



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Education Department Bureau of School  
District Organization Files of Master Plan Studies 11120**

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New York State Archives  
222 Madison Avenue  
Albany, NY 12230  
[archref@nysed.gov](mailto:archref@nysed.gov)  
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	In 1958, the Commissioner's Advisory Committee on the Master Plan for School District Reorganization issued a revision of the 1947 Master Plan. These study files contain minutes of Advisory Committee meetings, proposed changes in the Master Plan, notes and memoranda concerning public hearings held about the Master Plan, correspondence with local school officials and citizens about revised reorganization proposals and county maps.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Education Department. Bureau of School District Organization
<b>Title:</b>	Education Department Bureau of School District Organization files of master plan studies
<b>Quantity:</b>	4 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1941-1959
<b>Bulk Date:</b>	1955-1959
<b>Series:</b>	11120
<b>Sponsor:</b>	This series' description was enhanced as part of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project (SIFEPP), in April 2010. The New York Community Trust - Wallace Special Projects Fund provided funding for this project.

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## Arrangement

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Arranged in three subseries: 1. Memoranda, 2. Subject files, 3. Files on counties.

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## Administrative History

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The Master Plan for School District Reorganization was created to guide the process of centralizing rural school districts. The consolidation of small rural school districts into larger

central school districts was first enacted into law in Chapter 55 of the Laws of 1914, which provided for the formation of "Central Rural Schools." In 1925, the Cole-Rice Law (Chapter 673 of the Laws of 1925) was enacted, which provided state financial aid for transportation and school construction in order to encourage rural school districts to consolidate. The pace of centralization increased in the 1930's, but the process of centralization was criticized as piecemeal by the Regents' Inquiry into the Character and Cost of Public Education in 1938. The Inquiry recommended that all new central school districts have at least 600 students in daily attendance, and at least 1,200 students when possible. In response, the Bureau of Rural Administrative Services was created in 1943 to facilitate the process of school district centralization, and a master plan for school consolidation was created by the Joint Legislative Committee on the State Education System in 1947. The Bureau of Rural Administrative Services was renamed the Bureau of School District Organization in 1964. By 1959, the number of school districts in New York State had fallen to under 2,000, down from around 10,000 in 1925. Overall, the movement toward centralized school districts was reflective of a national trend towards greater involvement by state governments and state education agencies in the administration and funding of public schools.

In the mid 1950s, Commissioner James E. Allen appointed staff members to an Advisory Council for School District Reorganization, with the intention of studying the state of school district centralization, and proposing revisions to the Master Plan for School District Reorganization. Some of their recommendations were incorporated by the Joint Legislative Committee on the State Education System into a revised version of the master plan in 1958.

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## Scope and Content Note

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This series consists of the files of the Advisory Council on School District Reorganization, a group appointed by the Commissioner to study and revise the "Master Plan for School District Reorganization." The beginning of the series consists of reports on studies initiated by NYSED by request of the advisory council. The first study details the number of central, union free, and common school districts in each county in New York. The remaining studies mostly deal with recommendations for the reorganization of groups of school districts, along with criteria to determine the size of an efficient school district, and notes on transportation problems likely to be encountered by reorganizations. The series also consists of subject files documenting the operations of the advisory council. Included are proposed schedules of public hearings to discuss the advisory council's recommended revisions to the Master Plan for School District Reorganization, as well as lists of changes in these recommendations due to feedback from the hearings. Also included are data on then-existing central school districts, including enrollments, maps, debt service, and transportation costs. Finally, the series contains files on information on New York counties used by the advisory council in the preparation of recommendations for changes in the master plan. Included in these files are lists of school districts within counties and maps of counties showing school district boundaries.

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## Related Information

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### Related Material

B0476Series B0476, Certification files regarding State aid and reorganization

15672Series 15672, School district centralization and reorganization files all deal with the school district centralization process governed by the Master Plan for School District Reorganization

B0477Series B0477, Bureau of School District Organization subject and administrative files

B1104Series B1104, New York State Education Dept. Office of Counsel School District Centralization Files

Series B0472, School district centralization and reorganization files

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

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## Access Terms

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- Planning
- Education
- New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- Education
- University of the State of New York