



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Commissioner of Education Ewald B. Nyquist  
Speech Files B1060**

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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>	The series consists of drafts and final copies of speeches delivered by Ewald B. Nyquist, as well as clippings, notes, correspondence, and other materials related to the preparation of these speeches. The speeches date from Nyquist's tenure as Commissioner of Education, as well as previously held positions in the department. Topics include accreditation of higher education institutions, teacher education, role of state education agencies, racial integration, education reform, open learning environments, and moral and humanistic education.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Education Department. Office of the Commissioner
<b>Title:</b>	Commissioner of Education Ewald B. Nyquist speech files
<b>Quantity:</b>	37 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1951-1980
<b>Series:</b>	B1060
<b>Sponsor:</b>	The New York Community Trust - Wallace Special Projects Fund

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## Arrangement

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The material is arranged by format type, then chronologically. Background and preparatory material is followed by speech files. Most speech files contain the final speech, usually with some final drafts.

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## Administrative History

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Ewald B. Nyquist was born November 1, 1914 in Rockford, Illinois. He attended and graduated from Rockford public schools and entered the University of Chicago in 1931. While at Chicago, he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology, and pursued graduate study in psychology,

without earning an advanced degree. In 1945, Nyquist became the Assistant Director of University Admissions at Columbia University in New York, rising to the position of director in 1948. Nyquist then moved on to the New York State Education Department in 1951, becoming the Assistant Commissioner for Higher Education. In 1955, he was named Associate Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education, and in 1957, he became Deputy Commissioner of Education. On May 2, 1969, Nyquist was named Acting Commissioner of Education, replacing James Allen, who had been appointed U.S. Commissioner of Education in February of that year. On November 21, Nyquist was officially named Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York by the State Board of Regents.

As Commissioner of Education, Nyquist focused attention on the reform of school operations and curriculum. Nyquist was an advocate of "open education," an educational philosophy emphasizing individualized instruction and student-directed learning. In addition, Nyquist implemented Project Redesign, an effort to facilitate community involvement in examining and redesigning school operations within specific school districts. Nyquist's tenure also saw increased focus on bilingual education, spurred by the 1972 Regents Position Paper on Bilingual Education. Also, under Nyquist's tenure, the Education Department expanded its focus on higher education beyond public universities. The Regents External Degree Program allowed for undergraduate degrees, awarded by the Regents, to be given to people based on knowledge and skills gained outside of college. In addition, the Higher Education Opportunity Program funded programs to assist minority and disadvantaged students in attending non-public institutions of higher learning. In the field of cultural education, much of Nyquist's tenure saw the planning and development of the Cultural Education Center in the South Mall of the Empire State Plaza, as well as planning for the establishment of the New York State Archives.

Nyquist's most controversial policies were related to school desegregation. Sharing the views of his predecessor, James Allen, Nyquist was a proponent of the assigning of students to specific schools to achieve racial integration, a practice commonly known as "busing." Nyquist's desegregation policies drew much public criticism, and led the New York State Legislature in 1969 to enact a law barring the assignment of pupils to specific schools to achieve "equality of attendance...of persons of one or more particular races" without the approval of the relevant local board of education. Nevertheless, in the early 1970s, the State Education Department assisted several urban school districts in producing and implementing desegregation plans, and in 1976, provided assistance to the Buffalo school system in implementing a federal court-ordered desegregation plan.

In the mid 1970s, Nyquist's relationship with the State Board of Regents and state elected officials became increasingly contentious. In 1973, Governor Nelson Rockefeller proposed the creation of an independent "inspector general" to oversee the public school system in New York, thus challenging the independent authority of the Commissioner of Education. Meanwhile, in 1974, the State Legislature imposed term limits on members of the Board of Regents, leading to the replacement of pro-busing Regents with opponents of busing. Nyquist's tenure as Commissioner of Education came to an end in 1976, when a majority of the Regents voted to dismiss him, the first time a sitting commissioner had been voted out by the Regents.

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## Scope and Content Note

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The series consists of drafts and final copies of speeches delivered by Ewald B. Nyquist, as well as clippings, notes, correspondence, and other materials related to the preparation of these speeches. The speeches date from Nyquist's tenure as Commissioner of Education, as well as his time as Assistant Commissioner for Higher Education, Associate Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education, and Deputy Commissioner of Education. Topics covered in the speeches include accreditation of higher education institutions, teacher education, the role of state education agencies, racial integration, education reform, open learning environments, and moral and humanistic education.

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## Related Information

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### Related Material

B0464Series B0464, Commissioner's Constitutional Convention Files, 1958-1968, contains related records. Series/accretion 15080-80, contains the subject files of Commissioner of Education Ewald B. Nyquist.

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this series.

### Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

There is no microform or digital version of this series.

## Administrative Information

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### Processing Information

This series' description was enhanced as part of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project (SIFEPP), in April 2009. The New York Community Trust - Wallace Special Projects Fund provided funding for this project.

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## Access Terms

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- Research material
- Teaching
- Education
- New York (State)
- Speeches (documents)
- Nyquist, Ewald B., 1914-1987
- University of the State of New York