



*New York State Archives*

**New York State Education Department Commissioner Ewald  
B. Nyquist Subject Files W0105**

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## Table of Contents

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Overview of the Records .....	3
Arrangement .....	3
Administrative History .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	5
Related Information .....	8
Other Finding Aids .....	8
Use of Records .....	8
Administrative Information .....	9
Access Terms .....	9

## Overview of the Records

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<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	This series contains correspondence, agendas, meeting minutes, speeches, reports, proposals, and other documents relating to Nyquist's tenure as Commissioner of Education from 1969 to 1977. Files document the Education Department's efforts to influence legislation both in the New York State Legislature and the United States Congress. Other subjects covered in the series include school desegregation, busing, capital construction projects, and campus unrest.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Education Department. Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist
<b>Title:</b>	Education Department Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist subject files
<b>Quantity:</b>	129 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1950-1977
<b>Bulk Date:</b>	1969-1977
<b>Series:</b>	W0105
<b>Sponsor:</b>	This series description was enhanced as part of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project (SIFEPP), in September 2006. The New York Community Trust - Wallace Special Projects Fund provided funding for this project.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Arrangement

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Alphabetical by subject within two distinct groupings based on degree of organization. Capital construction project files are grouped as a separate subseries and arranged by location and project therein.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## 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. Also while at Chicago, he worked as a clinical psychologist at Cook County Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago, and played and coached for the university's football team. In 1941, Nyquist enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve. He remained in the Reserve throughout his professional career, eventually attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He married Janet Siebolt Winnett in 1938, and had three children.

In 1945, Nyquist became the Assistant Director of University Admissions at Columbia University in New York, N.Y., 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 2nd, 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. The paper mandated "full-bilingual" programs, designed to foster equal development of English and native languages, for districts where there were ten or more children with limited English proficiency. In 1973, the Education Department was successful in getting a bill passed to provide 1.5 million dollars for aiding local school districts to develop bilingual programs.

Also, under Nyquist's tenure, the Education Department expanded its focus on higher education beyond public universities. The Regents External Degree Program, proposed by Nyquist in his 1970 inaugural address, 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, created during Nyquist's tenure, 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.

During his time with the Education Department, Nyquist was Chairman from 1953 to 1959 of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the association responsible for accrediting college and universities in the Mid-Atlantic region of the country. He also served as Chairman of the Commission on Accreditation of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped from 1966 to 1971. He was a member of the board of trustees or board of directors of many organizations, including Cornell University, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, and the Agency for Instructional Television. He was also a member of the New York State Delegation to the Education Commission of the States, and was a member of the Council of Chief State School Officers, where he was Chairman of the Committee on International Education and member of the Committee on Policy.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Content Note

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Commissioner Ewald B. Nyquist's subject files were maintained in varied states of organization. The first subseries consists of files organized by subject matter. Some of these files had been assigned broad subject headings by Nyquist's office, while the other files were assigned headings by Archives staff, apparently derived from the original headings. Files from both sets have been merged in the finding aid under common subject headings.

Files in the first subseries arranged under "Commissioner" document the daily operation of the Commissioner's Office under Nyquist. Among these papers are appointment letters to newly-arriving department staff, letters of congratulations to colleagues, letters responding to invitations to speak or attend various functions, press releases, and correspondence concerning speeches given by Nyquist to various organizations with which Nyquist was involved on a non-official level. Also contained are correspondence, agenda, and supporting documentation from regular meetings of the Commissioner's Cabinet and Executive Group, as well as correspondence related to outside organizations, groups, committees and boards in which Nyquist was involved outside of the New York State Education Department.

Files arranged under "Department Administration" document the management and operation of the New York State Education Department as a whole. These files include correspondence, memoranda, and reports related to personnel matters, such as professional development; union matters - including implementation of the "Taylor Law"; and office administration, such as the maintenance of data systems, communications, and building operations. Also present are correspondence, memoranda, and reports related to the department's annual budget requests, as well as program analyses and appraisals related to the department's long-range planning efforts. Annual reports are included as well, along with correspondence and other materials associated with their production.

There is a considerable amount of documentation related to the Education Department's efforts to introduce and promote legislation in the New York State Legislature, and to respond to and influence federal legislation on education. These documents are separated into "federal" and "state" legislation categories. Much of the documentation on state legislation focuses on the yearly Regents Legislative Programs, through which the Board of Regents communicated their recommendations for state legislative action. This includes press releases from the Board of Regents, as well as correspondence with state legislators, texts of specific proposals for legislation, and summaries of enacted legislation affecting education. Other documents related to state legislation include letters from citizens referred to Nyquist by state legislators for the commissioner's response. Also included is correspondence with legislators involved in joint legislative committees and sessions on topics relevant to the Education Department, such as higher education, inter-institutional cooperation, "Taylor Law" amendments, social services law, school finance, and campus unrest.

Much of the material related to federal legislation comes from P. Alistair MacKinnon, Assistant to the Commissioner for Federal Legislation, and consists of correspondence to Nyquist informing and advising him on current and pending federal action. In addition, there is a considerable amount of correspondence between Nyquist and his cabinet members, and members of Congress and the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, including the U.S. Commissioner of Education. Some of this correspondence relates to NYSED positions on current federal action and needs for additional legislation and policy. Other correspondence relates to letters from Congressional constituents referred to the Education Department and Commissioner Nyquist by members of Congress for their response. Also included are brochures printed by the Board of Regents detailing the board's views on federal legislation and its impact on the State of New York. Federal legislation referred to in these files include the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts (ESEA), the Higher Education Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Defense Education Act, the Adult Education Act, the Vocational

Rehabilitation Act, and the Model Cities Program. In addition to the files on legislation at the federal level, there are many files related to the United States Office of Education, a department within the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. These include correspondence between Nyquist and the United States Commissioner of Education, as well as correspondence and reports from a study on the funding priorities of the National Institute of Education.

In addition, there is extensive documentation of organizations outside of NYSED with which Nyquist was involved in his official capacity as Commissioner of Education. Particularly well documented is Nyquist's membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers, an organization of chief executives of state school systems that assists states in education policymaking and advocates for the states at the federal level. Included are correspondence, agendas, and resolutions and minutes from CCSSO annual meetings; newsletters; legislative reports; and updates on federal policy from CCSSO staff. Also included are reports from CCSSO committees on urban education, international education, educational TV, organizing federal advocacy for state positions on policy, and other educational issues. There is also correspondence among chief school officers of states that form the Northeast Consortium of CCSSO (New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island). Other organizations documented in the collection include the Education Commission of the States and the New York State Teachers Association (for whom Nyquist served as Honorary Chairman of the Equal Education Opportunity Advisory Committee).

The interaction between the New York State Education Department under Nyquist and the New York State Board of Regents is also well documented. Among this documentation are drafts, press releases, and published versions of official statements and policy papers of the Board of Regents on various subjects, such as racial integration of schools, federal government funding, education governance, and state aid to non-public schools. Also included are correspondence, list of participants, press clippings and releases, and reports on various commissions and committees of the Regents. These include the New York State Commission on the Quality, Cost, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education (also known as the "Fleischmann Commission"), the Regents Advisory Committee on Educational Leadership, the Regents Committee to Study the 1972 Integration Statement, the Advisory Council on Regionalism, and the Advisory Commission on Post-Secondary Institutions in Financial Difficulty. In addition, there is extensive documentation of monthly meetings of the Board of Regents, including lists of actions taken by the Board, as well as reports presented to the Board by Education Department staff and representatives from New York State colleges and universities.

The second subseries consists of various documents from Nyquist's office that came to the State Archives in a very rough chronological organization. This subseries contains documents that, while similar in content to those in the first subseries, were apparently not integrated into the subject files. The existing organizational scheme, including multiple rough chronological runs of material, has been preserved. Included in these records are letters from citizens of New York State, many concerning Nyquist's views and policies on school desegregation and busing.

The third subseries contains records relating to capital construction projects involving the construction of, additions to, and rehabilitation of, buildings in the New York State school system. Many of these projects concern the maintenance of the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia and the New York State School for the Deaf in Rome. Other projects include

improvements to the State Education Building in Albany and the construction and rehabilitation of schools located on Native American reservations. Included are blueprints, specifications of labor and materials required, correspondence, requests for bids, and copies of contracts.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Related Information

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### Related Material

Series B0467, Education Department Commissioner's Files on Regents meetings

Series B0466, Education Department Commissioner's Office Outgoing Correspondence and

Series B0469, Education Department Cabinet Meeting Minutes contain related records.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Other Finding Aids

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### Available at Repository

Folder lists were created for the entirety of Accretion W0105-80. Therefore all boxes in that accretion are included in this finding aid. To date, folder lists have only been created for roughly one-third of the boxes in Accretion W0105-93, meaning that this accretion is only partially reflected in this finding aid. A very general box content list for the boxes not included herein is available at the repository.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Use of Records

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### Access Restrictions

This series may contain material to which access is restricted. Archives staff will review requested documents and disclose information pursuant to New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

## Administrative Information

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### Processing Information

W0105-80: These records were transferred by the State Education Department in 1980 and originally accessioned as part of Series 15080. When Series 15080 was separated into individual series corresponding to each commissioner in 2017, the records were re-designated part of Series W0105.

W0105-93: These records were transferred by the State Library in 1993 and originally accessioned as part of Series 15080. When Series 15080 was separated into individual series corresponding to each commissioner in 2017, the records were re-designated part of Series W0105.

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Access Terms

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- Educational planning
- School integration
- Educational law and legislation
- Monitoring education
- Education
- Education--Finance
- New York (State)
- Supervising education
- State University of New York
- Nyquist, Ewald B., 1914-1987
- University of the State of New York. Board of Regents