

Modernization in Philadelphia School Reform, 1882-1905

EDWIN A. VAN VALKENBURG, muckraking editor of the *North American*, hailed the Philadelphia Public School Reorganization Act of 1905 for bringing "the modernization of Philadelphia's school system."¹ The product of a twenty-year campaign by school reform organizations, the laws in the Reorganization Act defied the definition of law as congealed custom. The school reformers had deliberately designed a precedent breaking measure that would radically transform the old ways, for as the new conditions became urban, industrial, and (in the argot of the reformers) "foreign," the old ways had become repulsive and outmoded. The Reorganization Act brought an end to the uncoordinated localism and informality characteristic of the public schools of an agrarian culture, and symbolized the establishment of the centralized, standardized, and bureaucratic educational system characteristic of urban America today. In short, the Act brought educational modernization to the nation's third largest city. Investigation of the social basis for, and the political process behind, this modernization throws considerable light on both the history of urban education and the nature of Progressive Reform.²

An integral part of reform to modernize Philadelphia municipal administration in general, the campaign to reorganize the public

¹ *North American* (Philadelphia), Mar. 1, 1905.

² Charles R. Nash devotes a chapter of his Temple University Ed.D. dissertation to the 1905 Act, but his account suffers from his uncritical acceptance of the "people versus the interests" and "honesty versus corruption" explanation of municipal reform and school reform politics, and he ignores all but the immediate background to the reorganization. Charles R. Nash, "The History of Legislative and Administrative Changes Affecting the Philadelphia Public Schools, 1869-1921" (Philadelphia, 1943), chapter IV. Sam Bass Warner has noted the importance of modernization in the politics of municipal reform in Philadelphia, but in his few comments on the 1905 Act he incorrectly claims that it applied to the entire state. Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City, Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth* (Philadelphia, 1968), 214, 218-221.

schools began in the flurry of insurgency of the 1880's and ended in the heat of what Clinton Rogers Woodruff called "Philadelphia's Revolution" of 1905. Upper-class Philadelphians staffed the municipal and the school reform organizations (see table listing composition of various groups), and advocated a similar set of political goals for both City Hall and Board of Public Education: separation of municipal administration from state and local politics; centralization of power in the hands of a few nonpartisan experts; extension of civil service and scientific business administration methods.³

INDIVIDUALS LISTED IN THE PHILADELPHIA BLUE BOOK AND SOCIAL REGISTER

Officers of the Civic Club (1904)

Total Number	9
Number in Blue Book	9
Number in Social Register	5
Per cent in either	100%

Delegation to Harrisburg supporting the 1891 reorganization bill

Total Number	25
Number in Blue Book	22
Number in Social Register	14
Per cent in either	88%

Board of Public Education after the 1905 Reorganization Act (1906)

Total Number	21
Number in Blue Book	16
Number in Social Register	4
Per cent in either	76%

³ Clinton Rogers Woodruff, "Philadelphia's Revolution," *Yale Review*, XV (May, 1906), 8-23. The first to argue that school reform in Philadelphia was basically an attempt by upper-class businessmen and professionals to apply the findings of science and the principles of business administration to the operation of the public schools were the opponents of reform. Historians of the Progressive Era have too frequently ignored the records of the reform groups and have relied almost exclusively on their campaign rhetoric rather than on their private values and public goals. Historical studies consequently tend to be written from the point of view of the reformers and opponents are quietly forgotten. For an example of this practice see Lloyd M. Abernethy, "Insurgency in Philadelphia, 1905," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXVII (1963), 3-20. For more critical approaches, see Bonnie R. Fox, "The Philadelphia Progressives: A Test of the Hofstadter-Hays Thesis," *Pennsylvania History*, XXXIV (1967), 372-394, and, particularly, Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LV (1964), 157-169.

Officers of the Public Education Association (1882-1912)

Total Number	24
Number in Blue Book	18
Number in Social Register	11
Per cent in either	75%

Board of Public Education before the 1905 Reorganization Act (1904)

Total Number	42
Number in Blue Book	20
Number in Social Register	5
Per cent in either	47%

Delegation to Harrisburg opposing the 1891 reorganization bill

Total Number	18
Number in Blue Book	5
Number in Social Register	0
Per cent in either	27%

Ward Boards of Education abolished by the 1905 Reorganization Act (1904)

Total Number	540
Number in Blue Book	63
Number in Social Register	8
Per cent in either	12%

Sources: Philadelphia *Social Register* (New York, 1893, 1895, 1903, 1910); Boyd's *Philadelphia Blue Book* (Philadelphia, 1887, 1893, 1905, 1908); Philadelphia Board of Public Education, *Annual Report*, 1904, 276-296, and *Annual Report*, 1906; Public Education Association of Philadelphia, *A Generation of Progress in Our Public Schools* (Philadelphia, 1914), 63; Civic Club of Philadelphia, *Annual Report*, 1904, 3; *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), May 12 and May 22, 1891.

The first attempt by upper-class reformers to modernize the Philadelphia municipal government began in November, 1880. Led by disgruntled Republicans, including Anthony J. Drexel, Edward Longstreth, Justus C. Strawbridge, John Wanamaker, and Rudolph Blankenburg, and operating under the name of the Committee of One Hundred, the reformers nominated a reform slate for the February, 1881, municipal elections. Their goals suggested the later course of municipal reform in the city: a nonpartisan police force; limiting the salary of the receiver of taxes; prosecution and punishment of those guilty of election fraud, maladministration of office, and misappropriation of public funds. After failing to gain the support of the incumbent mayor, the Committee succeeded in securing the election of Samuel G. King on a nonpartisan ticket. The Committee approved of King's administration, but by 1884 the regular party

organization won back the mayoralty. The Committee chose to answer local resistance with state legislation, and, led by John C. Bullitt, drew up a reform charter. The Bullitt Bill, as the charter was called, passed the legislature in 1885, centralizing power and responsibility in the hands of the mayor and consolidating the twenty-five municipal bureaus into nine departments.⁴

The Committee of One Hundred had demanded election of the school board without regard to party affiliation and the appointment of teachers on merit. Shortly after the 1881 municipal election, members of the Society for Organizing Charity organized the Public Education Association (PEA) in order to fight exclusively for these and other public school measures. The PEA immediately distributed a circular of information in which it linked its goals directly to those of the Committee of One Hundred: "It is the object of this Association to promote the efficiency and to perfect the system of public education in Philadelphia, by which term is meant all education emanating from, or in any way controlled by, the State." The PEA decided to adopt frankly political methods, for "These objects the Association hope[s] to attain through appeals to the local authorities and to the Legislature, and by any other means as may be deemed expedient."⁵

The Committee of One Hundred had aimed to increase the power of the central city administration, but for Philadelphia's public schools in 1882 there was no central administration to strengthen. Supervising principals administered the ward schools; committees of principals managed teacher examination and other necessary duties; committees of the Board of Public Education carried out the overseeing of the high school. Such decentralization of authority seemed incredible to the members of the PEA. Looking, unlike the members of the ward school boards and most of the members of the Board of Public Education, to other large cities for comparison, they pointed out that Philadelphia's arrangement was an anachronism, for Boston, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, with smaller school populations, all had city superintendents. "The Board of Education," argued the PEA, "hold the same relation to the Public Schools as a Board of

⁴ Fox, 374-376.

⁵ Public Education Association of Philadelphia (PEA), *Report, 1896*; PEA, *Annual Report, 1882*, 3-4.

Directors hold to a bank or railroad. It would be as reasonable to argue that the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania should run the road, and dispense with a President, as to argue that the Board of Education should assume the duties of superintendents.”⁶

Early in 1882, the PEA set up a subcommittee to meet with the Board of Public Education on behalf of gaining an appropriation from the City Councils for a superintendent. At the same time, they organized several public meetings to stir up sympathy for reform, and utilized the newspapers to publicize the campaign. In April, the Board of Public Education adopted a new bylaw to allow for an office of superintendent, as well as for assistants, and the City Councils shortly thereafter authorized funds for salaries.⁷

Encouraged by their success in lobbying for a City Superintendent, the PEA decided to carry their interest in centralization further, and met with the legislative subcommittee of the Committee of One Hundred to suggest that the Bullitt Bill, then in the process of formation, include a section providing for the reorganization of the public schools. The ward school boards, they argued, should be abolished; in their place the PEA proposed managers and superintendents appointed by the Board of Public Education. The architects of the Bullitt Bill, though interested in the principle of centralizing school administration, refused to back a proposal that would deny to residents of the wards the power to elect their school directors. Such a clause would almost certainly reduce the chances that the reform charter could gain enough support to pass the legislature.⁸

Aware of the odds against them, now that their plan to abolish the ward school boards had been rejected by the Committee of One Hundred as too radical, the PEA worked even harder to gain support. The schools, they argued, were in a situation of crisis proportions brought about by the lack of “consistent and homogeneous methods of administration,” and “the unification of the governing body and undivided authority over, as well as the responsibility for,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁷ Lewis R. Harley, *History of the Public Education Association of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1896), 15-16; Theodore L. Reller, *The Development of the City Superintendency of Schools in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1935), 74-75.

⁸ Harley, 27-28.

the administration of schools must be secured." The PEA quietly increased its membership, gradually gained the support of newspaper editors, and tirelessly followed the deliberations of the Board of Public Education in an effort to gain influence. By 1885, the PEA codified its legislative program into two resolutions that would guide, with no substantive changes, its political activity for the following twenty years.⁹

Resolved, That it is the deliberate judgment of this Association that the advance of public education in Philadelphia is grievously retarded by the imperfect system of control of the public schools now existing; that the interests of this community demand a radical change in this system, which shall include the appointment of numerous assistant superintendents to co-operate with and act under the direction of the Superintendent of the Public Schools, and the abolition of the local school boards, and the vesting of the powers of disbursing money and appointing and removing teachers and otherwise controlling the public schools of this city in the Board of Public Education; that all merely local and artificial divisions should be abolished both in the management of the schools and in the appointment of the members of the Board of Public Education, so that the interests of the whole community may always be kept in view and the system of education treated as a unit, sub-divided as convenience may require, and not as a mass of separate divisions, each independent of the other and subject to no common control such as exist at the present time.

Resolved further, That this Association and its individual members will not rest satisfied until these measures are accomplished and will use their utmost endeavors to carry them through.

By 1891 the PEA had enlisted the support of several members of the Board of Public Education; most important, they had convinced Edward T. Steel, its president, of the necessity for reorganization of the school administration along the lines they advocated. And by 1891 the modernizing reformers who had supported the Committee of One Hundred had decided that the Bullitt Charter, while necessary if the municipal government was to be transformed, was not sufficient of itself to accomplish the task. Using the Committee of One Hundred as a model, a small group of reformers organized the Municipal League; the League demanded the familiar goals of civil service, separation of municipal administration from state and

⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-29; PEA, *Annual Report*, 1884, 11; PEA, *Annual Report*, 1885, 11.

national party politics, and business principles of management. In February, 1891, Edward T. Steel asked the Secretary of the PEA, lawyer William W. Wiltbank, to draw up a bill to be presented to the legislature for reorganization of the Philadelphia schools. The Porter bill, so-called after the Philadelphia Senator who managed the measure, followed the lines of the 1885 PEA resolution, and provided for the abolition of the ward school boards, increased financial autonomy by the Board of Public Education from the City Councils, prohibition of federal, state, or municipal officials from membership on the Board, and extension of power for the Superintendent of Schools. By the time the bill had passed second reading in the Senate, the PEA began to get a taste of the opposition, and it organized two meetings to gain support among the city population. Of the newspapers, most of which had already been enlisted as supporters of the bill, the most enthusiastic was the *North American*, owned by Thomas Wanamaker, son of the famous merchant, and edited by Edwin Van Valkenburg.¹⁰ Van Valkenburg used his paper in support of the Municipal League, and to hold up the school reformers, as he did the League members, as men "with no incentive but a conscientious feeling of the duty which as citizens they owe to the community. . . ."¹¹

The opponents of the Porter bill saw it and its advocates in a different light. When the Senate Education Committee held its hearings on the measure on May 11, almost half of the ward school boards sent representatives to Harrisburg to help defeat reorganization. They pictured the bill as a scheme in the interest of centralized power and decried it as a vicious attempt by Edward T. Steel to increase his personal influence.¹² At the meeting of the Philadelphia Board of Public Education the following day, they introduced a resolution asking the Board officially to condemn the bill. The Board squashed this resolution as beneath its dignity, but the bill's supporters were taken aback by the vehemence of the opposition represented by such a move.¹³

¹⁰ Harley, 31-32; *Pennsylvania Senate Journal*, 1891, 687, 874, 924; Abernethy, 5-6.

¹¹ *North American*, May 4, 5, 6, 1891.

¹² *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), May 12, 1891; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 12, 1891.

¹³ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1891.

The Senate was less moved by the vehemence of the opposition than by the arguments of the reformers that "The schools of Philadelphia are suffering for want of a system. They are now hampered by the local committees, made up for the most part of the worst element of ward politics."¹⁴ With the help of Boies Penrose and the endorsement of the Republic Party organization, for the state and city organizations were working to break the independent strength of the ward organizations, the bill passed the Senate easily.¹⁵

The situation was different in the House. The only Philadelphia member on the Education Committee opposed the bill, and the Philadelphia delegation, experiencing heavy pressure from their ward constituents and their ward party committees to oppose the bill, and reluctant to jeopardize their seats, prepared to defeat the measure with whatever help they could get from the rural members. The supporters of the bill who attended the hearings before the Education Committee on May 21 argued with the legislators until three A.M., at which time the Committee agreed to report the bill favorably. But when the time came for reporting out bills, the Chairman of the Committee could not be found. Later, when the supporters attempted to report the bill out of place, the Philadelphia delegation refused to grant the necessary unanimous consent, and thus killed the reorganization bill of 1891.¹⁶

By May 23, editor Van Valkenburg knew that the bill would be defeated, but he urged the reformers to take heart, for their victory was inevitable. "The man," he wrote, "who doubts the doom of the sectional boards in the near future must be willfully blind."¹⁷ While it was true that the ward school boards were "doomed," Van Valkenburg's timetable was faulty, for the opposition was to prove stronger than he or the reformers imagined in 1891. Their attempt to introduce a reorganization bill into the 1893 legislature was completely frustrated, for, while Senator Porter read the bill on the first day of the session, it was never reported out of Committee.¹⁸

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, May 19, 1891.

¹⁵ William S. Vare, *My Forty Years in Politics* (Philadelphia, 1933), 19, 45-46, 63; *Public Ledger*, May 14, 1891.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, May 14, 16, 22, 23, 25, 27, 1891. The Chairman claimed that he had overslept.

¹⁷ *North American*, May 23, 1891.

¹⁸ *Pennsylvania Legislative Record*, 1893, 4; Harley, 32.

In January, 1894, several women college graduates from Philadelphia's upper social levels, determined to promote "by education and active co-operation, a higher public spirit and a better social order," organized the Civic Club. Led by Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson, educated in Paris, holder of a graduate degree, and an amateur archaeologist, the Club members were profoundly disturbed by what they saw as the failure of women of their class and status to assume a public role in keeping with their intelligence and education. "The deep shadows which now darken our present moral condition," said Mrs. Stevenson in her first address to the Club, "have been brought about mainly by love of ease, of self-indulgence, and of luxury, and we women are not without blame with regard to this. The poor use which many of our privileged sisters have made of their fine feathers, not so much to attract as to dazzle others into something akin to covetousness, has led many a man, like the jay of the fable, to devote his entire energies to decking himself and his brood with peacock's feathers."¹⁹ The members of the Civic Club were as anxious to be realistic as they were to assume a political role, and they decided to avoid the stigma of idealistic, utopian, petticoat politicians. "The days of useless martyrdom are over," said Mrs. Stevenson, "and heroic sacrifice, even in the shape of unnecessarily facing ridicule, is not required of us." "For those who wish to point the way, it is not enough to be good, they should be clever." To be clever was to be politically realistic, and to be politically realistic was to know the strength of organization. In the twentieth century, since the "growing necessity for organization and concerted action in every direction is now so keenly felt," the voluntary and unofficial union of reform activity represented by the Club would become official. In the meantime, she felt that the Civic Club could "not only do serious good, but that it can win for itself the respect of the community by preparing the way for such unification of effort."²⁰

The modernization of the Philadelphia public schools stood high on the list of problems to which the Civic Club intended to devote its energy; scarcely two months after the Club organized, it arranged with the PEA for a joint meeting to consider the question. Encour-

¹⁹ Civic Club of Philadelphia (CCP), *Annual Address, 1894*, 1-2; CCP, Executive Board Minutes, January, 1894, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

²⁰ CCP, *Annual Address, 1894*, 9, 15.

aged by the large attendance at the meeting on March 3, and pleased with the city-wide publicity granted by the newspapers, the Club asked the PEA Executive Committee to appoint a subcommittee to formulate a joint proposal that would lead to the drafting of a new school reorganization bill. The joint committee of the two organizations, with the new President of the Board of Public Education (also a member of the PEA Executive Board) and Mrs. Stevenson among their number, met throughout the spring and fall of 1894 to consider the content of the bill. Senator Porter agreed once again to sponsor the measure, which he introduced on January 16, 1895.²¹

This bill, had it passed, would have radically transformed the character, duties, and powers of the Board of Public Education. Power to choose members would have been shared by the mayor and the judges of the common pleas courts, instead of held solely by the judges. The Board would have been reduced in size from more than thirty members to ten; the ward school boards would have been abolished; the Board of Public Education, not the City Councils, would have received all state school funds, and the Board would have had authority to levy a special city school tax. All teachers would have been appointed by the central board rather than the ward school boards, and only after an examination administered by the Superintendent of Schools.²²

Because this first 1895 reorganization measure was sponsored by Senator Porter, it was never to be considered. For during the week that followed the introduction of the bill, Porter supported the attempt by David Martin to seize control of Pennsylvania's Republican Party organization from Matthew Quay and Israel Durham. Martin, at the last minute, refused to support the Quay-Durham mayoralty choice, Boies Penrose, and shifted his delegates to Charles F. Warwick, City Solicitor. Taking his opponents by surprise, Martin won the convention, thereby allowing Warwick to win the election in February. Porter's support of Martin won him a place in the "Hog Combine," as the Martin faction was called, and lost

²¹ The paper presented at the Mar. 3, 1894, meeting entitled "Some Suggestions for Reform in the Public School System of Philadelphia," is in CCP, *Publications*, HSP; CCP, Executive Board Minutes, February-December, 1894; Harley, 32-33; *Pennsylvania Legislative Record*, 1895, 149; *Press* (Philadelphia), Jan. 6, 1895; *Call* (Philadelphia), Jan. 14, 1895.

²² *Public Ledger*, Jan. 23, 1895.

him the support of Penrose in the Senate. Consequently, his bills were killed, for most members of the Senate were sympathetic with Quay's desire to punish the rebellious Philadelphians.²³

Because Penrose opposed Senator Porter rather than the bill to reorganize the public schools, the second 1895 bill received a more sympathetic hearing in the Senate. The Civic Club and the PEA, furthermore, noting the newspaper opposition to placing any appointive power over school board members in the mayor's hands and criticizing the complete abolition of the ward school boards, revised the initial measure considerably. The new bill provided for a twenty-one rather than a ten-member board, replaced the ward school boards with ward boards of school visitors (a provision that would hopefully take the sting out of the stripping of power from the boards), abolished the ward lines as the basis of school districts in favor of lines drawn according to administrative "convenience," and required the City Councils to appropriate school funds to the Board of Public Education in a lump sum, to be distributed by the Board according to its own decisions. The Board, furthermore, would be authorized to levy a special school tax on the city residents to be used strictly for school purposes. As stated in the PEA resolution of 1885, the central Board of Public Education would take over from the ward boards all duties such as teacher hiring, building site selection and maintenance, and examination and certification of teachers, as well as determining and supervising curriculum. Prohibition of school board membership to municipal, state, or federal office holders, a clause that had antagonized potential supporters in 1891, was omitted.²⁴

By the time Mayor Warwick took office in the beginning of April, the bill was in the legislature, and Warwick, acknowledging the support he had received from the members of the Municipal League and the Independent Republicans, made it clear in his inaugural address that he favored the activities of their allies in the PEA and the Civic Club. "I am," he noted, "strongly of the opinion that the bill recently introduced into the Legislature, and urged by the Civic Club of this city . . . if passed will do away with the present cumber-

²³ *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1895; Vare, 48-51.

²⁴ *Public Ledger*, Mar. 5, 1895; *Star* (Philadelphia), Mar. 25, 1895; *Public Ledger*, Mar. 26, 1895. The text of the bill is reprinted in Harley, 33-37.

some and involved system, and result in securing greater efficiency in school work.”²⁵ By April 8, opposition had developed in the legislature to the autonomy granted the Board of Public Education relative to the City Councils by the financial arrangements of the bill. Granting the strength of the opposition, the bill’s supporters amended the measure so as to retain in the hands of the Councils the power to raise all school funds (except the state appropriation) and to delegate to the Board whatever funds it would receive. In this amended form, the bill passed the Senate unanimously.²⁶

The successful reorganization bill left the Senate with the support of both the Martin and the Quay-Durham-Penrose factions of the Republican Party organization, and with the backing of Mayor Warwick and District Attorney Graham, as well as the Civic Club and the PEA. Their support explained the fact that the members of the House from the other areas of the Commonwealth began “being besieged with letters from the best citizens of Philadelphia to support it. . . .”²⁷ The Philadelphia delegation, however, was beginning to receive pressure from citizens of presumably a different sort, as the members of the ward school boards began putting pressure on their representatives to defeat the bill.²⁸ When the bill came to the House to be placed in Committee, the Speaker (who later denied that he had deliberately tried to kill the measure) ordered the Committee on Municipal Corporations (popularly known as the “Corpse” Committee) rather than the Education Committee to take the bill. Whereas only four Philadelphia men were on the Education Committee, twelve were on the Committee on Municipal Corporations, and, as a member of the Philadelphia delegation told Senator Porter, to support the bill would be political suicide.²⁹

The battle to decide the fate of the reorganization bill during the six weeks that followed separated the modernizing reformers from the traditional enemies of reform. The reformers worked to destroy what they saw as an outmoded, inefficient, wasteful and corrupt

²⁵ *Public Ledger*, Apr. 2, 1895.

²⁶ *Telegraph* (Philadelphia), Apr. 9, 1895; *Star*, Apr. 10, 1895; *Public Ledger*, Apr. 10, 16, 17, 1895.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Apr. 23, 1895; *News* (West Chester), Apr. 25, 1895.

²⁸ *Public Ledger*, Apr. 25, 1895.

²⁹ *Record* (Philadelphia), Apr. 26, 1895.

systemless way of carrying out public education. The enemies of reform worked to maintain what they saw as a reasonably successful means of schooling that, most important, was controlled by people of their own class, status, and neighborhood, and to which they had immediate and personal access. On the one side were the PEA and the Civic Club, joined by both factions of the state and city Republican Party organization. On the other side were at least half of the ward school boards, particularly those in the lower and middle income wards of the city, and the ward political party organizations, the very ward organizations that Israel Durham and the Vare brothers had been working for a decade to mold into a centrally-directed city-wide Republican organization.³⁰

The criticism by the large circulation newspapers of the city that the ward school boards passed resolutions against the bill for "personal selfish fear of losing their petty political positions," and that "the election of School Directors by the people is a theory, not an actual condition" because the nominations were made by "the organization," contained a measure of truth. But it was deceptively simple as an explanation for the strength with which the ward school boards could fight, given the fact that "the organization" supported the reform bill. Newspaper editors supporting the bill never took it upon themselves to wonder how, since "the organization" had enlisted on the side of "the people at large," "the organization" could also be charged with responsibility for, in some shadowy way, opposing the passage of the measure.³¹ Newspaper editors opposing the bill, on the other hand, were as anxious to argue that the bill did not represent a popular and widespread demand as supporters of the bill were eager to argue that parents and guardians "are almost a unit in their support of the bill."³²

³⁰ *Taggart's Times* (Philadelphia), Apr. 28, May 5, 12, 1895. William S. Vare contained within himself the contradictory and conflicting values that were evident in the fight over the bill. For while he was instrumental in building the city-wide centrally-directed Republican organization, thereby destroying (quite deliberately) the autonomous strength of the independent ward organizations of the pre-1890 period, he was intensely loyal to his own ward, the ward "in which I was born and in which the affections of my family were so much centered." Vare, 63.

³¹ See, for example, the editorial in the *Public Ledger*, May 17, 1895.

³² The large circulation newspapers were in favor, including the *Public Ledger*, *North American*, *Bulletin*, *Press*, and *Inquirer*. Opposed were *Taggart's Times*, *Telephone*, *Downtown Record*, and two local papers, *The Advance* (Manayunk) and the *Frankford Herald*.

But Mrs. Stevenson of the Civic Club, speaking before the House Committee on behalf of the bill on May 7, did not refer to the sentiment of the people at large as the justification for the bill's merits. Instead she pointed out that given the modernizing perspective the bill was simply necessary in order to do away with the traditional practices now that they were outmoded. That they were outmoded was not determined by canvassing the citizens of Philadelphia. The reorganization bill looked beyond the city, and it was drawn up "after extensive correspondence between prominent members of both associations [*the Civic Club and the P&A*] and the leading educators of the country, and after a careful study of the latest reforms brought into the educational systems of the various states."³³

Mrs. Stevenson had no opposition counterpart in the Committee hearings except the delegations from the sectional school boards and the editors of the opposition newspapers. William Taggart, editor of *Taggart's Times*, emerged as the most vociferous critic of the reformers, and used his paper, as well as the Harrisburg hearings, to condemn the reformers as elitists anxious to impose their values upon the city population as a whole. "The agitation over this subject," he wrote, "does not represent a general demand or sentiment in this city. The great majority of the people are abundantly satisfied with the schools, and know that they are better today than they ever were as regards instruction, comfort, good teaching, and the general welfare of their children." Taggart's frame of reference, and the frame of reference he presented to his readers, was not, like that of Mrs. Stevenson, one that compared Philadelphia public schools with those of other large cities according to criteria derived from writers on educational administration. Instead, Taggart looked at the Philadelphia public schools in the context of the earlier years of the nineteenth century, and he was correct, according to even Mrs. Stevenson's criteria, that the schools were better in 1895 than they had been in 1845.

"Where," wrote Taggart, "does this bawling and whining about the 'degradation' and 'inefficiency' of our schools come from? Chiefly from the old maids in the Civic Club, from a handful of educational cranks, from the University clique which is anxious to boss the whole

³³ *Record*, May 8, 1895.

school system, and from the newspapers which are anxious to please powerful advertisers." Mrs. Stevenson and the reformers were indeed anxious to place control of the public schools in the hands of educational experts under the direction of a small group of college and university-educated businessmen and professionals. And the reformers did not deny that they were largely "women who have never experienced the joys of maternity and have no practical ideas whatever about the training of children" rather than argue that Taggart's criteria were irrelevant to the teaching of children in school. According to Taggart, "the real object [of the Porter bill] is an effort of the so-called social status people, who have no faith in the wisdom of boilermakers, carpenters, painters—in short the bone and sinew as well as the good common sense element to be found among our mechanics as well as business men in all our wards—to take a hand in the management of our public schools. . . ." ³⁴ The reformers again pointed out that such an argument missed the point; simply stated, "Education is a science. Every chance citizen cannot administer it." ³⁵

Advocates of the bill, argued the editor of the Philadelphia *Telephone*, "are in a majority of cases persons who have not been educated in the public schools of the city, and several of the most ardent opponents of the present system are not even residents of the city." ³⁶ The cosmopolitan modernizing perspective of the reformers made that argument irrelevant like the others. And explicit in the reform bill was the destruction of criteria for selecting teachers held up by the *Downtown Record* as admirable; most teachers, the editor pointed out, were natives of Philadelphia, but the bill would threaten the custom of hiring the teachers from the city Normal School on the basis of their family's residence in a ward. ³⁷

³⁴ Taggart's *Times*, Apr. 28, also May 5, 6, 7, 8, 1895.

³⁵ Mary E. Mumford, in Mrs. Talcott Williams, ed., *The Story of a Woman's Municipal Campaign by the Civic Club for School Reform in the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia*, American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS), *Publications*, No. 150, July 2, 1895, 8. The modernizers quite explicitly attempted to remove individuals from the lower occupational ranks of Philadelphia society from positions of decision making capacity over the public schools, because, the reformers reasoned, such individuals lacked "educational qualifications." See also Clinton Rogers Woodruff, "A Corrupt School System," *Educational Review*, XXVI (1903), 435.

³⁶ *Telephone*, May 18, 1895.

³⁷ *Downtown Record*, May 10, 1895.

Finally, the reformers were opposed to continuation of the traditional system of school control because it fostered a mentality they defined as destructive to educational excellence, because it fostered a point of view essentially parochial and neighborhood oriented rather than scientifically oriented. The editor of the *Manayunk Advance* told his readers that "the underlying principal of the measure is wrong, and it should be defeated." Referring to the transfer to an appointive from an elective central Board of Public Education earlier in the century, he argued against strengthening an appointive system by abolishing the ward school boards altogether. "Our ward," he argued, "has not been more advantageously represented in the Board of Education since the controllers were appointed than it was when they were elected."³⁸ It was just such efforts by the delegates from ward school boards to the Board of Public Education to act as members of a log-rolling political caucus on behalf of their constituents, according to the school reformers, that were inimical to the creation of a modern school system administered according to the latest principles of business management and devoted to the dissemination of curricula organized on the basis of scientific educational theory.³⁹

To the members of the Civic Club, the arguments raised by the opposition consisted merely of "well-sounding nonsense, such as has been used at all times by the crafty, by the ignorant, or by the thoughtless." From their point of view "school revision . . . must, of course, appeal to all those . . . who have had intellectual training, and who take an interest in the good standing of our city."⁴⁰ But to the members of the House Committee on Municipal Corporations, sympathetic to the pressure from the ward school boards and to the arguments raised by the opposition press, the bill had only enough appeal to induce them to "study" the measure. Needless to say, when the legislative session ended, they were still hard at work "studying."⁴¹

³⁸ *The Advance*, Mar. 27, 1895.

³⁹ *Public Ledger*, May 8, 9, 1895.

⁴⁰ CCP, *Annual Address*, 1895, 8-9.

⁴¹ *Public Ledger*, May 23, 1895. The supporters were able to pass a resolution for an investigating committee to study the Philadelphia schools, but they failed to win an appropriation for the committee. See *Public Ledger*, May 27, June 4, 1895.

The traditionalist opposition to reform kept the 1895 reorganization bill from consideration by the entire House, despite the efforts of the reform coalition of Civic Club, Public Education Association, most of the city's newspapers, and the leaders of the state and city Republican organizations. But the fight for the reorganization bill had not been the Civic Club's only fight in the first months of 1895; at the same time, the Club had worked to elect women school directors to the ward school board of the Seventh Ward. This campaign sheds further light on the nature of the school reform politics that eventually destroyed decentralized school control in Philadelphia. The model for the Civic Club campaign came from the old Committee of One Hundred, which had nominated two women school directors for the Twenty-Ninth Ward in 1882 who had subsequently served on that school board for fourteen years. Since that time, eleven women had been chosen for ward school boards out of a total of about 440 ward board members. Determined to work on a strictly nonpartisan basis, the Club sent to the Democratic and Republican leaders of ten wards, as well as to the newspapers and the Municipal League, the names of women who would run for the offices if nominated. The Municipal League nominated the Club's choices in three wards, and when the Democrats endorsed the League nominees in the Seventh Ward, the Club decided to put all its efforts toward the campaign in that section. A downtown ward, it ran from the Schuylkill River to Seventh Street, and from Spruce to South Street—a long and narrow strip bordering businesses and shops on the north and a lower income and ethnically diverse area of single-family homes, with a few tenements, on the south and east. Its population was one-third Negro, and of the other two-thirds, half were either foreign born or second generation (with a substantial group of Russians, Poles, and Italians), while the remainder were native-born whites.⁴²

The Civic Club pointed out that the ward political party leadership of this predominantly Negro and recently arrived immigrant section was representative of its population, and tracked down the occupations of the Democratic and Republican Executive Committees in an attempt "to make perfectly clear the forces with which a canvass like ours has to contend. . . ."⁴³ The Civic Club candidates

⁴² Williams, 5-6, 13-17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19-24. Over two-thirds of the men worked at unskilled jobs.

did not expect to win the election with ease, but they were surprised by their difficulty in even obtaining a hearing. They nevertheless persisted, refusing to participate in the petty bribery that was part of the political culture of the ward, and lost by a smaller margin than they had expected. They lost with the help of the ward school board, the ward Republican organization, and the ward public school teachers. The school board made it known that they would not suffer a woman on their board, and the teachers followed the lead of their employers: fifty-four of the sixty-three teachers in the ward issued a manifesto to the voters opposing the Civic Club hopefuls and praising the incumbents running for re-election.⁴⁴

Looking back at the election campaign after a space of several months, the architect of the fight attempted to explain to the members of the American Academy of Political and Social Science that the campaign results were not surprising. "The wealthier part of the ward," she admitted, "has only a platonic interest in the public schools. Its members do not send their children to these schools, as under their present political management no parents will send their children to them if they can send them to better schools. The most moral and conscientious Catholics," she claimed, "send their children to their own parochial schools. The only class of which," in her opinion, "the religious and moral portion interest themselves in the public schools, are the colored population, because they send their children to them, and are obliged to do so, or keep them at home, none of the private schools admitting them."⁴⁵ As the Civic Club campaigners were people from "the wealthier part of the ward," the fact that their interest was platonic was not lost on those from the less wealthy parts. And besides the organized opposition to their candidacy, the Club admitted that the confidence of the voters in "the men who had taken the trouble to make their acquaintance before they asked for their vote" partly explained the women's defeat. Furthermore, they had failed to convince most electors that women could "really manage the schools better than men."⁴⁶

Despite the rebuff in the Seventh Ward, the Civic Club continued, working with the PEA, to campaign for women school directors during the years that followed. And while they failed to elect more than

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

a handful of women, their political acumen increased considerably.⁴⁷ The major efforts of both organizations, however, went to the slow but quiet task of building enough support among the members of the legislature and among the state and city Republican organizations to insure the eventual success of a reorganization bill. In 1897, another bill was prepared, but it failed like the 1895 measure, and in 1899 the PEA appointed a committee to make a systematic investigation of the organization and financing of schools in the larger cities of the country. The committee made the report public in 1900, and used it as their rationale for a resolution to investigate the schools of the entire state, which they introduced unsuccessfully in the 1901 session of the legislature. In 1902, the Civic Club and the PEA continued to build their case against the Philadelphia schools by gathering still more empirical evidence with which to compare their administration with that of other large cities. Together, the groups memorialized the City Councils to support reorganization, sending along, as the fruits of their research, a list of contradictory and confusing laws in force that had been passed since the middle of the nineteenth century. Such empirical data impressed the Councils less than they did the reformers, and when a sympathetic Councilman introduced an ordinance to set up a commission of nationally recognized educational experts to investigate the Philadelphia schools, the Councils defeated it. Most Councilmen opposed the importation of outsiders to evaluate their Philadelphia public schools.⁴⁸

Frustrated once again by their failure to gain reorganization, the reformers sought to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the sensationalist press coverage accorded to the conviction of three school directors from the Twenty-Eighth Ward for conspiracy, bribery, and extortion in connection with hiring and promoting teachers in early 1903. At the same time, Miss Dora Keen, Secretary

⁴⁷ The campaign to elect women as school directors can be followed in the CCP *Annual Reports* from 1895 to 1904. See also Edith Wetherill, "The Civic Club of Philadelphia," *Municipal Affairs*, II (1898), 467-482.

⁴⁸ CCP, Executive Board Minutes, March, April, 1900; also January, March, June, November, 1902; PEA, *Annual Report, 1901*, 3-4; *Annual Report, 1902*, 3-4; *Annual Report, 1903*, 3-7; PEA, *A Generation of Progress in Our Public Schools* (Philadelphia, 1914), 19-20. The 1900 investigation was published by James T. Young, University of Pennsylvania Professor who drafted it as "The Administration of City Schools," AAPSS, *Annals*, XV (January-May, 1900), 171-184.

of the PEA and a member of the school board of the Ninth Ward, experienced a highly emotional personal confrontation with John K. Myers, Republican leader of the ward, over teacher hiring. According to Clinton Rogers Woodruff, sympathetic to Miss Keen and sharing her point of view that teachers should be chosen according to criteria other than strict seniority (the view of Myers), the ward leader "made a personal and profane attack upon Miss Keen of so virulent at [*sic*] nature that she was compelled in self-respect to leave the room."⁴⁹ The "Twenty-Eighth Ward Scandal" and the confrontation between Miss Keen and Mr. Myers provided the reformers with potentially powerful issues with which to support their case against the existing organization of the Philadelphia schools. The three articles that appeared in national magazines in the months immediately following added momentum to the reform campaign. Lincoln Steffens labeled Philadelphia "Corrupt and Contented" in July; Clinton Rogers Woodruff attacked "A Corrupt School System" in December; Adele Marie Shaw castigated "The Public Schools of a Boss-Ridden City" in February, 1904.⁵⁰

The muckrakers offered little in the way of concrete suggestions for change in the public schools, but Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard, recommended a detailed reorganization program in his address to the PEA on January 16, 1904. Eliot reiterated, in considerable detail, a program for modernization sketched out in the PEA resolution of 1885. Legislation for the schools should be strictly in the hands of a small board representing the city as a whole; executive functions should be confined to educational experts; all school finances should be controlled by the Board of Public Education, whose income should be predictable in advance and determined by law irrespective of the City Councils.⁵¹ In April, the PEA began distributing copies of Eliot's address throughout the city, urging

⁴⁹ *Public Ledger* and *North American*, Apr. 2 to 6, 1903; Woodruff, 438-439. Myers had supported the election of Miss Keen, but "Since that time she has never recognized me at all—she has always thrust her own ideas on the Board, and expected them to be followed." *Public Ledger*, Mar. 23, 1903.

⁵⁰ Lincoln Steffens, "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented," *McClure's Magazine*, XXI (July, 1903), 249-263; Clinton Rogers Woodruff, "A Corrupt School System," *Educational Review*, XXVI (1903), 433-439; Adele Marie Shaw, "The Public Schools of a Boss-Ridden City," *World's Work*, VII (1904), 446.

⁵¹ Charles W. Eliot, *A Good Urban School Organization*, reprinted by the PEA from *The Teacher* (March, 1904), copy in the Maria Hosmer Penniman Library of Education of the University of Pennsylvania.

readers to "throw your influence in favor of some similar reorganization of *our* system at the *next session of the Legislature*. Reorganization is needed in order to abolish sectionalism, but can not take place until public opinion is agreed what to substitute."⁵²

In the Fall of 1904, the reformers changed their tactics and emphasized dishonesty and corruption in the management of the schools as they never had before. Whether they deliberately decided to make such a change in order to dramatize their case, or merely shifted their emphasis as a result of the muckraking exposures and the convictions of the previous year, the school reformers stressed honesty versus corruption rather than the modernizing rationale behind the reorganization plan. The same was true of the arguments of the municipal reformers, who, reorganizing the nearly dormant Municipal League into a Committee of Seventy, launched a campaign on November 14, 1904, "to rescue Philadelphia from political degradation. . . ."⁵³ And two days before the organization of the new Committee, the Philadelphia Teachers' Association, itself recently organized and already a potential political force, having enrolled a majority of the city's teachers, declared its sympathy to reorganization.⁵⁴ The editor of the *North American*, having dedicated his resources to the service of "honesty," then began a systematic campaign of exposure against the ward school boards. Stressing the obsolescence of the constituent orientation of the ward school boards as a group, Van Valkenburg made clear that "We propose to remedy the deficiency by adapting to conditions here the methods which created a political revolution in Chicago. That city was cleansed, not altogether by exposing graft and corruption, not by attacking the machine bosses, but by printing unbiased records of crooked councilmen and School Directors."⁵⁵

On the day following the *North American's* first installment in its "gallery" of "crooked" ward school board members, the principals of fifty Philadelphia public schools and several department heads at

⁵² Broadside attached to the copy in the Penniman Library, italics in original.

⁵³ *North American*, Nov. 14, 15, 21, Dec. 20, 1904; Abernethy, 6-8.

⁵⁴ *North American*, Nov. 12, 1904.

⁵⁵ Van Valkenburg's principal target was Charles H. Edmunds, representative to the Board of Public Education from the notorious Twenty-eighth Ward. When Edmunds denied the charges and backed his side of the case with specific evidence, the paper dropped the case. *North American*, Dec. 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 1904.

Central High School (one third of whom were PEA members) published an "Appeal to the Citizens of Philadelphia." Unwilling to remain silent about the "deplorable administrative conditions under which the public school system of this great city must operate," the principals called for "the only effective reform possible, a complete reorganization of the system of control for the public schools of Philadelphia." After setting out their grievances in detail, and arguing that "it is the system that is at fault, not the men who operate it," the principals suggested a method for achieving reorganization.⁵⁶

We believe, therefore, that all public agitation of the question should be directed to the great end of securing for Philadelphia through legislative enactment a thoroughly modern system of school control. Furthermore, the system should not be changed by reckless or hap-hazard methods. Just as the selection of a route for the Panama Canal or the plan for our own new water supply was determined by the advice of skilled engineers, so should men of established reputation for their broad knowledge and practical experience in the successful operation of modern school systems be consulted in the formation of a plan to place our schools upon this higher plane of administrative efficiency. This is the unquestioned right of the children of our city.

The principals appealed for an educational commission to draw up a new reorganization bill. The Board of Managers of the Teachers' Association, spurred by the dramatic move of the principals, unanimously agreed to support the demand for a commission. "The vice of the Philadelphia system," according to the President of the Association (who was also a long time PEA activist), "is, in brief, that while we have grown into a great city, we have maintained a village organization. All of the other great cities of the United States have passed through a similar stage of administrative development." One week later, the Council of Representatives of the Teachers' Association also agreed to support the Appeal. But the membership of the Association at large never expressed its opinion on the Appeal, for a resolution at the Council of Representatives meeting for a referendum was overwhelmingly defeated.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the Committee of Seventy prepared a City Party ticket for the February municipal elections, and the regular Repub-

⁵⁶ *North American*, Dec. 21, 1904.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1904, Jan. 6, 1905.

lican organization, anxious to protect its appeal as much as possible given another threat to its tenure of office, publicly announced its support for both an educational commission and reorganization of the schools. Confronted with the third organized cry for "honesty and efficiency" in as many decades, a cry that had consistently cost them the mayoralty, the Durham organization found it especially expedient to join the fight for the abolition of the ward school boards. And as the central city organization had been working for a decade to strengthen its control over the ward organizations, its ability to control the Philadelphia delegation to the House of Representatives in Harrisburg was considerably stronger than it had been in 1895. As the editor of the *Press* had written during the battle over the 1895 bill, "a majority [of the Philadelphia delegation] would vote for the abolition of the local school boards, because as a rule they are a source of great annoyance for candidates for the Senate and House. Candidates for the Legislature are compelled to go into these fights simply to maintain their political hold in the district, and it would be a relief to a great many of them could the measure prevail."⁵⁸

The Board of Public Education responded to the Appeal and to the support by the leaders of the Teachers' Association by appointing a five man commission to prepare an Assembly bill to carry out reorganization. Three members of the commission had worked with the PEA for reform, Henry R. Edmunds as a sympathetic non-member while he was president of the Board of Public Education, lawyer William W. Justice as an active member (he later became honorary president of the PEA), and Martin G. Brumbaugh, University of Pennsylvania Professor of Pedagogy and former Commissioner of Education for Puerto Rico, as vice-president. The Republican Party organization was represented by David H. Lane, and the other member, William H. Lambert, was President of the Board of Charities and Correction. Anxious to get the bill to the legislature by March 1, Lane advised the newspapers that "we seek to be enlightened but we should invite [to public hearings] only those specially equipped."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Press*, Apr. 23, 1895; *North American*, Dec. 25, 1904, Jan. 1, 1905. *Taggart's Times*, the most vocal and consistent source of opposition to the 1895 bill, had been purchased by the *Public Ledger* in 1900.

⁵⁹ Philadelphia Board of Public Education, *Journal*, 1905, 54-58, 115; *North American*, Jan. 26, 1905.

At the public hearings held by the commission on January 28, the members of the PEA, the Civic Club, and the Teachers' Association presented the plan outlined first in 1885 and refined in 1904 by Charles W. Eliot as the model the commission should follow in drafting the bill. The expected opposition from the ward school boards, now organized into a School Directors' Association, never materialized; its representative at the hearings informed the commission that its views would be made known through private correspondence.⁶⁰ On March 1, as planned, Senator John M. Scott introduced the bill. At that point, the School Directors' Association played its hand by suggesting a substitute bill providing for an elected rather than an appointed board, allowing the ward school boards to continue hiring teachers, and leaving the financial specifications of the school system intact. Taking advantage of Durham's absence on a Florida vacation, the Directors' Association appealed to his lieutenants, Senator McNichol and the Vares, to support the substitute bill. But Durham and David H. Lane, having already convinced Governor Pennypacker to approve an appointive board, and hard pressed by the Committee of Seventy for supporting the white slave trade, for stuffing ballot boxes, and for covering up police corruption, were unwilling to renege. Durham returned from Florida and quelled the potential revolt.⁶¹

Both the Senate and the House favored the commission bill, the bill, in the words of the editor of the *North American*, "for the modernization of Philadelphia's school system," and it passed the Senate 38 to 1 and the House 178 to 0 on April 11.⁶² Modernization removed power over the city's public schools from the 540 elected members of the ward school boards and placed it in the hands of the twenty-one appointed members of the Board of Public Education. Before the reorganization the forty-two members of the central board had represented the forty-two sections of the city; now twenty-one members represented the city as a whole. Modernization stripped the ward school boards of power, left them intact only as boards of visitors, and placed control of the schools in the hands of

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1905.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Mar. 10, 1905; *Pennsylvania Senate Journal*, 1905, 606; *Record*, Mar. 2, 12, 14, 1905.

⁶² *Pennsylvania Senate Journal*, 1905, 1136; *Pennsylvania House Journal*, 1905, 2138; *North American*, Mar. 1, 1905. The Philadelphia delegations in both Senate and House voted unanimously in favor of the bill.

cosmopolitan and efficiency-minded upper-class businessmen and professionals, whose legislative decisions would be carried out by dispassionate, university-trained, educational experts according to the impersonal criteria of bureaucratic social organization. Power over teacher selection and construction and maintenance of schools shifted from the predominantly middle- and lower-class ward school boards to the upper-class central school board and the administrators in their offices at the Board of Public Education. The neighborhood loyalty and local orientation of the ward school boards that had encouraged the hiring of teachers who were "one of ours" disappeared to be replaced by hiring practices based on the scientific and empirical indices that could be utilized in standardized civil service examinations. Reform signaled the end of the diversity of styles of instruction and the multiplicity of criteria of evaluation that had followed logically from curricula and supervision patterned according to norms rooted in the class, nationality, race, or religion of a ward. The new system brought curricula patterned according to the laws of educational psychology and a supervisory staff loyal to their superior, and, beyond him, to the national corps of professional educators. Reform swept away the personalistic orientation characteristic of most ward school board members that excused occasional chicanery and dishonesty as "human nature," that regarded as normal to the social order the *quid pro quo* bargaining and factionalism of city ward political systems. In the place of such traditionalism stood impersonal educational administrators "above politics," whose rewards would come strictly from within the organization of which they were a part, and who would relate to their public in strictly defined capacities according to clearly defined rules.⁶³

To the PEA and the Civic Club, the passage of the bill, despite the compromises it contained, meant a considerable advance toward the creation of a school system in Philadelphia capable of meeting the demands of a modern age. They applauded what they saw as the

⁶³ Pennsylvania *Legislative Record*, 1905, 1914-1916. A school director from the Twenty-first Ward expressed his reaction to the certain passage of the bill as follows: "For my part, I am willing to serve the people as long as I can be of any use in this position, but if everything is to be done by the Central Board, as now looks probable, I wouldn't think it worth while to come once a month to these meetings and could spend my evenings more satisfactorily and profitably elsewhere." *The Sentinel* (Manayunk), Mar. 30, 1905.

most important features of the reorganization: centralization of power in the Board of Public Education over all city schools; concentration of executive work in the hands of educational experts rather than in the hands of committees of laymen; destruction of decentralization.⁶⁴ The reformers admitted that their program for modernization was nearly complete with the passage of the 1905 Reorganization Act. Considering the extent to which the Reorganization Act radically altered the Philadelphia public school government and administration, the educational modernization laws easily qualify as the most revolutionary of the reform measures passed during "Philadelphia's Revolution" of 1905.

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⁶⁴ PEA, *Annual Report*, 1905, 33-35.