

Common School or “One Best System”? Tracking School Reform in Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1853–75

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From 1865-75 public schooling and teaching developed quickly in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This mid-sized, mid-western United States city capitalized on the post-Civil War boom, and its schools benefited from the superintendency of James H. Smart, who introduced Progressive school reforms.¹ The timing, pace, and direction of these changes in Fort Wayne, especially during the years of Smart's superintendency, raise questions about how we conceptualize educational reform.

Although United States historians have sought to untangle the complicated web of educational history in such urban financial and industrial centres as Boston, New York, and Fort Wayne's Midwestern neighbours of Chicago, Detroit, Gary, and St. Louis², smaller centres like Fort Wayne have

¹For a history of Common Schooling I draw on Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic, Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). For various approaches to Progressive Era schooling I take the following as points of reference: Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961); Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Boston: Beacon, 1972); David B. Tyack, *The One Best System, A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

²For example Ronald D. Cohen, *Children of the Mill, Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906–1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); David John Hogan, *Class and Reform, School and Society in Chicago, 1880–1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Carl F. Kaestle, *The Evolution of an Urban System: New York City, 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System, Detroit, 1907–81* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993); Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars, New York City, 1805–1973* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1974); Stanley K. Schultz, *The Culture Factory: Boston Public Schools 1789–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Selwyn K. Troen, *The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838–1920* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1975); Julia Wrigley, *Class Politics and Public Schools, Chicago 1900–1950* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

been bypassed.³ Canadian scholars have documented the rise of public-supported schools in the nineteenth century, telling a story similar to that in the United States,⁴ but still without emphasis on individual cities. According to Murphy, whose study of London, Ontario breaks new ground:

[H]istories of Canadian education have provided us with fine accounts of the creation of state systems of education ... [but] we still know relatively little about the forces that shaped and reshaped educational provision in urban communities.⁵

Despite its particular circumstances, Fort Wayne imported some of its educational initiatives from larger centres. Its educational history thus resembles that of its larger, more industrialized urban neighbours, but allows detailed examination not so easy in a larger setting.

The Fort Wayne case raises new questions about how to characterize the period between the Common School and Progressive Eras (roughly 1860–90). These transitional years in Indiana have been described as a time of development and reform, but not a reform era:

The villages, towns, and city school systems that emerged in Indiana during the Victorian period were thus the sites of numerous educational reforms. Many of the changes that professional educators advocated—the grading of classrooms, the expansion of the curriculum, the creation of high schools, the hiring of women as teachers, and the separation of administration and teaching—were increasingly implemented in many corners of the state. Change occurred in dozens of communities, not just in the big cities...after the end of the Civil War.⁶

Urban and Waggoner characterize the years 1865–90 as “Beginning a Modern School System.”⁷ For Katz, Boston’s schools from 1850–84 illustrate how an

³For an overview on the rise of urban educational history since the 1960s and the issues that have confronted it, see David L. Angus, “The Origins of Urban Schools in Comparative Perspective,” in David N. Plank and Rick Ginsberg, eds., *Southern Cities, Southern Schools, Public Education in the Urban South* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 59–78.

⁴See, for example, J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., *Canadian Education: A History* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1970), and Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

⁵Michael F. Murphy, “Unmaking and Remaking the ‘One Best System’”: London, Ontario, 1852–1860,” *History of Education Quarterly* 37, 3 (Fall 1997): 310.

⁶William J. Reese, “Urban School Reform in the Victorian Era,” in William J. Reese, ed., *Hoosier Schools, Past and Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 48.

⁷Wayne Urban and Jennings Wagoner, Jr., *American Education, A History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996).

urban school system became a bureaucracy.⁸ Katz sees the earliest of those years, 1850–76, as a time when “the new class of professional educators consolidated the systems they inherited.” Katz links the appearance of the public school in its bureaucratic form in the nineteenth century to long-term developments in capitalism and the wage labour system, not to reform.⁹

Still, Kaestle’s conceptualization of the Common School Era fits the 1850s in Fort Wayne. The beginnings of feminization in the teacher labour force, the standardization of the curriculum, the grading of classes, the centralization of power, and bureaucratic organization—all appeared in Fort Wayne. Kaestle, who ends his study of Common Schools in 1860, claims the period following 1860 was quite different:

While the germ of many later changes can be found in the antebellum cosmopolitan reform values of increased schooling, professionalization, standardization, and cultural assimilation, the unfolding of those values in practice revealed profoundly new aspects of American public-school systems during the years after 1860.¹⁰

Meanwhile the seeds of a development loosely associated with the Progressive Era were to be found in Fort Wayne after the passage of Common School legislation. The curriculum was diversified, pedagogy and discipline humanized, organization bureaucratized, power centralized, and the labour force feminized and professionalized.¹¹ Tyack describes an organizational revolution, accompanied by pedagogical reforms throughout the nineteenth century, reaching its nadir at the turn of the century in what he called the “one best system.” These changes in the form, content, and control of the work of students and teachers were in tune with larger developments in the political economy, as Spring emphasizes, not exclusive to schools. Tracking reform in Fort Wayne’s public schools from their inception in 1853 through their first 22 years brings perspective to these different conceptions of educational growth and change during the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁸Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools, The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971) and *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

⁹Katz, *Reconstructing*, 72, 5–23.

¹⁰Kaestle, *Pillars*, 221.

¹¹For two excellent discussions of the ongoing debate over definitions and interpretations of the Progressive Era, see Herbert M. Kliebard, “Afterword, The Search for Meaning in Progressive Education: Curriculum Conflict in the Context of Status Politics,” in *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893–1958*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 1995), 231–51, and Jeffrey E. Mirel, “Progressive School Reform in Comparative Perspective,” in Plank and Ginsberg, 151–74.

SCHOOLING AND TEACHING, 1853–65

From its beginnings as a hub of east-west and north-south trading routes at the confluence of three rivers, Fort Wayne grew from a trading and military outpost to a United States fort, then to a small city in the 1820s and '30s that attracted settlers as it invested in plank roads, canals, and railroads. German, Irish, and French immigrants joined settlers from the East Coast, as well as Native Americans and French from earlier times. In the 1850s railroads and the railroad industry bloomed as economic investment quadrupled and population mushroomed. The new heavy industries, particularly foundries and railroads, began to surpass the older family shops and woolen, grist, and lumber mills. This economic prosperity and population growth continued throughout the Civil War and afterwards.¹²

Fort Wayne was the geographic centre of a vibrant Midwestern German community bounded by Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Milwaukee/Chicago. Most post-war immigrants were Germans seeking jobs or good farming land in a city well-positioned (first through canals, later through railroads) on a major trade route. German political unification in 1870 fed immigration, as did German rural unemployment in the face of industrialization. Immigrants were also drawn to Fort Wayne's thriving religious congregations: German Methodist, Calvinistic Reformed, Catholic, and Jewish. In particular the city became a centre for Lutheranism associated with the Missouri Synod. By the turn of the century there were six German newspapers and 90% of the population had German roots. Fort Wayne had become a "most German town."¹³

At the height of Fort Wayne's (and Indiana's) early industrial development in the 1850s, the state brought in public or Common School legislation.¹⁴ Some of Fort Wayne's leading pioneer citizens, entrepreneurs, and business-

¹²John Ankenbruck, *Twentieth Century History of Fort Wayne* (Fort Wayne, IN.: Twentieth Century Historical Fort Wayne, Inc., 1975); Wallace A. Brice, *History of Fort Wayne, from the Earliest Known Accounts of This Point, to the Present Period* (Fort Wayne, IN: D. W. Jones & Son, 1868); B. J. Griswold, *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana: A Review of Two Centuries of Occupation of the Region about the Head of the Maumee River* (Chicago: Robert O. Law Co., 1917); Michael C. Hawfield, *Here's Fort Wayne; Past & Present* (Fort Wayne, IN: SRS Publications, Inc., 1992).

¹³Hawfield; Charles R. Poinsatte, *Fort Wayne, During the Canal Era 1828–1855: The Study of a Western Community in the Middle Period of American History* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969); Clifford H. Scott, Historian of American History at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, discussion with author, 14 June 2000.

¹⁴Scott Walter, "Awakening the Public Mind": The Dissemination of the Common School Idea in Indiana, 1787–1852," in Reese, ed., *Hoosier Schools*, 1–28.

men were among the foremost promoters of public schools, and in the end their publicly-supported schools largely replaced county, private, and church subscription schools. But from the mid-to-late 1850s Fort Wayne's public schools struggled to survive as opponents and promoters of public schools fought at the local level and in the state legislature over the direction of public schooling. The earliest public school legislation in 1852 was contested, overturned, and revised several times between 1852–65. Public schools in Fort Wayne operated from 1853–54, closed until 1857, reopened, closed again in 1859 for one term, then opened again. In 1865 and 1867 further changes in state law enhanced the powers of local boards to raise funds for public schools, thus solidifying the state's system of tax-supported public schools.¹⁵

During Fort Wayne Public Schools' first year of operation, 1853–54, the Board of Trustees hired four teachers who had been teaching privately, a man and his wife, and a man and his sister, and paid one lump sum to each pair.¹⁶ Each pair taught all subjects in one of the two rented buildings, one on each side of the city. Because of the contesting of the school law, schools closed at year's end.

The schools reopened in 1857 with a new superintendent and new rules of school government, and in a new schoolhouse. The Board hired on 31 December 1856 Fort Wayne's first Superintendent, the Rev. George I. Irvin, previously director of the Fort Wayne Presbyterian Academy, then reopened the schools with the inauguration of the new School House No. 1 (later called the Clay school). At the meeting following Irvin's hiring, 2 January 1857, the Board passed policy specifying how teachers were to apply for positions.¹⁷ At the next meeting the Board asked the new Superintendent to "report a set of Rules and Byelaws for the government of School House No. One." The Rules and Byelaws were reported at the 2 February 1857 meeting, a week before the opening of the new school house.¹⁸ Clear lines of

¹⁵For a discussion of this period of Fort Wayne's schooling, see Kathleen A. Murphey, "Schooling, Teaching and Change in Nineteenth Century Fort Wayne," *Indiana Magazine of History* 94 (March 1998), 1–28.

¹⁶*Board Minutes, School Trustees, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1853–1869* (Book 1), 27 September 1853, 11.

¹⁷From the *Board Minutes*: "Resolved that when teachers be employed it be for the term of one year provided such teachers give satisfaction—Resolved that all applications on the part of persons wishing to become teachers in the Public Schools of this city be made to this Board in the handwriting of the applicant and shall specify the applicants experience in teaching—the Branches they are qualified to teach, and amount of salary per annum required." *Board Minutes 1853–1869*, 2 January 1857, 53.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 31 December 1856, 51; 2 January 1857, 53; 20 January 1857, 54; 2 February 1857, 55. The Board ordered one thousand copies of the new Rules and Regulations.

authority and responsibility, and a division of labour among students and staff, were laid out from the very beginning. The framework for a hierarchical, bureaucratic system was established before the first school was opened, before the first teacher was hired, and before the first student was enrolled.

With a new superintendent and work rules in place, the schools were ready to take on the children. The city and school leaders waxed eloquent on the occasion of the opening of School House No. 1, espousing what has come to be viewed as typical Common School ideology.¹⁹ They praised the School Board for overcoming local resistance to its creation and powers, the separation of church and state, the inclusion of all social classes in the public schools, the intellectual freedom the schools would foster, and the power of the people to control their own schools. Speakers emphasized the high expectations of and opportunities for students, teachers, and the superintendent. Several speakers noted that the superintendent had particularly heavy responsibilities, for the success of the whole operation depended on his leadership. One speaker, pointing to Irvin, said: "You must harmonize, fraternize and bring into subordination a heterogeneous mass."²⁰

The School Board first graded the system by general levels, as typical in the earliest Common Schools,²¹ hiring eleven teachers for the newly opened School House No. 1. In contrast to the first four appointments, the Board hired new school staff by general grade level: one high school teacher; two grammar school teachers, one for each of two sections; one head teacher and his assistant and two other secondary school teachers, three sections in all; and four primary school teachers, two in each of two sections. A second school house, School House No. 2 (later called the Jefferson school) opened in Fall 1857. By December 1858 the high school and upper grammar school classes in School House No. 1 moved to School House No. 2, and the grammar school class still in School House No. 1 was divided and another teacher hired to teach it.²² By 1859, when the schools closed for a half year, fifteen teachers taught in the public schools.²³

The new superintendent constantly negotiated with the Board. In December 1859, just before schools reopened in January 1860, Irvin was authorized to hire new teachers who had been working privately in the interim. At the same meeting two of the three Board members protested

¹⁹See Tyack, Part II.

²⁰David H. Colerick, Esq., comments at the inauguration of School House No. 1, 9 February 1857, reprinted from the newspaper account in the *Board Minutes 1853-69*, 60.

²¹Kaestle, *Pillars*, 132-4.

²²*Board Minutes 1853-1869*, 20 December 1858, 144.

²³*Ibid.*, 30 May 1859, 162.

against the superintendent's power to choose teachers. In July 1859, in anticipation of hiring teachers for the fall, Irvin was authorized to employ no more than fifteen teachers, subject to approval of the Board, with salaries "not to exceed the salaries paid to the same class of teachers last term."²⁴

Irvin resigned in 1863 to become an army chaplain. Professor E. S. Green, from Indianapolis, followed as superintendent from 1863–65. He and his wife taught in the high school.²⁵ Green had his hands full during his first year, dealing with overcrowding and inadequate discipline.²⁶

The bureaucratic arrangement of the new school system was clarified in 1863 when the School Trustees issued new rules and regulations for the government of the public schools and updated guidelines for the division of grades.²⁷ Both rules and guidelines detailed the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, superintendent, teachers, and pupils, stressing lines of authority, attendance, punctuality, and accurate record keeping—themes that would attract ever more attention in the coming years. "Grades" were further subdivided by level of difficulty into three primary grades, two secondary grades, two intermediate grades, two grammar grades, and four years of high school.²⁸ Division of the high school into a four-year course of study was Superintendent Green's innovation.²⁹ Despite graded divisions, grades often combined in one classroom, and the lowest primary grade had boys' and girls' sections.

Green's unrelenting insistence on attendance and punctuality, typical for chief officers of new public school systems across the nation, came to a head over children's enrollment at the beginning of the school year. In August of 1864, Green set a precedent for future superintendents, imploring parents of children in the city to bring their children to school the first day of school so that children's grades could be accurately assessed and children might all begin learning together. He stressed the importance of starting the school year on time:

²⁴Ibid., 2 December 1859, 31 July 1860, 167, 169, 171.

²⁵Ibid., 15 July 1863, 192; 27 May 1864, 209.

²⁶Ibid., 17 October 1863, 198; 7 December 1863, 200; 22 February 1864, 205.

²⁷*Rules and Regulations adopted by the Board of Trustees for the Government and Regulation of the Public Schools of the City of Fort Wayne, Ind.* (Fort Wayne: Printed at the Sentinel Office, 1863).

²⁸Ibid., 11–14. Primary grades were, from lowest to highest, third grade, second grade, first grade; Secondary grades were second grade, first grade; Intermediate were second grade, first grade; Grammar were second grade, first grade; High School were first through fourth year.

²⁹*Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, 13 September 1864.

I trust parents will see the necessity of having their children ready for school on the day of commencement, that they may enter their proper classes and grades, and be ready to be promoted with their class. Pupils who do not expect to commence with the opening of the school must not expect to be promoted with the class; hence the importance of being ready and on the spot at the appointed time. Pupils who were not present at the examinations, and pupils who enter for the first time, will be examined and assigned to their proper grades.³⁰

The Board of Trustees reported monthly attendance statistics, and all students were examined publicly at the end of each term.

In September 1864 schools were overflowing and the superintendent was under stress. Still a local newspaper interpreted the situation as a vote of confidence for the public schools. The schools had opened with an enrollment of 825 pupils, up 300 from the previous semester, which, according to the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette* showed “not only an increase in the population of our prosperous city, but a growing interest in the public schools, and the causes of education.”³¹

The newspapers boasted, as they would throughout the years under examination here, that the high school, still housed with the other grades in School House No. 2, could compete with the best boarding schools and colleges, and furthermore allow students to live at home. Mr. Green cordially invited the public to visit the high school at any time to witness the progress students were making. In Spring 1865 four young women graduated from the high school, its first graduates.³² The high school grades had been a part of the public schools since their initiation in Fort Wayne.

Despite two school closings in the 1850s and Superintendent Green’s frustrations with controlling the growing system during the War years, the school system had changed constantly from 1853–65. Fort Wayne’s public schools had hired a superintendent, promulgated two sets of rules for the governance of the growing, hierarchical system, and accepted increased numbers of students, teachers, and schoolhouses. The system promoted regular attendance patterns for students, continually revised grades in the schools from the primary through high school years, and maintained the good reputation of the high school.

³⁰Ibid., 30 August 1864.

³¹Ibid., 13 September 1864.

³²*Public Schools of Fort Wayne, Third Annual Report of the Board of Education, for the Year ending June 8th, 1866, with Various Supplementary Documents exhibiting the Condition of the Schools* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Daily Gazette Job Office Print, 1866), 26. [Hereafter, “Annual Report” cited as *AR*, where not a part of a longer title.]

SCHOOLING AND TEACHING DURING SMART'S YEARS, 1865–75

Fort Wayne survived the Civil War economically strong.³³ The following decade brought renewed growth and expansion in population, industry, and schools. German immigrants arrived in ever larger numbers, industries could attract distant markets because of the new railway system, and the growing population soon outdistanced the capacity of its public schools.

In 1865 the Fort Wayne Public Schools hired James H. Smart as superintendent. Smart was not quite twenty-five years old, a former teacher and administrator in Toledo, Ohio, and before that a teacher in rural New Hampshire towns. He was charged with bringing order, efficiency, and discipline to a public school system alleged to be overcrowded, understaffed, and poorly managed—in effect, asked to put into place the system now made legally possible by what his predecessors had lacked: an expanded school law that allowed increased taxation to support the public schools.

Working with supportive Trustees, state legislature, and public, Smart attacked problems with zeal and vision, inspired by the curricular and pedagogical innovations in East Coast schools.³⁴ During his ten years as Superintendent, before becoming Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Indiana and then President of the new Purdue University for nineteen formative years, Smart aggressively put his stamp on the way students were graded, taught, and rewarded and on the way teachers' work was organized, improved, and paid. He sought to make students, teachers, and custodial staff march to the tune of new norms of work productivity. He openly borrowed and incorporated new ideas of pedagogy, discipline, curriculum, organization, inclusiveness, and teacher training. He, like leading educational reformers across the country, participated in state and national educational organizations. He was in his own eyes and according to School Board members extremely successful. His energy and organizational talent turned the Fort Wayne schools into a showcase that rivalled that of Indianapolis, Indiana's capital and only larger city. The many new school buildings Smart constructed were models of educational and architectural vision, visual symbols of the ascendancy of the new public schools.

When Smart took over, he set out to grade the primary schools as had John Philbrick, Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools.³⁵ Although

³³Hawfield, 39.

³⁴Arlene Argerbright, "The Educational Career of James H. Smart," *Old-Fort News* 4, nos. 1–3 (Nov. 1939): 4–12; Kathleen A. Murphey, "James Henry Smart," in *American National Biography*, eds. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), Vol. 20, 115–6.

³⁵Kaestle, *Pillars*, 132–4; Tyack, 44–5.

previous superintendents had tried to reduce the number of grades, Smart counted “*twenty-eighty* [sic] *different grades* of scholars in the schools, some of the teachers having as many as five in one year.” He reduced the grades to eighteen during his first year, but sought “fourteen yearly grades, and in the Primary Departments, to assign one grade to each teacher.” In 1866 Smart quotes Philbrick as saying, “*Our aim should be to have one class or grade in a room.*”³⁶

Critics of grading claimed that if students were kept together for an entire year, some would be held back from advancement, whereas the less able would be lost. Smart responded that a “suitable *middle* course of study should be adopted, remembering that dull scholars *need to be urged and assisted*, while those with active temperaments *ought to be restrained*,” and these changes should be made in conjunction with “a judicious and thorough system of *examination and promotion*...”³⁷ Smart proposed constant, daily evaluation of students, with re-classification of students, up a grade or down a grade, every one or two months.³⁸

A new division of labour under grading struck the public and educators throughout the country as sensible.³⁹ A Fort Wayne newspaper claimed:

Division of labour and economy of time are the objects sought in establishing grades for schools. These things are essential in any enterprise where a large amount of work is to be done, and there are many hands to do it. It would be an interesting subject of comment in this connection to consider how this division of labour and economy of time are secured in large business enterprises....It is apparent that in all such cases *some* division of labour is necessary, and, other things being equal, the more perfect this is, the more successfully will the work be prosecuted.

The grading or classification of a school depends upon the same principles. Just as in a factory so in a school, there is a certain amount of labour to be performed—in the one case mental and in the other case physical; there is a certain capacity of the workers; there is a certain length of time during which the work must be done; and there are certain helps in the way of machinery or improved methods of operation.⁴⁰

Changes in grading would continue throughout Smart’s years in Fort Wayne.

Like his predecessor Green, Smart was concerned with attendance, both at the beginning of the school year and on a daily basis.⁴¹ Like new superintendents throughout the United States, he began reporting statistics on all

³⁶AR 1866, 12, emphasis in the original.

³⁷Ibid, 13, emphasis in the original.

³⁸Ibid., 13–14.

³⁹Kaestle, *Pillars*, 133; Katz, *Class*, 67–9; Tyack, 28–9.

⁴⁰*Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, 9 February 1867.

⁴¹AR 1866, 7–11.

aspects of attendance, as well as comparative statistics with other such Mid-western cities as Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Springfield, and Cincinnati. Fort Wayne did as well as, if not better than, the other cities, but attendance remained irregular. Of those enrolled and enumerated in the city, only about 60% attended (categorized as "belonging"). Of those "belonging" 92% attended on a daily basis. Of the total number enrolled, about 30% "did not enter school at the beginning of the session" and "one half of those, or 15 per cent...did not enter school until it had been in session two months." Echoing former Superintendent Green's admonitions, Smart explained that the disadvantages arising from this want of punctuality, are obvious. In every well regulated school, classes are formed and lessons are given and recited the *first day*, and those who enter afterwards must either detain the class while they make up the lost lessons, or lose that primary instruction which is so necessary to profitable advancement.⁴²

To encourage attendance and promptness Smart instituted an elaborate reward system. He issued a *Card of Honor* for those neither absent nor tardy during an entire term, a *Card of Merit* to those not tardy, and absent only due to sickness, during a term, and a *Badge of Honor* to those neither absent nor tardy during a term. Complete lists of recipients of those awarded appeared in the Annual School Reports. Smart notes that the "plan was not open to the usual objections against prizes, because a prize was in the reach of all."⁴³

By the end of Smart's first year twenty-three teachers taught at specific grade levels, and a music teacher taught all grades.⁴⁴ Smart had recommended much greater uniformity of textbooks, accumulating donated books for a high school library, and purchasing extensive "Philosophical and Chemical" apparatus for the high school to augment the teaching of the natural sciences.⁴⁵ By 1868, the end of Smart's third year, the Board had built a high school building and three new primary school buildings. This increased the school buildings to six, the rooms to forty-four, the students to 1,811, and the teachers to forty-four. Plans for an additional building were on the way. All grades had access to the gymnasium in the new high school. In addition to music, German and drawing had been added to the curriculum.

In 1867 the Board took up the task of professionalizing its future teachers. A city Normal School, the first such in Indiana, opened by the Board and under its control, was housed in the new high school. Meant to upgrade the skills of teachers and help introduce "new" pedagogy into the

⁴²Ibid., 7.

⁴³Ibid., 9.

⁴⁴Ibid., 25–26.

⁴⁵Ibid., 29–32; *Board Minutes 1853–69*, 23 October 1865, 227.

schools, the Normal School boasted nine young women graduates in 1868.⁴⁶ Two young women from New York—Mary H. Swan, Principal of the Training Department, and Lena S. Funnelle, Critic in charge of the Practicing Rooms—had learned the newest methods at Oswego before coming to Fort Wayne. Smart noted, as had public school advocates around the country since the time of Common School advocate Horace Mann, the now accepted wisdom that primary teachers needed special training; simply graduating from a high school or college prepared one more for teaching high school, not primary school.⁴⁷ Swan stated:

In order that a teacher may truly *instruct*, she must not only have knowledge but also the ability to lead her pupils to reason, and arrive at conclusions for themselves. Many have the requisite knowledge, but there are few having the power of questioning, the aptness in illustration, the ready adaptation to different minds, so necessary in the teacher.⁴⁸

The system of instruction, Object Teaching, had been imported to United States Normal schools from the Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. It was based, according to Swan,

upon the principle that the cultivation of the powers of the mind is the ultimate end of education....We do not require children to commit to memory sentences they do not understand, but rather endeavor to lead them by questioning, explanation and illustration, to a perfect understanding of the subject....

Objects were used, not for their own sake, but "to cultivate close attention, observation and judgment."⁴⁹

Professionalization of teaching through teacher training was central to the School Board's broader goals of regular attendance and student punctuality. The president of the Board of Trustees thought the Normal School more than paid for itself, because students under the care of more highly trained teachers would "advance more rapidly than they would be by teachers educated differently." Teachers would change and diversify their lessons, thus attracting students to their studies: "The children would be stimulated to be punctual and regular in their attendance." He cited, in particular, the practice of object teaching as central to gaining students' attention, exciting

⁴⁶*Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Fort Wayne Public Schools, with accompanying Documents, For the Year Ending June 12, 1868* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Gazette Company, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1868), 21.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 18; Board of Education, Fort Wayne Public Schools, Fort Wayne, Indiana, "Fort Wayne Normal School," Bulletin No. 3, December 1919, 5; Kathleen A. Murphey, "The Fort Wayne Normal School: History and Issues," *Journal of the Midwest History of Education Society*, 22 (1995), 127-37.

⁴⁸*AR 1868*, 19-20.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 20.

their curiosity, and producing a desire for knowledge that would continue throughout life.⁵⁰

The Board noted tremendous improvement in student punctuality in Smart's first three years. 6,087 tardy marks had been recorded previous to his coming, but only 438 in the past year. Attendance had also increased to 93% of those "belonging" everyday. The Board saw this as "undeniable proof of proper discipline and faithful instruction on the part of the teachers, and of their effective labours to elevate the standard of education..." Smart added that these results "were not obtained by any unreasonable pressure, but were the *natural* results of well disciplined and attractive schools."⁵¹

According to the Board, good teachers also needed the support of parents to promote "regularity and punctuality in attendance" in their children, for "without these much of the teacher's effort is lost."⁵² As usual in urban school development at the time, the Fort Wayne School Board put emphasis on parents in their campaign to achieve regular, prompt student attendance.⁵³ Both the superintendent and the high school principal, Robert G. McNiece, noted that the problem of attendance was far greater in higher grades than in primary grades. The superintendent thought this due to the fact that "the older pupils have more to engage their attention out of school than the others." The high school principal believed tardiness and absence would be reduced "if parents were more thoughtful about the importance of punctuality and constancy in daily attendance on the public school, less ready to yield to the occasional whims of children..." The school Rules and Regulations still allowed for late entry to school, albeit at specified times.⁵⁴

The Board, beginning to respond to the needs and demands of particular constituencies in the city, had added German to the elementary curriculum in 1867: "Having in our midst a large *German* population, we regard the study and knowledge of the german language as a real business want, and believe it will give breadth and strength to the education of the rising generation."⁵⁵ Indiana law required the public schools to be taught in English, but it permitted other languages as special studies. Smart thought a knowledge of German helped young men get jobs, and that

there is a natural desire on the part of the German population to perpetuate their mother tongue. They speak of the scenes of their youth, of the friends they have left behind, of the glorious history of the Fatherland, and *think* of

⁵⁰Ibid., 6, 122.

⁵¹Ibid., 7, 13–15.

⁵²Ibid., 9.

⁵³Kaestle, *Pillars*, 158–61.

⁵⁴AR 1868, 15, 25, 109.

⁵⁵Ibid., 6

all that is best and most dear to them in their native language, and they wish that their children may not be to them as strangers in these things.... Experience in some of the larger cities has shown that the introduction of the study of German into the public schools has enhanced the success of the general instruction, and that properly managed it will not interfere with desirable results in the English studies.⁵⁶

By 1870 the Board had added a small German primary school on each side of the city. One such school had been a German Reformed church school which petitioned to become part of the public school system; the other was opened in the Clay school. German schools continued in Fort Wayne until after World War I, as they did in Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Cincinnati.⁵⁷

Although public schools expanded uncontroversially to accommodate German-speaking children, the Board was uncertain how to serve the city's few African-American children, for whom Indiana school law made no provision. In the absence of a clear legal responsibility to school African-American children, the board nonetheless acted.⁵⁸ After meetings in 1873 with the parents of the city's sixteen African-American children, the Board decided to give each parent their child's portion of the school fund to spend as the parents pleased. The Board offered to hire a teacher for a class, but the parents were divided on this alternative, since some were already paying private tutors. In 1875, after some changes in the state school law, the School Board hired a teacher to teach the black children in a class designated for them in the Jefferson school.⁵⁹ The School Board's quick response to its large German community and halting response to its small African-American community were typical of school board initiatives throughout the Midwest in the United States at this time. They marked the beginning, nonetheless, of the Board's varied attempts to "meet the needs" of particular constituents, a practice that would become ever more identified with Progressive policies.

Pride in the city's high school continued unabated. The crown jewel of the new "system," it was both a goal for students progressing through the newly defined grades and a symbol of success for the new public schools over private seminaries and academies.⁶⁰ In 1868 Smart and High School Principal McNiece

⁵⁶Ibid., 25, 6, 32.

⁵⁷Kaestle, *Pillars*, 164-66; Tyack, 106-09.

⁵⁸While Indiana had been notoriously slow in educating its African-American children (See Reese, "Victorian Era," 39-41), Superintendent Smart would later boast of these meagre first steps in Fort Wayne before the school law had been changed as signs of progress.

⁵⁹*Board Minutes, School Trustees, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1869-1874* (Book 2), 22 March 1870, 31, 33; 26 February 1873, 143; 2 September 1873, 215; 16 December 1873, 241-3; 18 December 1873, 245-53; 8 October 1875, 73.

⁶⁰Kaestle, *Pillars*, 117-122; Reese, "Victorian Era"; Tyack, 56-59.

claimed (echoing the two previous superintendents) that the high school, now in its own handsome new building, could compete with the country's best high schools, academies, and female seminaries. Although the high school officially had only two courses of study, the curriculum was gradually differentiating. A general four-year course consisted of a fourth or preparatory class, a third class, a junior class, and a senior class. Students could substitute French or German for Latin. A classical course began in junior year with a heavy concentration of Latin and Greek, and could be continued through the senior year into a post-graduate advanced class. Four teachers offered the entire curriculum: Principal Robert G. McNiece, A.B. (Languages and Belle Letters); Miss Susan B. Fowler (Painting, Drawing, and French); Miss Lucia F. Clark (Mathematics and National Sciences); and Miss Mary B. Norwood (Latin and English). The Vocal and Instrumental Music teacher, John Howard, A.B. and the German and Gymnastics teacher, Carl Gottfried Holthusen, extended the curriculum, teaching in the lower grades as well.⁶¹

Recommendations for the new, softer discipline dominated the Rules and Regulations of 1868. Teachers were to maintain order in school through gentle persuasion. They were reminded:

[P]assionately and harsh expressions and injudicious measures tend only to evil; that the best disciplinarian is the one who can secure order by the gentlest influences....They shall avoid corporal punishment where good order and obedience can be secured by milder measures.⁶²

Principal McNiece espoused education over force in securing obedience:

[T]he general aim has been to secure order, not so much by an arbitrary enforcement of what might be called military rule, as by educating all...to see the practical need of constant self-control.

This method

sends forth into the world men and women more genial in disposition and manners, and far more likely to triumph over the alluring temptations which will beset them, than those who have been restrained by arbitrary rule.⁶³

Five years later, Smart added that good management depends on teachers' own self-control:

Teachers should never show that they are angry, or worried and annoyed by the pupils. They should be kind, considerate, and just, but should also be firm and decided....Nine-tenths of all the disorder in the school-room occurs because the teacher permits it, or, what is worse, absolutely places temptation in the way of the scholars.

⁶¹*AR 1868*, 49, 51–53, 88–89.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 105.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 25.

When problems arose, discipline should be judicious:

It should at all times be remembered that the rod is a relic of barbarism and that the teacher who is obliged to resort to its frequent use should be regarded a failure.

Teachers and students were to discipline themselves, that is, to internalize the new behavioural expectations.⁶⁴

In his eighth year as superintendent in 1873, Smart once again reported enrollment up, absenteeism and tardiness down. He praised this accomplishment, yet demanded still better results. Of the city's 5,800 children between ages five and sixteen, 2,684 attended public schools, 1,100 attended Catholic schools, 1,000 attended Lutheran schools, and 50 attended other schools. About 1,000 did not attend school. Smart blamed, as he had since his appointment, the parents. The answer was not the "vexed question of compulsory education," but for public sentiment to pressure parents "to make it disgraceful for a parent to permit his child to grow up in ignorance."⁶⁵

Smart also blamed parents for allowing their children to miss school for "frivolous" reasons. Parents should be educated on the seriousness of absenteeism, so as to "remedy the evil at once." He was particularly concerned that young ladies "leave at a very early age for the purpose of finishing their education in the parlor, the ball-room, or on the street. They are allured by the follies of dress and the glittering attractions of society."⁶⁶ Again, Smart sees it as the fault of parents who are "permitting their daughters to be injured in this way." On the education of girls, Smart held strong views:

There are no good reasons why our girls should not receive as much scholastic training as our boys; and there are many reasons why they should receive more. If I were asked, "What shall we do with our girls?" I should answer, educate them. If you wish to elevate the condition of women, educate the girls; if you wish to improve the men, educate the girls; if you wish to reform society, educate the girls; if you wish to elevate, refine, and Christianize all mankind, educate the girls. Let the girls improve the opportunities which are afforded them; let them take their places beside their brothers in the high school, the college, and the university; and let them come out ahead, as many of them are quite likely to do. Keep the girls in school.⁶⁷

One of Smart's worries was that young women who started high school were leaving to take jobs as teachers in rural systems without requirements for

⁶⁴Ibid., 46-8.

⁶⁵James H. Smart, "Report of the Superintendent," in *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Fort Wayne Public Schools, with accompanying documents, for the Year Ending June 15, 1873* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Sentinel Book and Job Rooms, Calhoun and Wayne, Sts., 1873), 30-1.

⁶⁶Ibid., 36.

⁶⁷Ibid.

teacher training, rather than finishing Fort Wayne's Normal School to be available to teach in Fort Wayne.⁶⁸

In 1873 Smart again noted the high school's high ranking "among similar institutions in the West." In the past eight years the high school had served over 400 students. The average stay of a pupil was one and a half years. Instruction was given in higher mathematics, natural sciences, mental and moral philosophy, literature, French, German, Latin, and Greek. Eighty-four students had completed the entire course and gone on to business, law, teaching (25 in Fort Wayne's public schools), or further university education at "Dartmouth, Princeton, Michigan...and other higher institutions of learning." According to the Superintendent, the high standard at the high school affected favourably the standards of the grammar school and the aspirations of the younger children to attend.⁶⁹

Smart continued to fine-tune the high school curriculum to meet student needs. By 1873 the course of study at the high school was a three-year program. This would, according to Smart, increase the number of students attending by satisfying a diverse student body. The new curriculum "affords ample opportunity to those who wish to fit for college, and it is, at the same time, better adapted to the wants of the average student."⁷⁰ High school principal Robert M. Wright recommended two distinct courses of study, one classical for the college-bound and one scientific for "those who pass out of the High School immediately into the concerns of active life." He claimed nine-tenths of high school students never attended college.⁷¹

Smart acknowledged the curriculum must also accommodate those who dropped out. Courses must not be developed only to prepare for a further class. To meet the goals of students who did not complete high school, every course should emphasize methods and discipline of study, rather than a subject of study.⁷²

The revised course of study in 1873 included three high school years, four grammar school years, and five primary school years. Smart considered this division suited the physical space in available buildings rather than student requirements. He thought the highest grammar school grade should be considered high school work, thus making four high school grades, and the highest primary school grade should be in the grammar school. An ideal

⁶⁸AR 1866, 12.

⁶⁹AR 1873, 34-5.

⁷⁰Ibid, 37.

⁷¹Ibid., 41.

⁷²Ibid., 49.

system and a hoped-for future development would not be the 5-4-3 system, but a 4-4-4 system. He accomplished this just before he departed in 1875.⁷³

Between 1868 and 1873 Smart also initiated changes in the curriculum of specific content areas and the time spent in them. English lessons increased, emphasizing meaning and understanding. Science was to favour observation, inquiry, and reading over lectures. Results of comprehensive end-of-year examinations were to be given students before summer recess, so they could plan for the coming year and do any necessary remedial work in the summer.

The various departments are becoming more thoroughly graded; the methods of instruction are being perfected; increased facilities, and improved apparatus and appliances are being afforded; and our teachers are every day gaining wider and more valuable experience. The pupils are quite in advance of the course adopted three years ago and are now well up to the course which is herewith presented.⁷⁴

In 1873, School Board treasurer John S. Irwin (himself later superintendent in Fort Wayne) praised the broadened curriculum:

The curriculum of study has improved from the low position of the then contemptuously-called *common school education* to one which fairly meets in all points the demands of the present age for a thorough practical education, as well in the higher as the lower class of studies, and which places the graduates of our High School on a level with those of many so-called colleges. All honor to that system of education which gives to the child of the rich and the poor alike all needed aids to a thorough cultivation of the faculties God has given him, and recognizes between them no distinction, save the honorable one of personal merit.⁷⁵

Smart also suggested that the Board encourage educational opportunities in the community for all adults, graduates as well as school-leavers. He recommended a free library, a free reading-room, a course of free public lectures, and a free evening school.⁷⁶

Smart's accomplishments between 1865-75 in curriculum design, grading, attendance, discipline, and pedagogy not only built on the Common School foundations of his predecessors, but sought to go beyond them in directions we might now term pre-Progressive. Smart succeeded in increasing the size and diversity of the bureaucracy, and defining and rewarding new roles and expectations in the evolving hierarchical system. However viewed, his accomplishments are a testament to his acknowledged organizational talents, to the growing power of the superintendent, and to the influence of

⁷³*Board Minutes, School Trustees, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1874-85* (Book 3), 10 February 1875, 39.

⁷⁴*AR 1873*, 48.

⁷⁵John S. Irwin, "Treasurer's Report," 25.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 58-60.

the newest nationally promulgated ideas on education. Smart saw himself as the creative manager of Fort Wayne's new educational enterprise. To the superintendent, according to Smart, "belongs the task of systematizing the whole work so that all the various parts shall move in perfect harmony."⁷⁷

WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE AND DURING SMART'S YEARS,
1853-75

As superintendents took up their role in the burgeoning system, so did the new educational work force. Over the twenty-two year period, hiring, placement, promotion, and pay moved in parallel with changes in grading, attendance, curriculum, and punctuality requirements for students. Teachers' work, like students' work, was defined and rewarded to meet new norms of organization and productivity. As the teaching force expanded, patterns of entry, promotion, pay, and control evolved and became more regularized.

The first year of the public schools (after which, as noted above, they were closed for three years) was a period of transition for teachers. As in the previous subscription and quasi-private/quasi-public schools, the first four teachers worked as pairs paid one lump sum.

With the inauguration of a new school building in 1857, the school system began anew. Rules and regulations were promulgated, and teachers were hired as individuals, not pairs, to teach specific grade levels. The brother/sister pair of Isaac and Melvina Mahurin, hired in 1853-54, were re-hired in 1857, though at different levels: he as head teacher of the intermediate division, she as a primary grade teacher.

Vestiges of the old non-system remained. During the first years, 1857-58, two teachers were assigned to each of the two large primary school classes. This practice did not last. Some teachers brought relatives. The high school principal from 1861-63 was Mr. Pierce; his wife also taught at the

⁷⁷Ibid., 60. According to Smart, the superintendent's specific tasks were to select capable teachers, to maintain correspondence with teachers across the country so as to be able to find a teacher in case of an emergency, to construct courses of study, to determine how much shall be attempted in any one course, to be acquainted with the best methods, to know the work of other superintendents, to attend conventions and institutes, to read professional literature, to know what makes a good school, to build buildings based on the best design, to inspire teachers with a zeal for their work, to aid and encourage, to criticize, to reprove and to instruct, and to promote harmony among all. The superintendent must also supervise the work of janitors, know how students are progressing, keep accurate records, and deal effectively with parents and visitors. In sum, and in Smart's words, the superintendent "must be wise to know, prudent to judge, and swift to execute."

high school and was paid as a teacher. In 1862 a Mr. and Mrs. Andrews taught for a brief time.⁷⁸ In 1863 E. S. Green was hired as superintendent; his wife was hired as a high school teacher. Superintendent Smart married Mary H. Swan, the first principal of the Normal School, and she was then employed as system clerk at a modest salary for several years thereafter. When Smart resigned and John S. Irwin was hired, Irwin's daughter was hired as clerk, a position she held as long as he was superintendent, almost eighteen years:

As in industrializing countries across the world, gender began to replace family as a sorter for various school positions.⁷⁹ The previous pattern of brother-sister, husband-wife, sister-sister, and teacher-assistant gave way to teachers hired as individuals, almost all single women. Married women were rarely hired, although marriage for women teachers was not expressly forbidden until 1899, and marriage was not cited as a reason for resignation until the 1880s. From the beginning only men were hired as high school principals or superintendents. Isaac Mahurin, head of the intermediate division, in fact became the only other man in the entire system for years. Up to 1875 the few male teachers were brought in for special classes: music, gymnasium, and German.

As schools grew, Smart established a system of supervision: principalships in the larger Clay and Jefferson schools, both of which housed upper elementary and grammar school grades in addition to the primary grades, and lead teachers in the smaller elementary schools. As the latter expanded they, too, acquired principals. A principal's salary was based on school size and thus significantly larger in the bigger schools. In the smallest two-to-four teacher schools, a lead teacher's pay was only a few dollars more than her colleagues'. From the beginning these principals were women promoted from within the system. The principals of the two largest schools were paid well,

⁷⁸*Board Minutes 1853-69*, 185.

⁷⁹This process, referred to as the feminization of teaching, has been the focus of much study. For example, see Sandra Acker, "Gender and Teachers' Work," in Michael W. Apple, ed., *Review of Research in Education*, 21 1995-1996 (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 1996), 99-162; Kaestle, *Pillars*, 123-27; Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875," *Histoire Sociale-Social History* 8 (May 1975): 5-20; Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (Toronto, Canada, 1991); John Rury, *Education and Women's Work, Female Schooling and the Division of Labour in Urban American, 1870-1930* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991); Tyack, 59-65; and various chapters in Donald Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1989).

eventually almost as much as the male high school principal. This was probably as much a reward for their supervisory duties as it was for their years of experience, since they held their positions for many years.⁸⁰

Staff turnover was relatively high, but long tenure became typical of superintendents, women principals, some women high school teachers, and some women elementary teachers. Those women who taught longest usually had advanced training: elementary teachers had attended normal school, high school teachers colleges or universities.

In the earliest years teachers entered and left the system at any point during the year. Their attendance "on the first day of class" appears to have been almost as irregular as that of the students. This became less pronounced by 1865, especially as salaries were approved for the year instead of the month.

Movement and/or promotion within the system became more regular. In the earliest years, as grades for students were being changed, added, and subdivided, teacher assignments changed. Opening new schools meant new opportunities for teachers both within and outside the system. Teachers who stayed longest moved up in grade level, or to a principalship, first of a small primary school, then of a larger one.

During Smart's superintendency, continual expansion meant a regular flurry of reassignments, resignations, refusals of reassignment, and promotions at the beginning of the school year. Changed assignments did not necessarily mean more pay: sometimes they meant less. Nor did pay necessarily increase every year: sometimes it did, or did only for some; sometimes it stayed the same or went down.

One consistent aspect of teacher compensation over the twenty-two years was the growing differential between grades, particularly elementary grades and high school grades, between principals and teachers, and between the superintendent and all others. This perpetuated hierarchical work relationships, further reinforced by gendered division of labour. High school teaching was always more highly rewarded than other grades. Over time non-high school grades, including what were originally called primary, intermediate, and grammar grades, became approximately equivalent for purposes of pay. High school teachers, both men and women, made roughly twice as much as lower grade teachers, mainly women. The high school principal made twice as much as his teachers, and the superintendent a third again as much as the high school principal. As the two large schools housing the upper elementary and grammar school grades expanded, those principals' pay approached that of the high school principal. Their duties expanded to include supervision of

⁸⁰All of the following trends are based on teacher assignment and salary data for the Fort Wayne Public Schools in the *Board Minutes 1853-69, 1869-74, 1875-85*.

the teachers in their buildings and in nearby small primary schools,⁸¹ until those primaries in turn expanded and were assigned their own principals. The principal of the Training School, a woman, and some of the special (K–12) teachers had pay levels approaching that of the high school principal. These emerging positions of authority and higher pay for women were highly correlated with their long tenure in the system, as opposed to the high turnover of men in the high school principal's position, the highest paid position in the system next to the superintendent.

In 1873 the pay scale began to be regularized and tied to teacher job performance. Under Smart, the School Board rescinded all past rules regarding salary and its increase, and brought in merit pay. Each teacher would be graded monthly on a scale of one to five on success in instruction, success in government, willingness to work in harmony, prudence out of school, success in retaining pupils in school, and regularity of attendance upon duties. Those earning grades below three would not be reappointed; those between two and three would be reappointed at the discretion of the Board, but without promotion or pay increases; those with a grade of less than two would earn the following increases:

Second and third assistants in A and B Grammar grades shall be paid for first year \$400.—with an annual increase thereafter of \$50.—until the amount reaches \$600.

All other subordinate teachers shall be paid for the first year \$300.—for the second year \$400.— for the third year and thereafter \$450.

These rules shall take effect at the close of the school year 1873–74.⁸²

Division of labour, rewards for labour, and control of labour were becoming ever more precise and exacting.

CONCLUSIONS

Fort Wayne's centralized and expanding public school system came to offer a broad and calibrated curriculum with ever more highly trained teachers using new methods of pedagogy and discipline. In retrospect, the outcome became the seeds of the "one best system," the centralized, bureaucratized, professionalized, urban school system usually ascribed to the Progressive Era at century's end.

This Common School system moved quickly into what we know as the Progressive Era. It was a system designed by Common School legislation and inspired by Common School rhetoric, but each step in its development took it in the direction of the Progressive Era urban school. Schemes of periodization

⁸¹*Board Minutes 1853–69*, 24 October 1871, 85.

⁸²*Board Minutes 1869–74*, 30 August 1873, 211, 213.

fail in any explication of this growing system. The ideology of its leaders, the power of the superintendent, the trends in curriculum diversification, grading, and compulsory attendance, the growing bureaucracy for and professionalization of the staff, the blatant feminization of the teacher work force, rationalization of the organization of work, and centralization of power—all defining characteristics to different degrees for each of the major reform eras—evolved throughout this time period. Fort Wayne's school developments from 1853–75 suggest that innovation and change were *continual*, perhaps largely in response to economic and demographic growth, and *on a continuum* with no deviation during these years. They developed toward an ever more centralized, bureaucratized, and professionalized system for both students and teachers, supported by a new pedagogy, new internalized self-discipline and “soft” discipline, and new expectations for attendance and punctuality.

The Fort Wayne case suggests that periodization of reform is only a starting point for consideration of why these nineteenth century urban school reforms developed so similarly, in large as well as smaller cities, into what seems like such targeted ideological, organizational, and pedagogical directions. These developments, continual in Fort Wayne for the years studied, defy pigeonholing into either of the major reform eras. They suggest a broader dynamic underlying the building of a school system than can be captured in the study of reform era developments. In the end an analysis more like that of Katz—focussing on the long-term changes in the economic system, such as the nineteenth century movement to a market economy and wage labour system—might explain more about the kinds of changes that ordered the lives of students and teachers in the new public schools, and the timing of those changes, than tying those developments to the political reform eras that dominated the country at large during specific time periods. Developments in schools were definitely a part of those political reform eras, but the Fort Wayne case suggests underlying dynamics of change also fell outside them, i.e., they went beyond the Common School Era and pre-dated the Progressive Era.

The system's emerging shape in Fort Wayne affected both teachers and students. A new teacher labour force was being formed, as was Fort Wayne's future labour force. The new school system grew in ways the old quasi-public “non-system” could not. Fort Wayne's new public schools offered, as did public schools elsewhere, financial stability and curricular continuity, and an ever more clearly developed ladder of steps and rewards for both students and teachers. They sought to attract students and to be inclusive, actively promoting the attendance of girls and boys, poor and rich, minority populations—Germans and African Americans among them—and potential college attenders, non-college attenders, and drop-outs. They demanded prompt attendance and subordination, but did so with political savvy. They

controlled from the top down, and demanded self-control. Were these new urban schools Common Schools coming into their own, urban schools developing into a bureaucracy because of changes in the capitalist system, or Progressive Schools in their infancy—or all three—or something else altogether?

The early history of public schooling in Fort Wayne challenges us to reconsider how we think about educational change and reform in the latter nineteenth century, in small as in urban centres, and to find broader, more inclusive ways to characterize urban school development.