooper, Thomas A. Edison, Albert Einstein, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Charles William Eliot, Mark Hopkins, Charles Evans Hughes, Seth Low, Elihu Root, Alfred E. Smith, William Howard Taft.

**Early History:** Current Functions: ..... Education Department is responsible for general supervision of all educational institutions in the State, for operating certain educational and cultural institutions, and for certifying teachers and certifying or licensing practitioners of 31 professions. It exercises power to “charter an educational institution in the State, including schools, libraries, and historical societies; developing and approving ideal curricula; and providing and coordinating vocational rehabilitational services.” Commission exercises a “quasi-judicial authority to review, upon appeal, the action of any local school official or board.” It also operates the New York State School for the Blind and the New York State School for the Deaf. The office of Cultural Education -- includes the State Museum and S..... Service, State Library, State Archives and Records Administration and the Public Broadcasts Program, which maintain scientific and ..... research collection and provide services to State government and the public.” (“Java: Guide to Records in the New York State Archives, 1993, pp. 197-198)

**New York State's educational history** -- Dutch and English antecedents -- Dutch: seek to establish “widespread general education, establish tax-supported common schools under church and state control in most of New Netherland’s communities.” The English: sought rather to establish “a system of private or church-supported academies, emphasis was placed on advanced education of the elite, and the common school system of the Dutch all but disappeared. In 1754, the first college of the colony, King’s College, was founded in New York City under a royal charter and was ruled by a Board of Governors and appointed by the colonial government.”

1784 -- Legislature enacted first education bill in State’s history creating Board of Regents to act as governing body of King’s College, renamed Columbia College.

1787 -- Board of Regents --- Regents Board membership consists of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, President of the State, Member of the Assembly, Mayors of Albany or New York, Attorney General, Secretary of State. Twenty-four other persons on the Board of Regents. Three years later (1787) Board membership changes to Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and 19 members appointed by the State Legislature.

“During its first year of operation the reorganized Board of Regents recommended State support for public schools. However, no action was taken until 1795 (chap. 75) when the Legislature appropriated \$100,000 a year for each of the next five years to encourage the establishment of

common schools under the supervision of town communities.” (pp. 198-199)

1805 -- (Chap. 66) Comptroller authorized to sell certain State lands and use proceeds to establish a “permanent fund for the support of public schools.”

1812 -- (Chap. 242) The Common School Act provided for a statewide system of public elementary schools.

1821 -- (Chap. 240) Office of Superintendent established -- duties transferred to the Secretary of State.

1853 -- (Chap. 433) Union Free School Board permitted common school districts to consolidate for purposes of organizing tax-supported public schools.

1854 -- These responsibilities transferred to new Department of Public Instruction -- under a Superintendent of Public Instruction -- elected by the Legislature and served as an ex officio Regent. This Department had power over elementary schools and teacher training program -- and ..... of department -- control over colleges, universities, private academies.

1894 -- State’s educational system given a constitutional foundation. Article IX of the new constitution stipulated that “the Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools.”

1904 -- Unification Act (Chap. 40) Abolished Department of Public Instruction -  
- created State Education Department. Headed by a commissioner who  
was the “Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Regents.” Board  
effectively became policy-making body and the commissioner the chief  
administrative officer serving at pleasure of the Board of Governors  
(1925 Constitutional Amendment).

Beginning with the Medical Board in 1972 various professional examining  
boards were placed under the supervision of the Board of Regents. “These boards  
now issued licenses or certificates and discipline practitioners in the following  
professions: architecture, certified shorthand reporting, chiropractics, dentistry,  
engineering, land surveying, landscape architecture, massage, medicine, nursing,  
occupational therapy, ophthalmic dispensing, optometry, pharmacy, physical  
therapy, podiatry, psychology, public accounting, social work, speech-language  
pathology and audiology, and veterinary medicine.” (p. 201)

SED governed by Board of Regents consisting of 16 members elected by the  
Legislature. The Board is also head of the University of the State of New York --  
consisting of all public and private schools, colleges and universities, and chartered  
libraries, museums, history societies, and other educational institutions in the State.  
The department’s chief executive is the commissioner of education and president of  
the University, who is appointed by the Board of Regents.