

**“A Fair and Forward Union:
Black Teachers and The Chicago Teachers Union 1963 – 1987”**

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List of Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor	IIT	Illinois Institute of Technology
AFT	American Federation of Teachers	IEA	Illinois Education Association
ATA	American Teachers Association	MTU	Men's Teachers Union
BTC	Black Teachers Caucus	NAACP	National Association for the
CCCCO	Coordinating Committee of Community		Advancement of Colored People
	Organizations	NALC	Negro American Labor Council
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations	NEA	National Education Association
CFTB	Concerned Full Time Basis	NTU	Newark Teachers Union
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality	OCR	Office of Civil Rights
CPJS	Concerned Parents of Jenner School	SFA	School Finance Authority
CPS	Chicago Public Schools	TAC	Teachers Action Council
CTF	Chicago Teachers Federation	TCQE	Teachers Council for Quality
CTJS	Concerned Teachers of Jenner School		Education
CTU	Chicago Teachers Union	TET	Temporarily Employed Teacher
CUL	Chicago Urban League	TIS	Teachers for Integrated Schools
ESSA	Elementary and Secondary School Act		
FTB	Full Time Basis		
HEW	Housing Education and Welfare		
HOD	House of Delegates		

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Summary

Across the United States, the 1960s were a tumultuous period for organized labor. While organized labor in the private sector was at the beginning of a decline in membership and collective bargaining power, public sector unions, like police, fire fighters, government officials, and teachers were increasing their power thanks to local elected leaders extending collective bargaining rights to public sector unions that had been denied those rights under the 1937 Wagner Act. As teacher unions, particularly those in large cities, gained collective bargaining rights, they were often confronted with a shifting demographic reality in those cities that often placed black students, their families, and black teachers at the center of educational transformation.

In Chicago, black teachers during the period 1963 – 1987 were at the center of a demographic transformation in which they would by 1984 overtake white teachers as the largest racial demographic in the city's teaching force. That demographic transformation was at the center of black teachers increasingly fighting for equal rights in the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union. Black teachers by the 1980s were not only the largest racial group in the city but were also the political power bloc at the heart of successive strikes that would improve pay and benefits for teachers as well as lead to an increased focus on professional growth for teachers and contribute to the larger reform agenda of the Board of Education.

This study seeks to document the transformation of the Chicago Teachers Union by black teachers and the collective bargaining battles with the Chicago Board of Education by combining archival research and the oral histories of black teachers who were themselves teachers during the late 1960s into the 1980s. Combined with the documentary research, these black teacher voices shed valuable insights into how black teachers experienced major policy initiatives of the Board of Education and the union, such as the Board's efforts to comply with desegregation

Summary (Continued)

mandates of the federal government through teacher transfer, as well as the seven teacher strikes between 1969 and 1987. Finally, this study argues that the elevation of Jacqueline Vaughn as the union's first African-American president led to increased focus on professional development for teachers and a focus on reform that was absent from the previous agendas of union leadership.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

When, at the age of 26, I was elected Associate Union Delegate at Lincoln Park High School in 1999, I had little knowledge of CTU's history, its politics, or even its political clout. I only knew that coming from a union household, and given my early experiences with overcrowded classes, the union was our only protection against the worst abuses by management, often heaped upon the most politically vulnerable. In May of that year, I attended my first meeting of the House of Delegates, the citywide body composed of delegates from across the Chicago Public Schools then 700+ schools. Walking into that meeting at the Plumbers Hall, I was immediately struck by what looked like the cafeteria at Lincoln Park high school in which all of the black students sat on one side of the room and white students on the other side of the room and in the case of the union hall at that time, a small number of brown teachers interspersed. When I asked our school's main delegate Bernie Eshoo what was going on here, she explained that high school teachers sat on one side, and largely elementary teachers sat on the other side. This explanation did not satisfy my curiosity nor my immediate problem of understanding where I should sit. I was a high school teacher, but I was first and foremost a black teacher. At each subsequent HOD meeting, I experienced this same neurosis that is all too common for black people in America and in this case, black teachers in Chicago. This dilemma is at the core of this dissertation. What does it mean to be a black teacher in the Chicago Teachers Union? What did it mean to be a teacher in the midst of black power politics of the 1960s? How did black teachers shape the internal politics and external orientation of the Chicago Teachers Union?

The nation's two dominant national teacher unions, with their vastly different historical

roots, also differ significantly in how each has approached the issue of race. While initially formed as a professional organization of teachers, administrators, and university staff, the National Education Association (NEA) actively resisted advancing a unionist agenda until the collective bargaining victories of the 1960s. NEA leaders similarly resisted integration of African-American educators within its membership. Segregated black educator professional organizations were shunned throughout the 1930s and 40s. By contrast, the unionist oriented American Federation of Teachers (AFT) by the 1930s welcomed African-American educators from segregated southern locals while also supporting integrated northern urban locals.¹ Ironically, as late as 1952 the NEA in many states operated dual affiliate locals (one black and one white), while it publicly staked out an anti-racist position refusing to host national conventions in segregated cities.² Indeed it was not until after President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that the NEA relented to pressure from the American Teachers Association, an NEA affiliated African-American union of southern educators, and to internal pressure from young white liberals, that they forced locals to desegregate.³

Founded very explicitly to advocate for higher wages, protections against cronyism and nepotism, and improved working conditions, the AFT, while not immune to larger societal tendencies, advocated an egalitarian vision of worker solidarity. Throughout the 1940s African-American membership in the AFT continued to grow both as a result of increasing numbers of black teachers from segregated southern locals allying with the AFT as well as increasing numbers of black teachers in integrated largely northern locals. In 1943 the AFT refused to admit

¹ Marjorie Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*, 147.

² *Ibid*, 201.

³ Rolland Dewing, "The NEA and Desegregation," *Phylon* (Vol. 30, No. 20); pg. 121.

segregated white locals into membership in the national organization. AFT affiliation with the American Federation of Labor helped to convince the NEA of the viability of race equality as an organizing principle.⁴ However egalitarian in spirit, the AFT was only marginally better than the NEA in advancing full civil rights for black teachers within its membership. After four years of bitter argument between northern liberal integrationists from New York and Detroit and southern segregated locals and old guard Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) leadership over membership of segregated locals, it was the AFL merger with Walter Reuther's militant and openly integrationist Congress of Industrial Organizations that provided the impetus for final withdrawal by or expulsion of segregated southern locals.⁵

Civil Rights struggles that gripped the nation and Chicago during the 1950s and 1960s found no analog inside the Chicago Teachers Union. Though CTU, like all AFT affiliated unions was dedicated to egalitarianism, the CTU was regarded even within the AFT as a conservative union on racial matters. As the civil rights movement gained momentum across the country, the CTU was ambivalent on the issue. Union president John Fewkes went so far as to condemn the actions of the Chicago Civil Rights community that threatened walk outs and boycotts in 1963 to protest the apparent segregationist agenda of the Chicago Board of Education and its superintendent Ben Willis.⁶ Fewkes declared that boycotts and sit-ins interrupt educational processes though he himself had threatened to close the schools in 1933 and strike in 1948 to

⁴ Ibid 148.

⁵ Rolland Dewing, "The AFT and Desegregation," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Winter, 1973), 88.

⁶ John Rury. "Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago's Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education" *History of Education Quarterly*, Summer, 1999, 128.

protest pay issues. On segregation, Fewkes argued that mobile classrooms were not being used to perpetuate segregation, defended the neighborhood school policy, and argued against transferring students while remaining silent on the issue of teacher segregation.⁷ When John Fewkes retired from the CTU presidency in 1966 there appeared to be little difference between the Board of Education positions on desegregation and that of the CTU. On issues of race and civil rights, trade unionists in the United Auto Workers were advancing a more progressive position than the CTU or many other locals that failed to recognize their own unofficial means of subordinating black members.

The retrograde politics of the CTU on issues of race highlight a basic contradiction inherent in teacher unionism during the late 1960s as locals demanded collective bargaining rights in the midst of a mass mobilization of black workers and teachers. Trade and in this case professional unions struggled to live up to their own egalitarian principles. In Chicago and in other urban school systems, the teacher and student composition was undergoing a radical shift away from being a system of white ethnics to a system of increasingly black and latinx students and teachers. Thus teacher unions that had throughout the 1930s and 1940s confronted race in isolated and or theoretical terms now faced the prospect of managing the practical demands of living up to their stated rhetoric of egalitarianism for all teachers. At the same time urban unions faced a changing social and political context that called into question who is best able to improve the lives of the urban poor. The most dramatic case of this tension over who is best qualified to improve education in poverty-stricken communities came in 1965 in New York where Al Shanker and David Selden successfully fought for bargaining rights for the nation's largest teacher union, the United Federation of Teachers. Only three years after securing collective

⁷ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, " 151.

bargaining rights for UFT teachers, Shanker was confronted with charges of racism in the Ocean Hill- Brownsville dispute.⁸

In 1965, on the eve of Stokely Carmichael's call for Black Power, the civil rights community in Chicago sat at a critical crossroads. The mass march and demonstration tactics that had proved to be effective in confronting Jim Crow in the south had yielded few tangible results for civil rights leaders in Chicago who sought better housing and quality schools. At the insistence of groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the civil rights community would continue to work for change in housing and in the schools through boycotts, mass demonstrations, and through the courts. The administration of Mayor Richard J. Daley responded to calls for open housing with an unenforceable pledge by the city to work towards open housing and the construction of massive public housing complexes within otherwise segregated black communities on the city's south and west side.

Calls by the Coordinating Committee of Community Organizations, an umbrella organization uniting Chicago's numerous community and civil rights organizations, for the city schools to desegregate and provide additional resources for the city's black students resulted in massive construction of new schools within black communities but not a fundamental shift in the

⁸ In 1965 the New York Chancellor of Schools office appointed Rory McCoy as the superintendent of the Oceanhill Brownsville district. McCoy transferred 17 teachers against the wishes of the New York City United Federation of Teachers. The UFT led intermittent strikes across the city between September and November and lead to schools being shut down across the city as teachers in other parts of the city joined the UFT in striking. In the end the UFT prevailed, winning reinstatement for all of the transferred teachers albeit at a considerable political costs as the strike drove a wedge between the city's Jewish community which supported the UFT and the city's black communities that supported the school Board's decision to remove the teachers and experiment with community control of the schools. See Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*, Wendell Pritchett, *Brownsville Brooklyn: Blacks Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

school boards unofficial policy of maintaining segregated schools in Chicago. Within the Chicago Teachers Union, black teachers faced a similar situation. Black teachers by 1966 accounted for approximately one third of the city's teaching force yet very few of them had attained full member status within the union.⁹ Furthermore, the CTU had continued to oppose policy shifts aimed at integrating the teaching force.¹⁰ The election of John Desmond as CTU president in 1966 appeared to offer hope for black teachers toiling in vastly overcrowded schools and their more liberal allies within CTU. Desmond supported then superintendent John Redmond's desegregation plans and resisted calls from within CTU to oppose busing.¹¹ However, Desmond's opposition to segregated schools, which stood in stark contrast to that of his predecessor, did not manifest itself in a concomitant opposition to a segregated and bifurcated teaching force. The years of 1966 – 1976 would test the limits of Desmond's leadership, see a black teacher revolt within and outside of the union and ultimately set the stage for the changing racial politics of the nation's third largest teachers union. Against this backdrop, this study will investigate the relationship between black teachers and the Chicago Teachers Union from 1963 and 1987, including the critical role that black teachers played in the evolution of the union's internal practices and the union's stance on critical developments in the district around desegregation and collective bargaining.

Methodology

Oral history is primary source material created in an interview with a participant or

⁹ Havighurst, *The Public Schools of Chicago*, 54.

¹⁰ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 175.

¹¹ Ibid.

witness to an event for the purpose of preserving information and making it available to others. In this way, oral history is both a process and product.¹² Historians of the second half of the twentieth century have increasingly found oral history to be a useful method to explicate and tell the stories of workers, minorities, the impoverished, and others who might be “hidden from history.”¹³ In some cases, such as understanding the holocaust, records and archival sources only tell the story of the institutions but say nothing of the lived experiences of participants, or, in the case of the holocaust, victims. Oral history complicates western reliance on the textual source as the only valid and reliable source for historical data.

As a methodological approach, oral history is not without its challenges and detractors. As Ronald Gele reminds the oral historian, memory fades or is distorted by time.¹⁴ The principle challenges to oral history as a methodological approach are centered around two interrelated themes. First, that the oral interviewee is possibly subject to distort or misremember important aspects of a phenomenon. It is thus likely in the oral interview for a participant to not remember significant dates or a chain of events that happened years or decades before. The second challenge to oral history is the nature of the interview as a source. Oral history interviews as sources are, unlike journal entries, letters, memoranda etc. that are the hallmarks of traditional archival research, shaped at least partially by the researcher, though even the use of these types of sources is limited by the subjective nature of all research. The choice of questions by the oral historian to a large degree determines the content and direction of the oral history source. Oral

¹² Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*, 1.

¹³ Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *Oral History Reader*. Xi.

¹⁴ Robert Gele, “Movement Without Aim, the Methodological and Theoretical Problems of Oral History,” in *Oral History Reader*, 38.

history then can be viewed as an iterative process that produces new knowledge for the interviewer and interviewee. The iterative nature of oral history stands in contrast to the positivist tradition that undergirds archival approaches to history. Careful assemblage of documentary sources alongside oral histories can protect against distortion or errors in memory. Similarly, oral histories can validate, or in some cases point to the limitations of documentary sources. Italian historian Alessandro Portelli reminds us that oral history is distinct from archival research in that it is concerned with meaning, not simply events.¹⁵ Portelli makes a compelling argument that the forces of distortion and memory loss can also be at play in textual memoirs and reminiscences that are often afforded validity by historians. Alice Hoffman similarly concedes that reliability and validity of oral sources can be questionable, though no less questionable than other documentary sources that may be self-serving, edited, redacted, or doctored. Hoffman instead contends that in terms of authorship, giving voice to otherwise voiceless subjects, and the skill and care that the oral historian can take in shaping the document and thus preserving as wholly accurate an account as possible, oral history is in fact superior to archival research.¹⁶

In using oral history, there is a tension between the process and product aims of oral history that historian Barbara Tuchman highlights. If as Sommer pointed out, oral history is both the process of collecting oral testimony and it is also the product of that collection, Tuchman challenges historians to be more selective about what is being collected. If the process of oral history is aimed at preservation of stories and memories, historians may in fact be collecting

¹⁵ Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different?" in *Oral History Reader*, 70.

¹⁶ Alice Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History," in *Oral History: and Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 92.

hours upon hours of oral data that is in fact useless to other historians. If on the other hand oral history is concerned with history making, the oral historian must be more concerned with selectively utilizing oral sources as part of constructing a broader story. Thus, according to Tuchman, oral history can be criticized for being more concerned with history collecting or the mere documentation of experiences, than history making or the construction of meaning from those sources.¹⁷

Finally, the didactic nature of oral history challenges the convention in history writing of the objective historian utilizing the available sources to reconstruct and understand the past. Oral histories do not exist until the oral historian has interviewed a subject and documents the subject's experience. Oral historians then are a part of the actual reconstruction of the past on the part of the participant. Though some would question the validity of the documentation that the oral historian is an active participant in creating, Michael Frisch reminds us that the selection of documentary sources and or passages therein can be equally as self-serving and subjective.¹⁸

In addition to oral history methods, I intend to use archival historical research methods. The Chicago History Museum contains an archive of Chicago Teacher Union documents as well as the papers of Chicago Board of Education member Cyrus Adams III and the Citizens School Committee Papers. The AFT papers housed at Wayne State University will be valuable in gaining the national union's perspective on the challenges that the CTU faced. The Addie and Claude Wyatt Papers and the Timuel Black Papers at the Carter G. Woodson Library will be a

¹⁷ Barbara Tuchman, "Distinguishing the Significant from the Insignificant," in *Oral History: and Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 96.

¹⁸ Michael Frisch, "Oral History and Hard Times," *Oral History Reader*, New York: Routledge, 32.

valuable documentary source for understanding teacher organization within the CTU. The Chicago Urban League Papers at the University of Illinois Chicago will be an important source for understanding how one of Chicago's leading civil rights organizations viewed the CTU. The Chicago Teachers Union archives are an important albeit incomplete source of documentation.¹⁹ Finally, local press organs are important data sources for helping to shed light on the topic. Both the *Chicago Tribune* and The *Chicago Defender* provided extensive coverage of local educational issues though the Defender more thoroughly documented the efforts of black teachers to confront the CTU. The Coordinating Committee of Community Organizations papers at the Chicago History Museum as well as the Newberry library will provide valuable insights into the citizen organization on behalf of and at times in opposition to black educators. Finally, archival copies of dissident newspaper *Substance*, published monthly since 1968 will be an important addition to more traditional newspaper sources.

Steve Golin's *The Newark Teachers Strike* utilizes oral history to great effect. Though the strikes of 1969 and 1970 were well documented in the press, official documents, press releases and public statements made by key individuals do not tell the story of how the two strikes impacted people on a personal level. Over a two-year time period, Golin collected the stories of both teachers and community people to tell those important personal stories and thus situate the strikes in the context of local racial and class politics. Elizabeth Todd-Breland's *A Political Education* stands alone in its approach of marrying archival research alongside the oral histories of black educators to forge a deep and meaningful understanding of the history of black education in Chicago from the 1960s through contemporary times.

¹⁹ According to John Ostenberg, former Editor of the *Chicago Union Teacher*, many years of CTU files were lost when the union relocated its offices in the Merchandise Mart.

In terms of actual technique, both the *Historian's Craft* by Marc Bloch and *Library Research Models* by Thomas Mann have influenced my mechanical means of accessing and recording data. Though Bloch devotes a significant portion of *Historian's Craft* to historiographical debates, he also provides descriptions of how various historians find data, take notes and then assemble it into a coherent narrative. Although its section on computer research predates the internet and is thus dated, Mann's approach to notetaking has greatly informed my method, albeit in the digital domain.

For this dissertation I interviewed eight retired black teachers who were themselves teachers during the time in question and who can shed light on how they understood themselves as black teachers as CTU underwent its demographic and organization changes around race. These informants include Timuel Black, President of the Teachers for Quality Education, a dissident faction of black teachers organized around promoting better education for black students. Other informants are Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins, the Chicago Public Schools Chief Education Officer from 2001 - 2009 and long-time Chicago teacher and principal; Dr. Connee Fitch-Blanks, lifelong teacher, union activist and founding Executive Director of the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center for Professional Development; Dr. Kay Ward, lifelong Chicago Public Schools teacher and union delegate; nationally recognized choir teacher Norman Malone; lifelong teacher and west side community leader Regina McClellan; and her sister and lifelong educator, principal, and former CPS Chief of Teaching and Learning Annette Gurley.

Data Analysis

In order to synthesize the oral histories collected along with the archival sources that I utilized, I used a multistage process of data analysis. I recorded oral history interviews on my phone then uploaded them to a transcription service. Once I received written transcripts of the

interviews I performed random checks of the transcripts against the actual recordings to ensure accuracy as well as clarify parts of the recording deemed inaudible. After verifying the accuracy of the transcripts, I then set began reading and coding the interviews to identify important themes. In several cases this led me to obtain follow-up interviews from subjects to clarify their earlier comments or to ask for additional clarity on certain statements that the subjects made. After I coded the interviews, I then matched the transcripts with the archival record to ensure alignment on dates, sequences and events. In this way, I sought to triangulate the interviews with published newspaper accounts or archival sources and existing scholarship. Finally, in drafting this study, I sought to preserve informants' actual words rather than to paraphrase.

Bias and Limitations

In blending both archival and oral history sources, there are several identifiable sources of bias and limitations. In the initial outreach for this study, 16 retired black teachers were contacted and asked to participate, of those initial contacts, eight teachers ultimately responded. It is possible that the participating informants had strong opinions on the subject and were thus more inclined to participate. Thus, inclusion bias is a possibility that limits the generalizability of the findings of this research. Similarly, the explicit focus on the experiences of black teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union and the Omission of other racial minorities limit the generalizability of the study's findings across other racial minority groups who have each had their own unique challenges in the Chicago Public Schools and as members of the Chicago Teachers Union. Finally, given the interviewer's and informants' shared experience of being a black teacher in the Chicago Teachers Union, and in two cases shared experience as a CTU delegate, albeit at a significantly later period than the period in question, it is possible that during the interviews, familiarity and shared identities could lead to interviewer bias and or response bias. To mitigate

these biases, all but two of the interviews were conducted via telephone, which can reduce informal body language cues related to responses.

Conceptual Framework

In 1972 paleontologists Niles Eldredge and Stephen Gould published a paper titled “Punctuated Equilibria: An Alternative to Phyletic Gradualism.” The authors challenged the conventional thinking in evolutionary biology that evolution unfolds “as a stately unfolding of changes in large populations.”²⁰ Instead the authors argued that evolution is a process characterized by long periods of stasis interrupted by episodic events of speciation.²¹ In attempting to explain gaps in the fossil record, Eldredge and Gould argue that gaps in the fossil record are to be expected since evolution does not proceed in the slow march of time fashion as championed by proponents of Phyletic Gradualism. Eldredge and Gould instead argue that for too long paleontologists have been viewing the fossil record from a flawed theoretical lens that distorts the record and the evidence. Much of evolutionary paleontology proceeded from the first of Darwin’s major means for evolution, phyletic gradualism. Darwin contended that evolution occurs through phyletic gradualism as well as by splitting of a lineage (speciation). Even in speciation, Darwin contended that similar forces of gradualism were at play. Eldredge and Gould, however, contend that geography isolates species and can lead to genetic change, though that change occurs in fits and starts, compelled by outside forces in the environment and ecology. Thus, the general stratigraphic history of any species is characterized by long periods of stasis

²⁰ Nile Eldredge and Stephen Gould, “Punctuated Equilibria: An Alternative to Phyletic Gradualism,” in *Paleontology*, 83.

²¹ Ibid, 84.

that is only occasionally interrupted.²²

In recent years, social scientists have begun to consider the implications of punctuated equilibrium for social science analysis. The most prominent field to emerge from punctuated equilibrium as a theory in social science has been the emergence of historical institutionalism as a means to explain the development of organizations. Grounded in path dependency theory, historical institutionalists like Paul Pierson argue that understanding complex social phenomenon without attending to its temporal dimensions is unlikely to yield the complex understanding of social processes exemplified by leading social theorists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, according to Pierson, historical institutionalism, by placing heavy emphasis on temporal dimensions, can demonstrate that like other variables constraining complex social development, history matters.²³

Beyond simply stating that the development of political and social institutions is affected by events in the past, historical institutionalists argue that, rather than understand studying the ways in which institutions coordinate mechanisms for sustaining of equilibria, institutions are the result of events happening in the past that have a direct bearing on present circumstances. This does not imply that historical institutionalists are unconcerned with periods of equilibria but that of greater concern is the process of political development and the way that institutions emerge from specific historical conflicts.²⁴ These rational choice theorists emphasize the degree to which institutional arrangements serve to reinforce equilibria through individuals acting to preserve

²² Ibid 94.

²³ Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time*, 2.

²⁴ Steinmo, S. "American Exceptionalism Reconsidered: Culture or Institutions?" in *The Dynamics of American Politics*, Boulder Co: Westview Press, 1994, 108.

their own power and interests whereas historical institutionalists emphasize the process that produces change within an institution or political structure, understanding the ways in which political change is a dynamic process that frequently produces unintended consequences.²⁵

Central to successfully characterizing the ways that institutions emerge from historical events is an understanding of what Paul Pierson refers to as the “Time Horizon” of cause and outcome. There are some events in the social, political, and natural world that take long period of time for the cause of the event to develop yet the event itself happens quickly. An example from the social world might be marriage, often couples spend a considerable amount of time dating yet the actual act of marriage happens very quickly. From the physical world, Pierson describes a tornado as an example from the natural world of an event that has a long period of causation yet a very short duration for the actual event. Conversely, there are events that take very little time to emerge yet the outcome might be long and ongoing. An example of this process of short / long time horizon might be the theory that a massive meteor collided with the Earth 35 million years ago leading to massive climate change. The actual event of the meteor collision lasted but a very short amount of time yet the outcome, significant shifts in global temperatures and the concomitant ecological consequences were long lasting.

While much of social science research has been concerned with the triggering event, less attention has been paid to the ongoing, slow moving processes that make change possible. Historians have long been guilty of providing thick descriptions of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Cuban Revolution, 1968 riots or any number of major events while attending very little to the ways in which the collapse of the cotton industry provided an opportunity for black civil

²⁵ Thelen, Kathleen. “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. (Vol. 2), 384, 1999.

rights activists or the ways in which a demographic shift in the Cuban population provided fertile grounds for Fidel Castro's populist message, or finally how urban renewal policies of the Johnson years contributed to inner city frustrations of 1968. Exploring the rich antecedents inherent in Pierson's quadrant III (table 1) is the focus of this study. Thus, the evolution of the CTU's racial politics and its policies is an example of the rapid change in a short amount of time after what might on the surface appear to be a long period of stasis that in fact represents a long time horizon of cause that would culminate in the short term satisfaction of the demands by black teacher members for greater rights while at the same time opening the path for a long time horizon outcome of black leadership and voice within CTU.

Figure 1 – Time Horizon of Different Causal Accounts

Time Horizon of Different Causal Accounts			
<i>Time Horizon of Cause</i>	<i>Time Horizon of Outcome</i>		
		Short	Long
	Short	I (Tornado)	II (Meteorite / Extinction)
	Long	III (Earthquake)	IV (Global Warming)

Source: *Politics in Time*.

Literature Review

Throughout its history, the American Federation of Teachers has at times been at the forefront of progressive change while at other times local unions have clung to the status quo in the interest of protecting teachers' self-interest and hard-fought collective bargaining rights. Ten years after the 1954 Brown v. Board decision that outlawed segregated schools, major urban

cities like Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia were faced with growing pressure by African-American parents and community groups to address segregated and often second-class facilities in which African-American students learned. In all three of these major cities as well as elsewhere, the drive to integrate schools was met with serious resistance by local school administrators, city politicians, white parents and many white teachers. In Chicago, the Chicago Teacher's Union with a substantial portion of its membership coming from some of the white ethnic neighborhoods that were most directly opposed to school integration, walked a fine line between its official denunciation of racial discrimination and the more protectionist interests of some its members.

Race and Teacher Unionism

There has been little scholarly work on the issue of race within the Chicago Teachers Union. Both Todd-Breland and Dionne Danna each focus on race in the CTU as part of larger narratives about black educational activism and protest in Chicago, respectively. There have been other recently published studies of other locals and how the issue of race in Newark and community control in Ocean Hill Brownsville exposed cleavages within the teacher union movement. There do exist though several important unpublished dissertations that are invaluable in providing an important macro view of the forces that have shaped the CTU. Each contains at least some passing mention of the battle within the CTU over the issue of desegregation. Francis Lanwermyer's *Teacher Unionism* provides a detailed view of the annual attempts on the part of the union beginning in the 1950s to receive an audience with the Chicago Board of Education on salary issues. Her year by year account of the negotiating sessions is important in understanding the nature of the negotiations but reveal little about the tensions within the union over desegregation. Similarly, John Lyons' *Chicago Teachers Union, Politics, and the City's Schools*

covering the same time period as Lanwermeier (1937 – 1970) provides a more thorough analysis of desegregation, albeit as a major obstacle to union solidarity rather than as a sign of a major organizational and ideological fault in organized labor.

Important historical studies of labor have focused on trade unionism to the neglect of professional unionization. Burton Bledstein's *The Culture of Professionalism*, while focusing on the development of higher education concomitant with the development of an upwardly mobile middle class, speaks little to the direct issue of teacher unionism and desegregation, though it offers an interesting conceptual framework to view the race and class-based struggles within the CTU and other urban locals confronting desegregation. Other more traditional labor studies such as Robin D.G. Kelley's *Hammer and Hoe* offer unique insights into basic tensions within organized labor over race. Kelley locates the popular front struggles of the communist party to organize African-American farm workers in the south, within the broader context of race relations paralyzed by paternalism and suspicion. Kelley's work too offers a broader framework for analyzing the complex manners in which African-American teachers reacted to what they often perceived to be paternalistic at best or at worst outright racist actions of union leaders surrounding the issue of desegregation.

Early Teacher Union Histories

Research on teacher unionism follows one of three basic trends. The first trend began in the 1960s and is best characterized as a celebration of the virtues of teacher unionism as an antidote to patronage and inefficiency. The writing on teacher unionism during this period, however, focuses on the tactics used to secure collective bargaining rights as well as the relative success that teacher unions have had in improving the working conditions of teachers. Marjorie Murphy's *Blackboard Unions* is exemplary in providing a sweeping history of both the National

Educational Association and the American Federation of Teachers. Murphy traces the evolution of teacher unions from their earliest incarnations as associations through to the post-collective bargaining era 1980s. Murphy argues quite convincingly that the AFT was often advocating progressive positions on issues of importance to schools as well as to the larger society.

Wayne Urban in his 1971 work *Why Teachers Organized*, while more narrowly examining the issues that forced teachers into forming unions in Atlanta, New York and Chicago, argues that rather than progressive reforms, it was teacher's basic need to improve salaries and work conditions that compelled them to organize into unions. Because of their political clout and influence within local politics, trade unions offered a more potentially successful route to improving conditions than the professional associations, thus the locals in these cities affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

Teacher Union Organization Studies

A second body of research on teacher unionism includes works primarily by political scientists and social scientists interested in examining teacher unions as organizations and within the broader context of local politics. William Grinshaw's work *Union Rule in the Schools* examines the Chicago Teachers Union as an example of an extremely powerful public employee union with the ability to destabilize electoral politics. Grinshaw argues that the power that public employee unions in general but the Chicago teachers Union in particular wields is dangerous in that it is not checked by normal democratic mechanisms of electoral politics. His analysis while useful in attempting to wrestle with the complex relationships developed between teacher unions and local governments severely overstates the power of teacher unions who according to Grinshaw's estimate are insulated from public opinions themselves. By not acknowledging the role that the media and public opinion plays in shaping union politics,

Grimshaw overstates the relative power of teacher unions to act against the wishes of the larger society in pursuing their own narrow economic interests.

Another important political science-oriented work on teacher unionism is Stephen Cole's *Unionization of Teachers*. Cole offers the New York's United Federation of Teachers as a case study in teacher militancy. Citing data collected from surveys conducted within the UFT in the 1960s as evidence to support his claims that the UFT was an important vehicle for increasing teacher militancy and expressing teacher dissatisfaction on a constellation of working conditions issues. An important strength of Cole's work is his attempt to use quantitative data to illustrate the ways in which teacher militancy was translated into actions that might not otherwise be thought of as part of a concerted union effort to express dissatisfaction and change school leadership's positions. By examining sick days, and opinions on striking, Cole helps to display the ways in which collective efforts might be utilized outside of the context of strikes.

Within this broader body of literature helping to contextualize and provide a theoretical framework for interpreting the rise of teacher unionism, a number of biographies are important in helping to gain in general understanding of the topic. Mary Herrick, CTU leader and former AFT Vice president's *Social and Political History of the Chicago Schools* is both a far-reaching study of public education in Chicago as well as a discussion of the union's role in shaping that history. Herrick charts the evolution of the schools from Chicago's frontier days through to the 1970s. Herrick, known during her time as one of the most progressive members of the CTU leadership, paints an all too sympathetic view of the progressive nature of the CTU on issues of race and gender. While Herrick does provide important context to understanding the constellation of issues faced by African-American educators in the 1960s, she stops short of critiquing the union for its intransigence on the issue of teacher transfers and the unequal status of most African-

American educators. Similarly, Robert Reid's collection of essays on Margaret Haley do much to venerate her position within the struggle for trade union status for teachers, it too is limited by its overly celebratory tone.

Local Teacher Union Studies

Recently there has emerged a body of work that is more critical of teacher union's positions on and relationship to the issue of race. This body of work which is typified by Jerald Podair's *The Strike that Changed New York*, seeks to illustrate that teacher unions, in spite of their rhetorical adherence to civil rights and equality for African-Americans are as vulnerable to prejudice and racism as the larger public. In his critical analysis of Al Shanker and the New York United Federation of Teachers, as well as the Ocean Hill – Brownsville local school board, Podair portrays both sides as operating out of a deep sense of suspicion and radically oppositional notions of what exactly the term "community" means. What began as a fight over the meaning and implementation of "Community Control" very quickly degenerated into an intense war of words between the largely African-American Ocean Hill-Brownsville community and the largely white, Jewish UFT teachers. In the end Podair critiques the UFT for its need for complete and uncompromised victory in the case while also critiquing the Ocean Hill Brownsville board for ignoring the due process rights of UFT teachers.

Steve Golin also makes an important contribution to critical scholarship on teacher unionism in his book *The Newark Teacher Strikes*. Golin's work which is unique in its reliance upon documentary and oral history sources, tells the story of two major strikes that reshaped education in Newark, New Jersey as well as local politics in that city. Golin maintains that the first strike for collective bargaining rights in 1969 was a strike based on class as the dominant issue in teacher identity, while fatefully the strike of 1971 was about race and the changing racial

character of the union's and city's leadership. Detailing shifting alliances of ethnic coalitions, and black power groups, and the violence involved in the 1971 strike, Golin argues that the 1971 strike pitted largely white ethnic teachers and parents against African-American community members who viewed the 1970 contract as a betrayal of community needs. What resulted was a protracted, violent strike in which the racial animosity existing between African-American community leaders, parents, and teachers and white ethnic communities was overt and unrebuked in any established political circles. In ignoring the wishes of parents on the issue of non-teaching duties, Golin argues the Newark Federation of Teachers provoked a strike and opened a racial wound still festering from the 1967 Newark riots.

As part of a larger critique of union politics surrounding race and desegregation, Dionne Danns' book *Something Better for Our Children*, is also important. Though the book deals more narrowly with student boycotts and protests in the Chicago Public Schools in 1968, Danns places that movement as part of a larger concerted effort on the part of African-Americans in the city of Chicago to gain community control of schools and other institutions in their respective neighborhoods. Danns includes as part of her study a chapter detailing African-American teachers and their support for student boycotts and opposition to the Chicago Teachers Union president John Desmond. Danns also examines that organization of African-American teachers into a number of anti-union coalitions and organizations spearheaded by Operation Breadbasket. Danns' brief chapter titled "Teachers Defy System" is important and groundbreaking as part of the move towards local and regional studies of union activism.

Other shorter secondary articles appearing in a range of journals are also important in examining teacher unionism during the 1960s and 1970s as well as how local unions dealt with desegregation of schools, and the teaching force. Rene Luiz Alvarez's "There's No Such Thing

as an Unqualified Teacher” appearing in the journal *Historian*, is an important attempt to detail the attempts by the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers to deal with school integration and desegregation. Alvarez, in this local study which is part of his unfinished dissertation on the same topic, puts forth a convincing argument that the PFT was not itself immune to the politics of racial exclusion in attempting to integrate its core of regularly appointed teachers.

Lois Weiner's Obituary of Al Shanker in *Contemporary Education* is also an important critique of Al Shanker and the tactics used by the UFT in the Ocean Hill Brownsville Strike. Though the article is a more round critique of Shaker's shifting ideology, Weiner argues that Shanker's real legacy will be his handling of the Ocean Hill Brownsville crisis, his consolidation of his own power within the AFT, and political opportunism that she argues is a consistent current in his political opinions.

Teacher Unions and Student Achievement

Finally, a fourth trend in teacher union research attempts to understand the impact of teachers unions on student achievement. Joshua Cowen, in *Teacher Unions and Teacher Compensation: New Evidence for the Impact of Bargaining*, examined more than 1000 districts with collective bargaining agreements and some without and concluded that outcomes results of districts with and without collective bargaining agreements are mixed and that bargaining increases expenditures. Johnathan Lott and Lawrence Kenny in their article “State Teacher Union Strength, and Student Achievement” provide evidence that suggests that in states in which teacher unions are strong, student achievement is lower than in states with weaker statewide teacher unions. Other studies in this vein include Robert Carini's “Teacher Unions and Student Achievement,” which conversely points to evidence of modest achievement gains for students who attend districts with collective bargaining agreements in place.

While there is a considerable body of work of both historical and social science nature, detailing teacher unionism, there appears to be a dearth of literature on the issue of race in teacher unions and union positions of desegregation of both student bodies and faculty memberships. Though there is an emergent body of critical local studies related to these issues, Chicago has only recently, with the publication of Todd-Breland's *Political Education*, emerged as a significant contributor to these local studies. To date there exists no study of meaning making among black teacher unionists. While traditions of scholarship detailing the efficacy of unionism and the role that black workers have played in industrial unions, little is known about the historical implications of unionism for the nation's black teachers.

African-Americans and Organized Labor

There exists a still developing body of work on African-Americans in organized labor. The most celebrated of this pool of literature is Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* which deals less explicitly with organized labor but instead chronicles African-American work and family life. Fellow "new labor history" historian David Montgomery's groundbreaking work on black workers such as *Black Workers Struggle for Equality in Birmingham* and *Beyond Equality* each contribute greatly to an emerging understanding of black worker agency during the reconstruction period in the case of *Beyond Equality* and at the turn of the twentieth century in the case of *Black Workers Struggles for Equality*. Eric Arnesen's edited collection of essays *The Black Worker: Race, Labor, and Civil Rights Since Emancipation* provides important insights into the tensions that black laborers often felt within the organized labor movement. On the one hand black workers sought job protections, improved working conditions and higher pay alongside their white, often immigrant counterparts. On the other hand though black workers struggled to reconcile the ideal of worker unionism and solidarity with the

reality or racism, discrimination, and in some cases violence directed at them by white union members.²⁶ Further complicating union participation for black workers was the unwillingness of the federal government to intervene on behalf of black workers even with the creation of federal agencies to adjudicate black worker complaints of bias in the defense contracting arena during world war two.

In his essay “Simple Truths of Democracy” William Powell Jones convincingly argues that liberal white support was key to racial equality and its fractured support during the critical period immediately following World War II made it difficult for black labor organizations to forge an agenda or worker equality. Similar cleavages prevented the mobilization of black porters evidenced in Beth Tomkins-Bates “Mobilizing Black Chicago: The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Community Organizing: 1925 – 41.”

Slow progress on matters of racial equality within the CIO and its affiliated locals coupled with the eventual merger with the American Federation, portended brighter prospects for black unionists during the 1950s and 1960s. However, the gradual collapse of key industries of black union strength such as steel, meat packing, and later automobile manufacturing led to declines in union numbers in general but more acutely amongst African-American workers who often held considerably less rank and seniority than their white counterparts. Nowhere was the

²⁶ See James R. Barrett, “Unity and Fragmentation: Class, Race, and Ethnicity on Chicago’s South Side, 1900 – 1922,” *Journal of Social History* 18 (1984): 37 – 55; James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago’s Packinghouse Workers, 1894 – 1922*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987; Rick Halpern, *Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago’s Packinghouses, 1904 – 1954*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997; Herbert Hill, “Race and Ethnicity in Organized Labor: The Historical Sources of Resistance to Affirmative Action,” *Journal of Intergroup Relations* 12 (1984): 5 – 49; Susan Olzak, “Labor Unrest, Immigration, and Ethnic Conflict in Urban America, 1880 – 1914,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1989): 1312; Cliff Brown, *Racial Conflict and Violence in the Labor Market: Roots in the 1919 Steel Strike*, New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.

old adage of “last hired, first fired” more keenly felt than in heavy industry that provided the economic strength of rust belt cities like Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Thus, at the beginning of the 1960s African-American participation in organized labor was peaking at the very time that overall employment levels in union dominated fields was diminishing.

In education and other public sector unions though African Americans were increasing in numbers at precisely the time that public sector unions gained collective bargaining rights and as a result increased power and importance. While somewhat overstating the power that public sector unions wielded in urban politics, political scientist William Grimshaw nonetheless effectively demonstrates the impact that the Chicago Teachers Union for instance played in Chicago political life during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the period immediately following collective bargaining rights being won.²⁷ In spite of the increasing involvement by black workers in public sector unions, little scholarship has emerged. Interesting questions of union involvement across class a ripe for exploration with further analysis of black involvement in public sector unionism. The perspectives of black teachers, nurses, municipal employees are will undoubtedly deepen our understanding of the ways that race and unionism collide as well as the ways in which unionism has been shaped by race relations.

This study seeks to provide much needed focus and clarity on how African-American teachers, an increasingly powerful political block in Chicago politics during the 1960s understood their roles as members of the Chicago Teachers Union in the midst of contentious struggles within the union over issues like desegregation, transfer rights, pay, and working conditions. Further complicating how these teachers understood their roles as members of the

²⁷ William Grimshaw, *Union Rule in the Schools*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

CTU was the rise of black power politics and increasing demands for community control in urban neighborhoods in Chicago and other large cities. Put simply, which community did black teachers see themselves as belonging to? A community of educators that at times stood in quiet acquiescence with Chicago Board of Education policies that were detrimental to black children and black communities or did they stand in solidarity with elements of the urban poor and working class calling upon the CPS and other local institutions to cede power and authority to communities of color. Finally, how did the radical politics of black educators transform the Chicago Teachers Union in general and shift the outward orientation of the away from strictly bread and butter unionism towards an agenda more responsive to the needs of the students and communities that it serves.

In studying American labor history, what becomes immediately apparent are the relative conventionality of approaches to the field and the polarized positions of labor historians themselves. This essay seeks to chart the ways that labor history could benefit from alternative methodological approaches to research as defined in the *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research*. Recent historians have suggested a willingness to explore alternative methodology though few have challenged the established conventions of methodology or epistemology.

Labor and Immigration History

The historiography of American labor has in recent years undergone a transformation that calls into question “new left” historians of the 1960s while also pointing to the limitations of Marxist histories of American labor that dominated the field until the 1960s. While Eric Bredo narrowly considers the philosophical dimensions of educational research, his essay could easily assume a central position in characterizing historical research. The labor historians of the latter

part of the 20th and early 21st centuries exhibited the prevailing positivist tradition that Bredo aptly describes. Historians such as Oscar Handlin, known as a proponent of the University of Chicago sociological school's totalizing argument concerning the coercive nature of the immigration experience, argued a metanarrative of dislocation and cultural annihilation faced by immigrants at the turn of the century as they sought entry into the nation and its labor force . New Left historian John Bodner however, argued for a more nuanced and elastic explanation that held the possibility of multiple narratives on the American immigration and labor experience. Reflecting a shift towards postmodernism, Bodnar and his contemporary Rudolph Contadini led a school of labor historians that made the epistemological shift towards the possibility that immigrant workers were themselves agents of their own mobility and that mobility depended as much upon immigrant "ways of knowing" and familial responsibilities rather than dogmatic adherence to ideology, for the creation of immigrant cultures and labor unions that were resilient, localized and cultured.

Leon Fink, in his historiographical essay *Labor and Immigration History: First Principles*, articulates a vision for labor and immigration studies similar to George Kelly's in educational research in *Epistemology and Educational Research*. While Fink limits his discussion to two particular subfields of American history, immigration and labor studies, Kelly ambitiously attempts to argue that the various, sometimes competing epistemological approaches to conducting educational research could benefit from greater discourse; critical discourse as he calls it, on methodological treatments and the construction of knowledge. Worth noting, Kelly's argument for the need for critical dialogues is fundamentally a reaction to the contemporary demands for "scientific research." As such it suffers from an imaginative deficit all too common to reactionary calls.

In the case of *Labor and Immigration History*, Fink charts the trajectory of the historiography of both fields while considering the limits of each particular subfields peculiar ideological trends and methodological problems. In the end Fink calls upon labor historians to pay more attention to context in attempting to reconstruct the lives of American workers while exhorting immigration historians to not dismiss nor overemphasize the role that institutions have played in shaping the lives of immigrants and their work experience. Kelly arrives at a similar position while at the same time furthering that position in calling upon researchers in education to engage in critical and hermeneutical conversations within and across groups.

The ethical dimensions of labor studies are similar to those of other historical fields with the added caveat that many of the agents involved in labor disputes in the latter half of the 20th century are still alive and increasingly being interviewed by historians for oral histories. While labor historians would argue for epistemological pluralism like Kenneth Strike, there exist no corpus of ethical obligations for labor historians as is the case for educational researchers. There is for instance no claim among labor historians that their works should contribute to individual and social betterment. On the contrary most labor historians are content to attempt to reconstruct the past as best they can using available evidence deliberately eschewing advocacy or explicit polemical debates on the efficacy of contemporary practices.

Though labor and immigration studies are relatively established sub fields of American history, they have relied almost exclusively on the narrative tradition in historical research as articulated by John Rury. Rury's distinction between narrative and social science traditions in historical research foreground the possibility for alternative approaches to conceiving of research and analyzing the textual data available to historians. Though Rury's definition of the historical process lacks nuance or attention to the more complex questions that historians wrestle with, it

does provide a useful template for conceiving how labor historians among others engage in the various dimensions of writing history. While again Rury situates his analysis of the historical research process within the field of education there is little in his explanation that is not applicable to labor history or almost any other sub field of American history.

As conventional as labor historians tend to be in methodology, Charles Bazerman, Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner suggest alternative possibilities for conceiving of research in education that may hold promise for labor historians. In the case of Bazerman, while he is principally concerned with the ways in which text aimed at or produced by students can be analyzed, a distinct possibility for textual analysis of labor history documents and or speeches is an interesting methodological departure that could serve to complicate historian's views of documents, figures and movements. While historians like Robbie Lieberman have done rhetorical analysis on labor songs, there is little complex analysis of the type that Bazerman suggests among labor historians. Perhaps least applicable as an adjunct to traditional historical methodology, Barone and Eisner's description of art-based research does however contribute to methodological pluralisms in the area of humanities based research. The aesthetic dimension or arts based research limits its possibility in the area of labor studies which are principally concerned with text though there may be possibilities for arts based research concerning labor monuments and the labor artwork of the Works Progress Administration during the great depression.

As historiographical fashions shift according to the larger social and political concerns of society, there has emerged in immigration and labor studies and many others a "crisis of representation" similar to that outlined by Margaret Eisenhart in her useful study of qualitative research in education. Her analysis of the vacuum of relativity brought on by the rise of

postmodernism is analogous in labor studies to raging debates over “whiteness” studies. In 1991 David Roediger published his groundbreaking work *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. In this provocative work which singly ushered in “White Studies” as a bonafide field of study, Roediger argued for the social construction of race by examining the routes to whiteness of America’s various European ethnic communities and suggesting that white workers were in fact the parents of white supremacy. Critics of the “white studies” field like Eric Arnesen charged that the historians of the field had strayed too far afield of conventional archival research into areas of textual analysis and literary criticism, to build solid evidence support conclusions about the nature of race and working-class America. Others critiqued the field insisting that at a time when the histories of women and minorities have begun to take central positions, “White Studies” was returning white males to the center of historical debate. The irony of course is that what emerged in this debate was a debate in which Eric Arnesen and others that would otherwise be identified loosely with postmodernism became the defenders of tradition and established epistemologies of historical research in an effort to further the deconstruction of the very traditions that Arnesen and others have critiqued.

As White Studies and its implications for labor and immigration histories helped to frame or problematize and perhaps polarize labor scholars, another significant methodological trend was shaping the direction of the field. Beginning in the late 1980s, books like Gary Mormino and George Pozetta’s *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and the Latin Neighbors in Tampa 1885 – 1985*, championed a case study approach to American immigration that accentuated the ways in which the Italian experience in Tampa departed from the dominant narrative of Italian immigration to the U.S. and the laboring experience of the Italian immigrant community. While Richard Yin in “Case Study Methods” fails to provide a clear definition of the case study

method, his summary of the useful applications of the approach suggests that in many areas especially in defining how the case study method approach provides an in-depth description of a phenomenon, Mormino and Pozetta's work is exemplary. Mormino and Pozetta also make use of oral histories that hint at narrative inquiry as a legitimate method of inquiry though it like oral history may suffer from major limitations surrounding its reliability. Other examples of very localized labor and ethnic histories emerging after the publication of the *Immigrant World* include David Emmons' *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in and American Mining Town, 1875 – 1925* and Kevin Kenny's *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* which focused on the laboring lives of the Irish in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania. The lack of generalizability that Yin and others admit as a limitation to the case study approach has caused some historians like Leon Fink to question the long term utility of these types of studies.

George Sanchez's *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles 1900 – 1945* on the surface appears to continue the paradigmatic shift towards local studies. While the study does in fact focus narrowly on the Chicano experience in Los Angeles, it differs from the aforementioned study in its reliance on culture and cultural persistence as a significant factor shaping conflict between Chicanos and the larger culture. By examining more closely the culture of the Chicano immigrants to Los Angeles in the period between the Spanish American War and the conclusion of World War II, Sanchez's work is an exemplary ethnography as defined by Katherine Anderson-Levitt in her essay on Ethnography in the *Handbook of Complementary Research Methods in Educational Research*. Sanchez's historical methodology, far more sophisticated and nuanced than that offered by John Rury as representative of the historical method, may in fact add another dimension to the method that Anderson-Levitt suggests as the ethnographic method. Through observation and open-ended

questioning, the ethnographer gains valuable insights into how a community or groups represents itself at a particular moment, Sanchez's skillful use of archival data as well as interviews suggests a place for documentary research in the crafting of rich ethnographies.

Research Question

The rapid transition of the CTU from 1968 to 1984 follows a pattern similar to cities like Newark, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Detroit where the public school systems that had once been dominated by white ethnics was transformed into majority minority systems.²⁸ Unlike New York City where the black teacher population remained relatively low and thus the power of black teachers within the city's United Federation of Teachers was weak, Chicago, Newark, Philadelphia, and Detroit were embroiled in consequential struggles over who would in fact run the city's schools and who would teach the city's increasingly black and brown student populations. While the demographic transformation taking place with Chicago is similar to other major cities in the post-World War Two period, the struggle of black teachers in Chicago is unlike other major metropolises in three ways that distinguish it from Newark, Detroit, and Philadelphia. First, Chicago was and remains uniquely segregated for urban metropolises.²⁹ This segregation would have major consequences for faculty and student desegregation efforts. Second, as the collapse of heavy industry throughout the united States dealt a deathblow to economies in cities like Detroit and Newark, the Chicago regional economy, much more diverse than many of its urban neighbors, was able to weather these industrial shifts though the locus of

²⁸ Alvarez, "There's No Such Thing as an Unqualified Teacher," 842.

²⁹ Silver, "The Most Diverse Cities are Often the Most Segregated," <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-most-diverse-cities-are-often-the-most-segregated/> (Accessed March 15, 2020).

local economies shifted to a service economy and widespread development of suburban office parks by the end of the 1980s.³⁰ The practical implications of this shift meant that Chicago remained a city of haves and have nots and with remaining whites enrolling their students in parochial schools and spending their dollars in suburban locales or remaining white ethnic enclaves within the city. Finally, by the 1980s Chicago's black business class was unrivaled nationally with the city serving as a hub for black owned publishing, consumer goods production, entertainment, and political ambition.³¹ The evolution of black political power within the Chicago Teachers Union can thus be viewed as part of the larger evolution of black political power in America of which Chicago was the epicenter.

In 1968, the CTU elected its first African-American to an executive office. Jacqueline Wright, who is best known and remembered by Chicagoans as Jacqueline "Jackie" Vaughn, was elected as Recording Secretary and would eventually become CTU president in 1984. Much of the existing national research on teacher unions explores the stability that collective bargaining brought to the profession, the political power attained through collective bargaining, and the personalities of figures like Al Shanker. Local studies have recently focused on some of the more problematic dimensions of teacher unionism and the push for collective bargaining which happened to coincide with growing calls for equal membership by black teachers and growing calls for black control of institutions effecting black teachers and students lives. Indeed, in the nearly 70 years of Chicago Teachers Federation (CTF) and CTU history very little regarding the roles, functions, rights, or positions of black teachers in the unions had changed. This study seeks to contribute to the body of local histories of big city unions by exploring two interlocking

³⁰ Guerrieri, et.al, "Within-city Variation in Urban Decline," 123.

³¹ Alkalimat, "Chicago: Black Power Politics and the Crisis of the Black Middle Class," 48.

questions that have been only partially addressed in the existing literature on the history of the Chicago Teachers Union: What was the relationship between the Chicago Teachers Union and black teachers and how did increasing numbers of black teachers within the Chicago Public Schools and the CTU change the union itself? Ultimately, this study will investigate the ways in which the black teacher agency transformed the Chicago Teachers Union within a relatively short period of time as black teachers moved from being outsiders during the 1950s and 60s to insiders in the 1970s and a true power block in the 1980s. This investigation will include the perspectives of black teachers who were themselves living these very transitions.

I utilized a mixed methods approach that uses archival sources to tell the story of CTUs early relationship with its black members together with oral and archival sources to understand how black teachers understood the internal and external politics of the CTU in the years following the CTU's first strike in 1969.

This dissertation fills important gaps in teacher union history, history of black education, black worker studies, and Chicago history. Though much has been written about teacher union history, very little has focused on the role that race has played in shaping teacher union activism. Similarly, much has been written by James Anderson, William Watkins, Dionne Dannels, and Barbara Sizemore on the history of black education though very little attention has been focused on the role that organized labor has played in recent developments in the political economy of black education. Likewise, important works studying black workers in the twentieth century have played scant attention to the mobilization of black professionals in education. This study will approach the linkage between education history and labor similar to the genre of highly localized immigration and labor histories of the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, by including the voices of black teachers themselves, local histories of union politics that have tended to focus on white ethnics

will be strengthened.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation focuses on the early efforts of black teachers to organize within the Chicago Teachers Union. Situated in a context of a relatively weak CTU, the concerns of black teachers were rarely addressed while CTU responses to the civil rights movement were often muted or equivocal. Chapter 2 seeks to provide important historical context for the years preceding rapid and aggressive black teacher mobilization during the late 1960s.

Chapter 3 examines the 1960s and the CTU's early positions on school discipline, integration, and rising black teacher militancy by examining the crisis at Jenner elementary over race and school leadership.

Chapter 4 chronicles the series of wildcat strikes in 1968 and the role that the wildcat strikes played in both emboldening black teacher organizations throughout the city and recasting the political calculus of the CTU. Signaling both a radical defiance of CTU leadership and the organizational impulse of black teachers, the series of wildcat strikes that occurred during the 1967-68 school year was a public expression of dissatisfaction with both the Chicago Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers Union on bread and butter issues that were relevant to black teachers. Oral interviews will focus on organization, the CTU response and community reactions to the strikers. This chapter focuses on the strike ridden 1970s as the Chicago Public Schools and its teachers found themselves in a nearly annual battle over wages and benefits as well as ongoing struggles over faculty integration.

Chapter 5 explores the 1980s and the changing composition of the teaching force and union leadership culminating in the election of Jackie Vaughn as the first black president of CTU in 1984. This chapter also focuses on a shift in focus under Vaughn's leadership, to school reform. Vaughn would lead CTU to engage in two strikes that were pivotal in galvanizing public

opinion and political support for significant reform of the Chicago schools and its teachers.

Chapter 2 - Race, Teacher Unionism, and the Political Economy of Chicago:

1917 – 1964

Introduction

The advent of teacher unionism during the progressive era reflected the increasing importance of the American labor movement as well as an attempt by teachers to advance education as a field while also protecting their jobs from patronage and graft all too common to municipal governments at the turn of the 20th century.³² Since their creation, teacher unions have been a source of controversy. Opponents of teacher unions have argued that teacher unions, through collective bargaining rights won primarily during the 1960s have placed their own narrow self-interest above the interests of the students that they serve. Proponents of teacher unions on the other hand have long argued that teacher unions are the only way for teachers to effectively negotiate fair salaries, promote professionalism, and ensure relative job security for teachers. Teacher unions, specifically the American Federation of Teachers are affiliated with trade unions through their membership within the American Federation of Labor. Their affiliation and identity with trade unionism has at times been a source of tension within teacher unions that have at various times sought to claim a more professional identity devoid of the trappings of trade unionism.

This chapter aims to provide background on early efforts of black workers to organize nationally as well as the early challenges faced by black Chicagoans as they sought to ensure that their children received a quality education in Chicago. As the major organization of teachers in

³² Wayne Urban. *The Unionization of Teachers*. Cleveland: Wayne State University Press, 1982, 34.

Chicago, the Chicago Teachers Union and its early history are an important actor in early debates around black students and the small number of black teachers in Chicago prior to the 1960s. Finally, the chapter explores the impact of national efforts to integrate schools at the local level in Chicago. By exploring the early efforts of black educators to organize nationally and locally with the rapidly changing political economy of black Chicago, this chapter aims to provide a foundation for understanding the relationship that existed between the Chicago Teachers Union and black teachers.

Early History of African Americans in Labor

Historians have ably chronicled the attempts of African-Americans to enter into white trade unions beginning shortly after the civil war and continuing into the second half of the 20th century. Not until John Lewis Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was founded in 1932 was the prospect of full membership and equal rights within affiliated trade unions a possibility. The CIO's rapid growth put considerable pressure on the American Federation of Labor to desegregate its locals and allow African-Americans full participation. World War Two and the rise of industrial capitalism to feed the war effort created new opportunities and new challenges for organized labor in the United States. The passage of the Wagner Act in 1936 and a pro labor Roosevelt administration legitimized organized labor's organizational efforts and helped to create conditions for mass industry necessary to win World War Two by outproducing the Axis Powers.

Labor activity in Chicago and other major industrial centers was critical to the war effort. In steel production and in transportation, black workers asserted their claims for higher wages,

improved working conditions, and an end to Jim Crow employment.³³ At the same time that black steel workers in Chicago and across the nation were increasingly empowered within the labor movement, the close to 100,000 black workers in transportation were marginalized except for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters whose visionary leader A. Phillip Randolph would aggressively press the Roosevelt administration to ban discrimination in the defense industry. As rail traffic dropped from its peak during the 1940s the membership of the BSCP dropped from its peak of around 15,000 to irrelevance by the 1960s.

While black workers in the meatpacking industry struggled to gain full membership and a foothold in the unions that acted as the gatekeepers to higher paying more prestigious jobs, other African-Americans formed their own labor organizations in response to Jim Crow tactics of Chicago labor unions. Both the United Transport Service Employees of America, a union of “red caps,” cooks, custodians, and other rail workers as well as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters emerged in Chicago as large unions of black workers. Both the UTSEA and BSCP were headquartered in the black belt of Chicago. As national unions, though until the passage of the Wagner Act lacking legal collective bargaining rights, the UTSEA and BSCP were visible examples of black worker upward mobility.

In heavy industry, however, black workers during the first and second great migration were frustrated in their attempts to first integrate Jim Crow labor unions of the north. Once allowed to enter union work as a result of executive order number 8802 signed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1941, black workers struggled to advance within the unions and win redress for

³³ In 1942 Phil Murray was elected to lead the newly renamed United Steel Workers and led the union to adopt progressive positions on race by granting black workers full membership and appointing black unionists to leadership positions within the union.

discrimination within the Office of the Fair Employment practices.³⁴ Black migrants to Chicago during world war two then often secured employment in steel, meat packing, manufacturing, and other trade unions though struggled to advance within the unions until the Congress of Industrial Organizations offered alternative representation to trade workers. Whereas the American Federation of Labor was dominated by skilled crafts and artisans operating segregated locals, the CIO sought to organize industrial workers and unskilled laborers in integrated locals.³⁵

A growing labor consciousness yet at the same time weariness on the part of African-Americans in Chicago and in other large industrial centers, helped firmly establish African-American laborers with John Lewis' CIO.³⁶ The war and post war years were an active period on

³⁴ Executive Order 8802 was signed into law on June 25, 1941. The Order barred discrimination in defense contracts. The struggles of black workers to bring cases to the Fair Employment Practice Committee was a recurring theme in Chicago Defender Labor Front columns from 1942 until 1945.

³⁵ The CIO grew out of a split within the AFL over how to organize industrial workers whose numbers increased throughout the 1930s and 40s as the auto industry matured. The CIO was formally organized in 1936. The union sought to educate workers on racial issues in the midst of ongoing strikes by white workers in the auto and steel industries when black workers were promoted to more prestigious positions. See Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955*.

³⁶ The *Chicago Defender*, a black owned, progressive newspaper advocating migration, civil rights, and economic empowerment for African-Americans began publishing a weekly column called the "Labor Front" by George McCray in 1941. In its weekly column, the "Labor Front," the paper, through the column's author George McCray, reflected the peculiar constellation of factors that made the experience of African-Americans during the world war two years distinct from turn of the century immigrants to the northern industrial locales. The end of massive European immigration in 1924 served to by the war years place a premium of African-American labor on the one hand while Jim Crow practices of northern industry and unions stood as a major obstacle to full participation in the nation's industries on the other hand. Rather than a Homefront united towards winning the war, what the *Chicago Defender* portrays from the beginning of the Labor Front column in 1941 until its demise in 1945 is patriotism on the part of African-American leaders and ordinary individuals anxious to do their part to win the war (and in the process advance economically) tempered by the reality of exclusionary practices of major defense contractors and a federal bureaucracy was slow to intervene at best and ambivalent or hostile towards African-American worker demands at worst.

Chicago's labor front. Passage of the National Labor Relations Act better known as the Wagner Act in 1935 legalized union organizing in private industry as well as established an administrative process for addressing violations of the act. Legalized union organizing peaked during World War two and the years immediately thereafter. Concentrated primarily in Chicago's steel mills and packing houses, bitter contests over the exclusion or inclusion of black workers were being waged. Wagner act provisos establishing the right of unions to collectively bargain on behalf of their members did not however extend to public sector unions like teachers, firefighters, police officers, municipal employees. An intense period of organization and collective bargaining in the private sector best exemplified by the famous sit-down strike at General Motors in Flint Michigan had no analog in public sector unionism. Without collective bargaining rights, the period between World War two and 1968 is derisively referred to as the period of "collective begging" in the Chicago Teachers Union and other teacher unions.

Early African-American Teacher Organization

While segregation in trade unions persisted in most industries until the 1955 merger between the AFL and CIO, northern teacher unions were often at the vanguard of integration. Teacher locals in Chicago, Detroit, New York City, Philadelphia and Boston each had written non-discrimination on the basis of race into their charters as far back as the original American Federation of Teachers charter in 1916. Segregated locals were a major discussion in the 1947 and 1950 national conventions.³⁷ Throughout the progressive era, teacher unions or associations continued to develop in urban centers as well as rural areas. In large urban centers where locals were desegregated, there remained relatively few African-American teachers. The largest

³⁷ Dewing, "The American Federation of Teachers and Desegregation," 79.

numbers of African-American teachers were concentrated in segregated schools in the deep south. These black teachers, seeking to improve their professional lives while at the same time advocating on behalf of their students and families established the American Teachers Association in 1904.³⁸ Viewing itself primarily as a professional organization comprised of school teachers, university faculty, school administrators, and other African-Americans working in education, the organization hosted annual conferences that explored topics ranging from literacy for young students to school funding.³⁹ The ATA and its local affiliates made no organized demands typical of trade unions and the AFT, but instead sought to gain favor and influence with local officials. Similar to the National Education Association that would absorb the ATA in 1961, the ATA did not view itself or its members as union advocates nor advocate for collective bargaining⁴⁰

In urban centers such as Chicago, the progressive era saw the rise of a small but growing number of black students and trained African-American teachers. United States involvement in the Great War and the first great migration of African-Americans out of the rural south and into the industrial north, precipitated an increase in the number of black teachers necessary to staff what were in Chicago and other cities often de facto segregated schools. In 1917, 41 of the cities 8316 teachers were black.⁴¹ Unlike subsequent years, these small numbers of black teachers were mainly concentrated in schools that were predominantly white.⁴² By 1930, the number of black

³⁸ Perry, Thelma, *History of the American Teachers Association*, (Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1975, 5.

³⁹ Ibid, 88.

⁴⁰ Dewing, Rolland. "The NEA and Desegregation" 67.

⁴¹ Homel, *Down from Equality*, 28.

⁴² Ibid.

teachers had increased to 308 out of a total teaching population of 13,268 or 2.3% of the total. However, 85% of black teachers in 1930 taught in schools in which the student population was 90 - 100% black.⁴³ At the same time black student enrollment rose dramatically to 33,856 or 5.4% of the student population.⁴⁴ By 1940, black students in the Chicago Public Schools numbered approximately 46,000 or roughly 11% of the student population.⁴⁵

The Political Economy of Black Education in Chicago

Beginning with the first massive influx of African-Americans into Chicago from rural areas of the deep south during world war one, the racial and political landscape of Chicago has been one of constant redefinition. African American migrants from the south entered a city in the midst of a massive influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Thus, African-American migrants to Chicago during and immediately after world war one did what every other group of new arrivals did, they formed their respective civic institutions and settled into a segregated neighborhood of. With only rare exceptions, neighborhoods in Chicago during the interwar years were characterized by rigid segregation.

Settling in what would become known as the “black belt” of Chicago, an area bounded by 22nd street to the north, 55th street to the south, the lake to the east and Lake Parkway to the west, black migrants to Chicago sought employment in one of the cities many meat packing plants or steel mills. At a time of intense labor strife, not surprisingly, black workers were often brought into labor disputes between packing executives and labor unions as strikebreakers.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁴⁵ Havighurst, *The Public Schools of Chicago*, 54.

Black Teachers in Chicago

As black migrants adjusted to life in Chicago, the unequal education facing black children emerged the prevailing civic issue for those in black Chicago concerned with education. Black migrants that had celebrated freedom from overt lessons of black inferiority in Dixie were quick to recognize the unequal treatment of black youth in Chicago. By 1930, overcrowding and double shifts in black schools had become the norm. In 1922, only 2 of 34 schools operating on double shifts were predominantly black. By 1939, 13 of the 14 schools operating on double shifts were predominantly black.⁴⁶ In 1939 Mayor Edward Kelly gave in to years of pressure by the African-American community to appoint an African-American to the school board. Physician and insurance executive Midian Bousfield, husband of the city's first African-American principal Maudelle Bousfield joined a pliant Board of Education that had through the interwar years resisted African-American civic pressure to address overcrowded conditions in black schools.⁴⁷ To the dismay of many activists, Bousfield displayed no outward hostility towards the overcrowded conditions in black schools. In rare cases of direct action during the interwar period, analogous to similar episodes during the 1960s, black parents in the southwest side neighborhood of Beverly in 1926 brought suit against the Board of Education over the attendance zone boundaries of Shoop elementary. Judge Otto Kerner, father of future Illinois Governor of the same name, rejected the suit thus leaving the Shoop boundaries intact.⁴⁸ A

⁴⁶ Chicago Board of Education, *Annual Directory, 1940-41*, p. 429. Chicago Board of Education Archives.

⁴⁷ Michael W. Homel, "The Politics of Public Education in Black Chicago, 1910 – 1941," *The Journal of Negro Education*, 45:2 (Spring 1976): 185.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 187.

decade later, overcrowding remained a concern that provoked parents of the Lilydale community on the far south side to win a major victory against the Board of Education's use of portable buildings to ease overcrowding. Pickets, petitions, threats to disrupt Board of Education meetings, and vandalism of the temporary structures forced the Board of Education to begin construction on a permanent facility that opened in the spring of 1937.⁴⁹

Calls for the increased appointment of black teachers and administrators in black schools emerged as a demand of black Chicago during the late 1930s. Black Chicago supported William "Big Bill" Thompson in his mayoral bid in 1927 and were rewarded with patronage appointments to unskilled positions as building janitors, school clerks, and truant officers. As many as 2500 unskilled and semi-skilled jobs at the Board of Education were given to black patrons.⁵⁰ These unskilled or low-skilled positions accounted for 803 of the 1153 black employees of the Chicago Board of Education in 1929.⁵¹

Though increasing in numbers by 1930, black teachers, especially in areas outside of the "black belt" were uncommon.⁵² Black teachers at Wendell Phillips High School and other surrounding black belt schools had until the 1930s been used as political patronage to leading black families. At Phillips, for instance, the daughter, sister, and niece of a prominent black politician were able to secure appointments.⁵³ Increased black population and the concomitant

⁴⁹ *Chicago Defender*, Mar. 7, 1936, p. 9, Mar. 14, 1936, p.6, Mar. 21, 1936, p.8, Apr. 4, 1936, 1, Sept. 19, 1936, 12, Oct. 3, 1936, 25, May 8, 1937, 14.

⁵⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1939, p13.

⁵¹ Herrick, *The Negro Employees of the Chicago Public Schools*, 96.

⁵² Herrick, "Negro Employees of the Chicago Board of Education," 77.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 88.

increase in political clout of black Chicago thus provided well-connected and loyal political families with an entry into employment with the Chicago Board of Education. Certified and experienced educators from areas of the deep south also emerged as classroom teachers in the Chicago schools during the depression years. Schools on the southside with student populations that were 85 – 100% black were likely to have substantial numbers of black teachers. Of the estimated 308 black teachers in Chicago in 1930, 272 taught in schools with student populations that were 85 – 100% black.⁵⁴ Mixed schools, on the other hand, with black populations between 15 – 75% were less likely. Mixed schools were often situated on racial boundary lines. Fear of alienating white parents deterred principals from hiring black teachers in these border schools.⁵⁵ Schools with few to no black students such as Skinner, Dante, Dore, King, Goodrich and other schools in immigrant communities were likely to employ 1- 3 black teachers.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid 94.

⁵⁵ Ibid 20.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 21.

Figure 1 – Schools and Black Population on Chicago's South Side 1930 Census

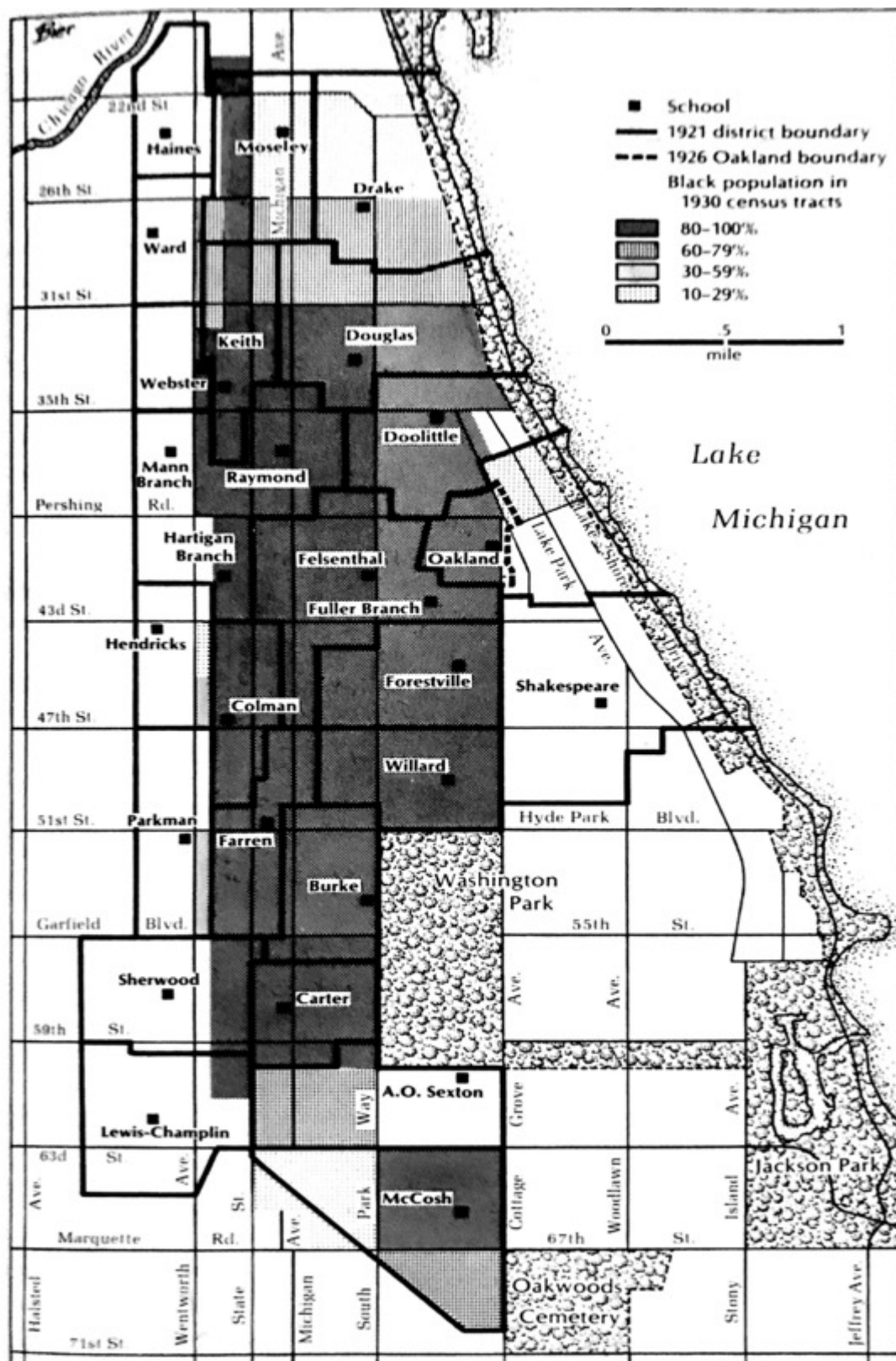
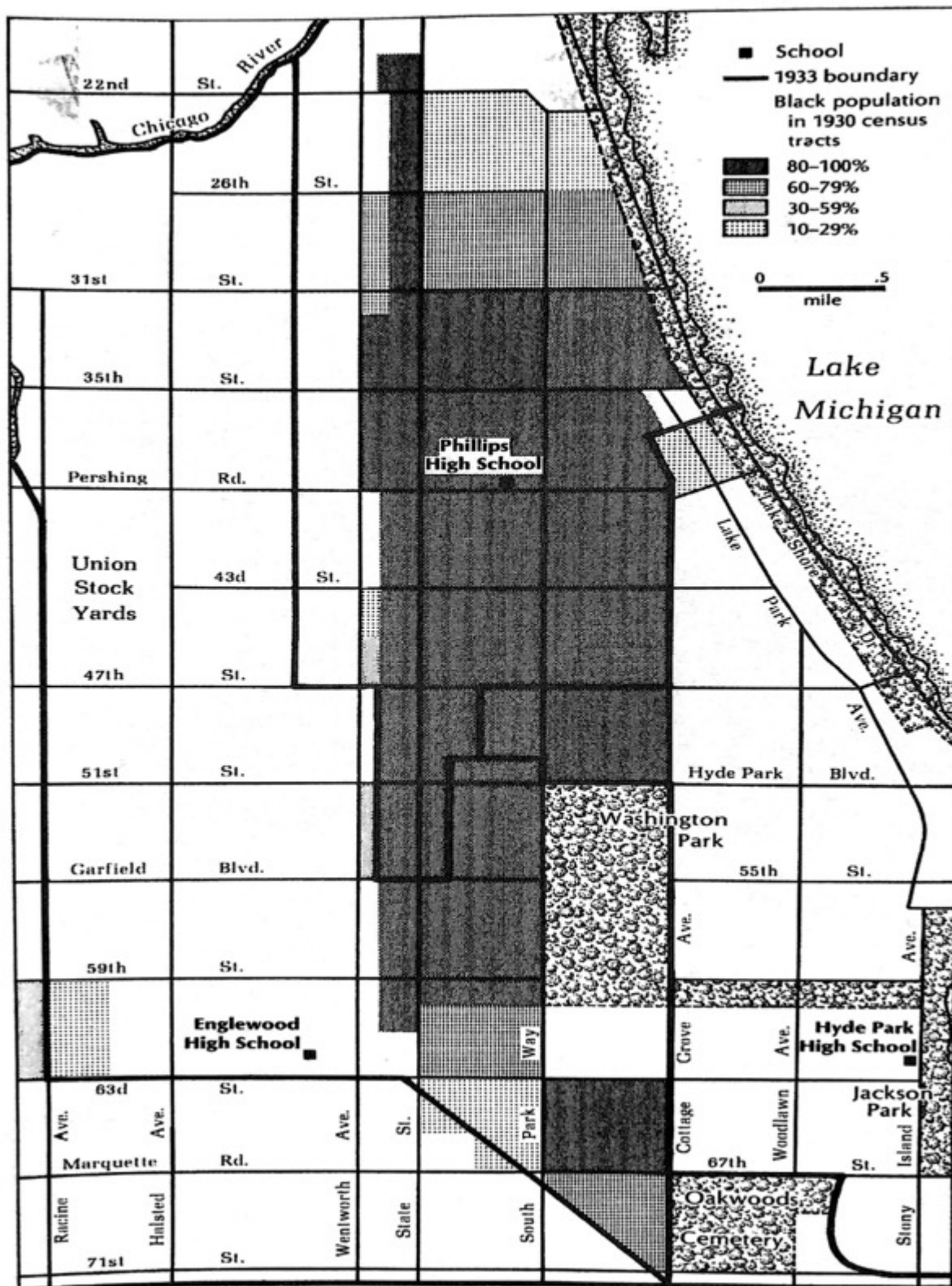
Source: Homel, *Down from Equality*, 37

Figure 2 – High Schools and Black Population on Chicago's South Side 1930

Source: Homel, *Down from Equality*, 38

An even more pronounced need for black teachers was provoked by the second great migration after World War II. Though the number of black teachers within the newly reorganized Chicago Teachers Union likely increased, there was no subsequent improvement in black teachers standing within the union. No black teacher ran for executive office nor were any black teachers appointed to lead committees. Nonetheless the CTU did however write within its bylaws a statement of nondiscrimination in 1937 when the CTU was born. In spite of the rapid growth in the number of black students and black teachers in the Chicago Public Schools during the first and second great migrations, black teachers by 1950 still accounted for a very small number of the total teaching force and were concentrated in black belt schools isolated from white teachers who were largely silent on issues of black teacher pay, working conditions, and segregation. Progressive white CTU leaders like Lilian Herstein and Mary Herrick were important voices for equal rights for women and civil rights for African-American teachers though their voices and influence were largely ignored by the overwhelmingly white union membership that saw little reason to actively embrace the concerns of black rank and file educators.

Little is known about the first African-American members of the Chicago Teachers Union. Though the CTU, like other big city locals in Philadelphia, Atlanta, and New York, succumbed to the communist hysteria of the 1920s in not protesting the Loeb rule, the Chicago Teachers Federation was considered progressive due to its early adoption of progressive reforms sought in other cities such as equal pay for male and female teachers.⁵⁷ The creation of the Chicago

⁵⁷ Anti-communist hysteria in state capitols across the nation produced legislation such as the Chicago Board of Education's Loeb Rule which forbade public school teachers from affiliating with any organized labor organization. The Loeb rule and the Illinois Supreme Court decision upholding the rule effectively destroyed Margaret Haley's Chicago Teachers Federation, the forerunner of the Chicago Teachers Union. In New York, anti-communist legislation provoked a

Teachers Union in 1937 created new opportunities for union leadership.⁵⁸ Pioneer leaders of the CTU, Mary Herrick, former president of the Women's High School Teachers Union and Lillian Herstein, and John Lee, a prominent African-American teacher involved in union politics, worked aggressively to ensure that the CTU advocated progressive positions on civil rights issues from the 1930s until the 1950s.⁵⁹ Counting as her pupils at Phillips and Dusable High Schools, the likes of John H. Johnson, Dempsey Travis, and Harold Washington, Herrick worked within the CTU to promote racial equality within the union to improve the number of black teachers choosing to become union members. In 1943, the CTU created and promoted an anti-racist curriculum for secondary schools.⁶⁰ In spite of progressive positions on civil rights during the 1930s and 1940s there were few African-American teachers in the CPS thus relatively few black members of the CTU.

Early History of the Chicago Teachers Union

The American Federation of Teachers did not keep records of the racial composition of its locals until the 1950s. Some have estimated that in the late 1920s there were as few as eleven

rupture within the New York Teachers Union. The resulting split produced two competing teacher unions, the NYTU and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). See Mary Herrick, *A Social and Political History of the Chicago Public Schools*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Press, 1971, 68; Marjorie Murphy, *Blackboard Unions*: Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990, 139.

⁵⁸ The Chicago Teachers Union, American Federation of Teachers Local 1 was an amalgamation of four separate teacher unions that existed in Chicago from the progressive era through to 1937. Those unions; The Chicago Teachers Federation, the Chicago Federation of Men's Teachers, The Federation of Women High School Teachers and the Elementary and Playground Union merged to create one union to represent the city's teachers in 1937.

⁵⁹ Lyons, John. *Teachers and Reform*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 110.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 144.

black teachers in desegregated AFT locals in northern states.⁶¹ Though the Chicago Public Schools employed over 300 black teachers by 1930, neither the Board of Education nor any of the 4 separate unions representing teachers documented the number of black teachers among their ranks. Lillian Herstein, the recording secretary of the Chicago Teachers Federation, the umbrella organization for the four separate locals in Chicago until their 1937 merger, estimated in 1930 that there were 60 black members out of an eligible pool of 278.⁶² The roughly 10% of black teachers that were members of the Chicago teacher unions were largely invisible at union functions and rallies except for Clarence Lee, a black teacher from Wendell Phillips high school who was a vocal supporter of CTU during the 1930s and 1940s and served on the executive board from 1942 to 1948.⁶³

First elected as president of the Men's Teachers Union (MTU) in 1931, John Fewkes emerged as a major voice advocating for teacher rights in Chicago. Fewkes' leadership during the years in which teachers were routinely paid in script culminated with a violent clash between teacher union activists and the Chicago police on April 24, 1933. In massive protests, 5000 teachers assembled in Grant Park to march on local banks thought that had refused to buy tax warrants. Once inside banks, angry teachers broke windows, destroyed bank furniture, and vandalized facilities until the police arrived.⁶⁴ The crisis over teacher pay and angry

⁶¹ Sterling Spero and Abraham Lewis, *The Black Worker*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931) 69.

⁶² Mary Herrick, "Negro Employees of the Chicago Board of Education," 77 – 79.

⁶³ John Lyons, *Chicago Teachers Union, Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 - 1970*, University of Illinois Chicago, Dissertation, 2001, 111 - 112.

⁶⁴ Tyack et. Al., *Public Schools in Hard Times*, 43; and Braun, *Teachers and Power*, 45 – 46.

confrontations with the business community changed the attitude of many teachers about their place in Chicago politics. Many became convinced that only through a strong union would teachers be able to protect their self-interests, thus in 1937 the city's four teacher unions merged to form the Chicago Teachers Union. Amidst a pro-labor national climate, teacher unionism in Chicago capitalized on the national and local support for unions to organize. By October of 1938, 3230 high school teachers (73 percent) and 4375 elementary teachers (51% of the total number of elementary school teachers) had joined the CTU under President John Fewkes' leadership.

The early years of the Chicago Teachers Union were dominated by what Francis Landwermeyer would call the period of "collective begging," in which, absent a collective bargaining agreement with the Board of Education, the CTU was reduced to annual pleas to meet with school superintendents to address concerns and proposed salary increases. These requests were routinely ignored or rebuffed.⁶⁵ As an umbrella organization for all who worked in the schools, CTU represented both principals and teachers. One of its most public organizing campaigns was against the Board of Examiners for unfair examination and hiring practices directed towards principals.⁶⁶ The CTU sought legislation to create a competitive process for members of the Board of Examiners with written and oral examinations. The Special Education Commission that would score potential examiners would come from the faculty of the University

⁶⁵ Francis Landwermeyer, *Teacher Unionism, Chicago Style: A History of the Chicago Teacher's Union, 1937 - 1972* University of Chicago Dissertation, 1978, 127.

⁶⁶ In 1939 Mr. Raymond Cook and Lyle Wolfe were transferred from positions as teachers at the Chicago Normal College to teachers at Hyde Park High School and Tilden High School because they ran afoul of the oral examiners. CTU claims that examiners against Mr. Cook and Wolfe were instructed by Supt. Johnson to fix the results against the two men according to an affidavit by one of the examiners J.J. Zmrhal. CTU Papers Box 18 Folder 1

of Illinois, the Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Loyola University, and Northwestern University.⁶⁷ In addition to CTU, the City Club of Chicago called upon the Board of Education to not renew Superintendent Johnson's appointment due in large part to his use of patronage and abuse of the principal selection process.⁶⁸ Johnson himself responded to the criticism by proposing to reform the Board of Examiners in a manner similar to CTU's proposal.⁶⁹ Johnson and the Board of Examiners recognized the criticism that the oral examination was potentially biased and attempted to address it by paying the committee to be drawn from the faculty of the University of Illinois, the Illinois Institute of Technology, the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Loyola University, and Northwestern University.

"It shall be the function of this committee to appraise the candidates appearing before them in terms of personality, traits, attitudes, ability to express themselves, grooming and appearance..."⁷⁰

At the same time, black Chicagoans, increasingly frustrated by the deterioration of schools in the black community, were voicing their concerns and appealing for increased investment.⁷¹ During the hearings for the 1940 proposed budget for the Chicago Public Schools,

⁶⁷ Report of the Legislation Committee Concerning A Board of Examiners and Merit, CTU Papers Box 14 Folder 2.

⁶⁸ Record of William H. Johnson, As Superintendent of Chicago Schools, CTU Papers Box 14 Folder 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Letter to Board President James McCahey, William Johnson, December 11, 1940, CTU Papers Box 37 Folder 10.

⁷¹ Stenographic Report of Special Meeting of the Board of Education "Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget for 1939." CTU Papers Box 18 Folder 1, Stenographic Report of Special Meeting of the Board of Education "Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget for 1939." CTU Papers Box 18 Folder 2.

Joseph Jefferson representing the Chicago Urban League spoke to the Board about 11 of 16 schools in the black community running on half day shifts. And while the Urban League appreciated the new Wendell Phillips high school, other schools in the community, according to the 1932 *Report of the Survey of Schools*⁷² needed to be replaced with new buildings. Mrs. Albert George of the Northern District Association of Colored Women urged the Board to appropriate funds for a full high school program at the two black high schools, Dusable and Phillips, so that students could qualify for four-year college.⁷³

In 1941, Ira Turley replaced John Fewkes as the President of the CTU. When WWII broke out, the CTU pledged full support to Mayor Kelly and the war effort. The Board of Education began to meet with the CTU to discuss mobilization. Chicago Vocational High School was turned over to the Navy for use during the war. By supporting Mayor Kelly during the war, the union was able to increase its public appeal. The union fully endorsed racial harmony during the war, publishing a course on Negro history (written by Madeline Morgan and Bessie King Bland) that was requested by teachers all over the country. The war effort of the union affected the union in trimming some of its social events and committees. The CTU and Chicago teachers helped Chicago become the leading city in terms of the war effort with Mayor Kelly receiving the Army's Award of Merit for the city's efforts. though the board used demotions to silence its most vocal critics. CTU President Turley agreed to stop criticizing the board and support Kelly's

⁷² In 1932 the Board of education commissioned a report from researchers at Columbia University on the state of school buildings in Chicago otherwise known as the Strayer report. The report was the most exhaustive to date view of the district's capital resources.

⁷³ Stenographic Report of Special Meeting of the Board of Education "Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget for 1939." CTU Papers Box 18 Folder 1, Stenographic Report of Special Meeting of the Board of Education "Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget for 1939." CTU Papers Box 18 Folder 2.

re-election bid in return for concessions. As part of a deal with the board, the union dismissed Eby, who was increasingly independent from Turley and the rest of the union leadership. By 1944 Turley had consolidated his power and established an accommodationist relationship with the board. However, there was a rank and file revolt over the issue of the single salary schedule for elementary and high school teachers.⁷⁴

In the period immediately following the war, Superintendent Johnson and the Chicago Board of Education would be engulfed in a controversy over abuse of power and ethics. In 1945 after receiving no cooperation from the Board, the National Education Association published a report that criticized the administration of the schools. The report said alleged that the McAhey-Johnson Board meddled in the Chicago Teachers College and appointed faculty based on political affiliation. The Board's transfer policy was abused allowing approximately 200 transfers per month. The report also criticized the fact that many of Johnson's own textbooks were in wide use in the system. Finally, the report condemned Board President McAhey for overreaching his authority.⁷⁵ Though the city council exonerated the Board, the North Central Association threatened to unaccredit the schools if an independent board was not established. The mayor appointed a task force of university professors who recommended that the whole board should resign. By May of 1947 the entire Board of Education had resigned.⁷⁶

CTU elected Arthur Walz President in 1945. Under the leadership of President Walz,

⁷⁴ For complete discussion of the CTU during the war years see John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*.

⁷⁵ Francis Landwermeyer, *Teacher Unionism, Chicago Style: A History of the Chicago Teachers Union, 1937 - 1972* University of Chicago Dissertation, 1978, 132.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 135.

CTU issued its Schools Program affirming the right of all students to receive a quality education regardless of race, religion, or economic standing. The statement further affirmed CTUs commitment to merit in employment without discrimination based upon race, religion, or gender.⁷⁷ In spite of this statement the Walz regime came into office facing a revolt among male high school teachers who objected to the single salary schedule for men and women. This opposition to the perceived feminization of the profession and the low pay accorded high school teachers led a group of men to form the Men's Teachers Club in 1946. The group attracted about 800 members. The CTU was forced to react though so as to not lose female members, thus they reiterated their support for a single salary schedule and equal pay for equal work. The MTC appeared before the Board and demanded a higher salary for male teachers as heads of households. The Board denied the request.⁷⁸

In 1948, CTU re-elected John Fewkes to the presidency, an office that he had left to assume leadership of the American Federation of Labor. During the war Fewkes worked for the War Production Board. After the war, he returned to work as a Physical Education teacher at Tilden High School and mount his campaign for union president.⁷⁹ Upon his return to leadership in the early 1950s, CTU, like the rest of the nation, particularly those in organized labor were in the midst of a nationwide communist hunt that culminated in CTU begrudgingly urging its members to sign loyalty oaths. CTU urged its members to sign the oath and if necessary

⁷⁷ "The Chicago Teachers Union Schools Program", Chicago Teachers Union, June 26, 1946, CTU Papers Box 29. Folder 1

⁷⁸ John Lyons, *Chicago Teacher's Union, Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 - 1970*, University of Illinois Chicago, Dissertation, 2001, 167 - 168.

⁷⁹ Francis Landwermeyer, *Teacher Unionism, Chicago Style: A History of the Chicago Teacher's Union, 1937 - 1972*, University of Chicago Dissertation, 1978, 145.

accompany the oath with a letter of protest. CTU had opposed passage of the legislation and pledged to work to repeal it.⁸⁰ Two major events of the 1950s would significantly shape the trajectory of Chicago, its schools, teachers, and the black teachers within their ranks. In 1953, after 5 years as Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, George Hunt stepped down and was replaced by Dr. Benjamin Willis, outgoing leader of the Buffalo, New York public school system. In 1955, Chicagoans elected Richard J. Daley to replace Mayor Martin Kennelly.

Fewkes style of personal diplomacy was well suited for work with the incoming schools Superintendent who was lauded in the press as a reformer. Willis in fact made it a point to meet with Fewkes in his first week in Chicago.⁸¹ The new superintendent would control lucrative contracts since a school construction bond had been passed in 1951. Willis' appointment was seen as a victory for the reform wing of the board. Willis' initial statements on the school system stressed the need for efficiency with only vague references to working with teachers.⁸² The 1954 salary negotiations began with Willis proposing a single salary schedule with 14 steps and an end to the discrepancy in hours worked between elementary and high school teachers. The union salary schedule retained the differential in pay between elementary and high school teachers. The Civic Federation also put forth its idea for a single salary schedule. Willis rejected the union proposals as too costly and again put forth his proposal. The CTU was considering a range of protests against the fact that the current Willis proposal contained small increases while they had

⁸⁰ Union's Position on Loyalty Oaths, Chicago Teachers Union, October 1, 1955, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 18 Folder 1

⁸¹ Letter from Ben Willis to John Fewkes, August 17, 1953, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 39, Folder 6.

⁸² Francis Landwermeyer, *Teacher Unionism, Chicago Style: A History of the Chicago Teacher's Union, 1937 - 1972*, University of Chicago Dissertation, 1978, 166.

received no increase in the previous schedule.⁸³

CTU and Black Teachers During the 1950s

The vast majority of black teachers taught as Temporarily Employed Teachers.⁸⁴ Within CPS, teaching certificates were given in three categories. First were regular teachers who had met all state certification requirements and passed both the written and oral examination conducted by the Chicago Board of Examiners. Temporarily Employed Teachers on the other hand, met state certification requirements but had not passed Chicago Board of Examiners examinations and were thus vulnerable to layoffs and paid less money than regular teachers. Finally, day to day substitutes were certified within the Chicago Public Schools. In 1956, the CTU clarified membership criteria for different classes of teachers. Full membership was open to anyone who held a permanent certificate from Board of Examiners; Associate members were teachers who held a temporary certificate and who served as substitute continuously for one full year prior to application, all subs who had been assigned TET, and trade schoolteachers on temporary certificates.⁸⁵ In 1958, CTU appealed to the Board on behalf of TETs and won additional pay. Instead of being paid only on the first step of their respective lane, TETs would be eligible to move to step 5 of their respective lanes. TETs who did not meet qualifications or who failed certifying exams were paid on step 1 of the appropriate salary lane.⁸⁶ TETs, later to

⁸³ Ibid, 169.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 231.

⁸⁵ *Information for Delegates on Persons Eligible for Membership into the Chicago Teachers Union*, Chicago Teachers Union, April 26, 1956, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 1.

⁸⁶ Like most school districts, the Chicago Public Schools bases pay on years of experience (steps) and education level (lanes). For example, a first year teacher with a Bachelor's degree

be renamed Full Time Basis (FTB) substitutes, were allowed membership in the CTU as Associate Members.

Active Associates or those who were actively teaching on a daily basis paid only partial union dues (\$20 per year compared to \$30 per year for regular members). Active Associates elected members to represent them in the CTU House of Delegates at a rate of 1 representative per 100 Associate members which in 1961 resulted in 11 Associate representatives. These eleven representatives had full voting power within the CTU House of Representatives and extended all union benefits except the right to vote in union elections or run for office outside of their own Associate group.⁸⁷ The concerns of Associate members assumed ever greater importance within CTU as the number of TETs and later FTBs grew. In 1962 CTU estimated that there were 4200 TETs serving nearly 127,000 or over $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total CPS school population.⁸⁸

Black Students, Black Teachers and CTU - The Integrationist Years

As mass movements and protests against unjust local, state, and federal policies grew nationwide and the Chicago civil rights community was organizing for mass movements and direct action, the Chicago Teachers Union's primary concerns were securing collective bargaining rights for members, school discipline, and member recruitment. Throughout the

would be paid an amount determined for Lane 1, Step 1 teachers, while a teacher with a Master's Degree in year 4 of their career would be paid the amount determined for teachers in Lane 2, Step 4. CPS Asst. Superintendent Lester Schloerb, *Memo to T.E.T.s*, April 1, 1958, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

⁸⁷ John Fewkes, Letter to Associate Members, October 19, 1961, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

⁸⁸ John Fewkes, Letter to Board President William Caples, January 19, 1962, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

decade the ideological and practical divide between CTU leadership, regular members and black teachers and FTBs would widen as the union focused exclusively on bread and butter union issues, and school discipline as its black teacher base grew increasingly unwilling to accept second class membership nor subordinate the needs of black students to a singular focus on wages.

As early as 1954 the *Chicago Union Teacher*, the monthly newsletter of the Chicago Teachers Union began writing stories on the emerging discipline issues faced by teachers. In its Report on Discipline the CTU recommended that:

1. Class size be capped at 25,
2. Experts attention be focused on discipline problems,
3. administrators and all civic stakeholders recognize their role in supporting school discipline efforts,
4. administrators and teachers establish a uniform system for dealing with discipline,
5. Child study or psychology department be augmented,
6. Parents be educated on proper discipline techniques.⁸⁹

In 1962, CTU President Fewkes predicted that the lack of school discipline and the support of parents for students no matter how ‘fantastical their behavior’ would lead to an exodus of quality teachers from CPS.⁹⁰ Earlier that year, CTU called upon civic, religious, and other organizations to support the Board and law enforcement in preventing “invasions” of

⁸⁹ Report on Discipline, Chicago Teachers Union, August 10, 1954, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 11.

⁹⁰ John Fewkes, Letter to Board President Clair Roddewig, November 5, 1963, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 11.

schools by individuals and groups disrupting schools through sit-ins.⁹¹ By 1963 the CTU regularly featured information for members on discipline matters. Also that year as direct action had spread to schools, CTU leader John Fewkes found himself and the union increasingly at odds with black parents and community members.⁹²

Central to the arguments made in support of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision declaring school segregation in schools unconstitutional was a recognition that due to the long history of racism in the United States and its pernicious effects on black students, segregated schools were inherently unequal insofar as white schools were better equipped and resourced.⁹³ Throughout the South black schools received less funding for textbooks, capital improvements, and teachers. In Chicago, where the demographic transformation of the school system was in full swing by 1955, black students were attending overcrowded, under-resourced schools sometimes staffed by less experienced teachers or teachers seeking to “do their time” before transferring to “more desirable” schools.⁹⁴ The fight for integration in Chicago then can be viewed as a struggle for resources for black students and better resources (pay, job security) for black teachers.

The integrationist ethos that was pervasive nationally, saw its expression in Chicago through continued calls by black leaders and others for CPS to do more to integrate schools and the teaching force. Black schools were overcrowded, often operating double shifts while some

⁹¹ Press Release, Chicago Teachers Union, February 16, 1962, CTU Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

⁹² Parents Association for Child Education criticized union president John Fewkes for labeling the group irresponsible for engaging in a sit-in at Beale elementary to protest the current principal. Fewkes criticized the group after meeting with the school’s union delegate who was also the assistant principal. Author Unknown, “PACE Strikes Back at CTU”, *Chicago Defender*, September 23, 1963, 1.

⁹³ Kugler, *Simple Justice*, 22.

⁹⁴ Robert Havighurst, 346.

white schools were underutilized. Black schools were more likely to be staffed by new teachers or substitute teachers. White residents, aldermen and the Board of Education, rather than allow black students to transfer to nearby under enrolled white schools sought the construction of new schools in black neighborhoods. Elected officials in many cases solidified their support within their respective wards by petitioning the Board of Education for white kids living in mixed neighborhoods to be able to transfer to white schools in surrounding areas. The Board of Education maintained segregation through its emphasis on neighborhood schools. The Board took no measurable steps to integrate the teaching force.⁹⁵ In 1956 Willis embarked on a massive building campaign that resulted in the construction of 208 new elementary schools, 13 new high schools, a junior college and new teachers college on the north side.⁹⁶ Through these construction projects, Willis was able to eliminate double shifts that were common in overcrowded schools in African-American communities. Willis won the support of the business community and white community because of his adherence to the principle of neighborhood schools. The building program accentuated segregation in constructing new schools in black neighborhood rather than transfer black students to nearby white schools. While new schools were being built double shifts, and Willis Wagons, were the preferred method for dealing with overcrowding in the schools.⁹⁷

1960 Census data compiled by the Chicago Public Schools reveal a complex picture of

⁹⁵John Lyons, *Chicago Teacher's Union, Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 - 1970*, University of Illinois Chicago, Dissertation, 2001, 231 - 232.

⁹⁶ Long note on Ben Willis as foil for Mayor Daley's preference for maintaining segregated schools from *Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago's Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education*.

⁹⁷ Willis Wagons was a pejorative term coined in the local black press to refer to mobile classroom units in which instruction would be held in overcrowded black schools.

race and income. The Chicago Public Schools were organized into 21 geographically based districts that roughly approximate established neighborhood lines. The five districts with the lowest median years of school completed (less than nine) were Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Englewood, North Lawndale, Pilsen / Lower West Side. However five districts with the lowest income were the predominantly African-American neighborhoods of North Lawndale, Auburn Gresham, Pilsen, Englewood, and Bronzeville. The five districts with lowest levels of males employed as professional, technical, and kindred workers and managers were again African-American communities of Garfield Park, Auburn Gresham, North Lawndale, Englewood, Washington Park. The neighborhoods with the highest percentage of African-Americans residents were Washington Park (99), Bronzeville (85), Auburn Gresham (82), Englewood (76), Woodlawn (58). Conversely the five districts with highest percentage of non-white other than negro populations were Lincoln Park (3), Bronzeville (2), Ravenswood (2), Rogers Park/Edgewater/Uptown (2), and Woodlawn.⁹⁸ That year CTU President Fewkes in his Keynote speech at the Annual Education Conference referred to integration is a major problem throughout the nation and applauded the teachers of Chicago for handling the problem in a truly American way during a period of massive immigration and neighborhood change.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Chicago Public Schools, 1960 CPS Census Tract Data by School Districts, April 20, 1961, Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 76 Folder 862.

⁹⁹ John Fewkes, "Exploding Schools: Explosive Problems for Teachers," May 8, 1961, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 18 Folder 1.

Figure 3 - 1960 Education Levels Across CPS Districts 1960 Census

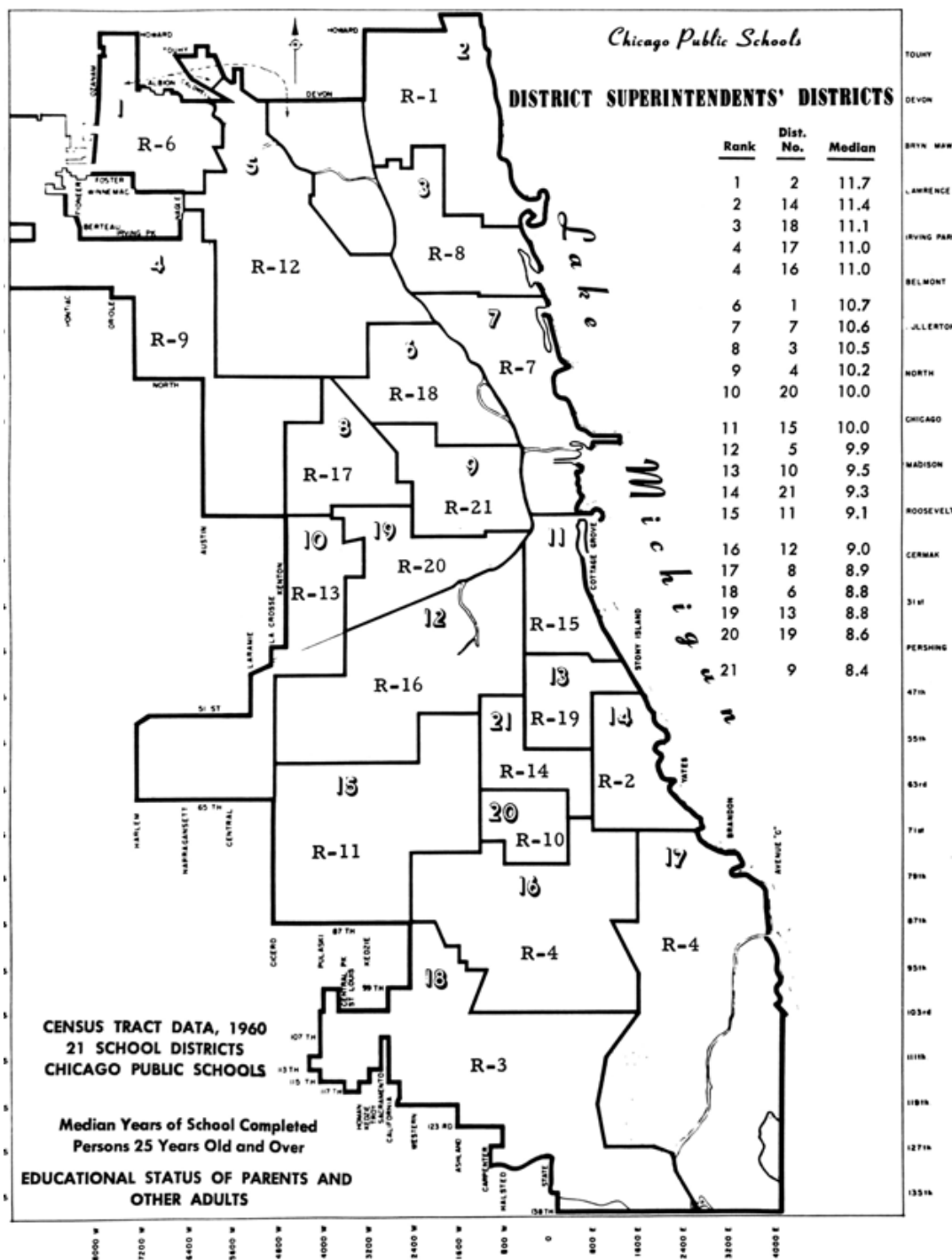
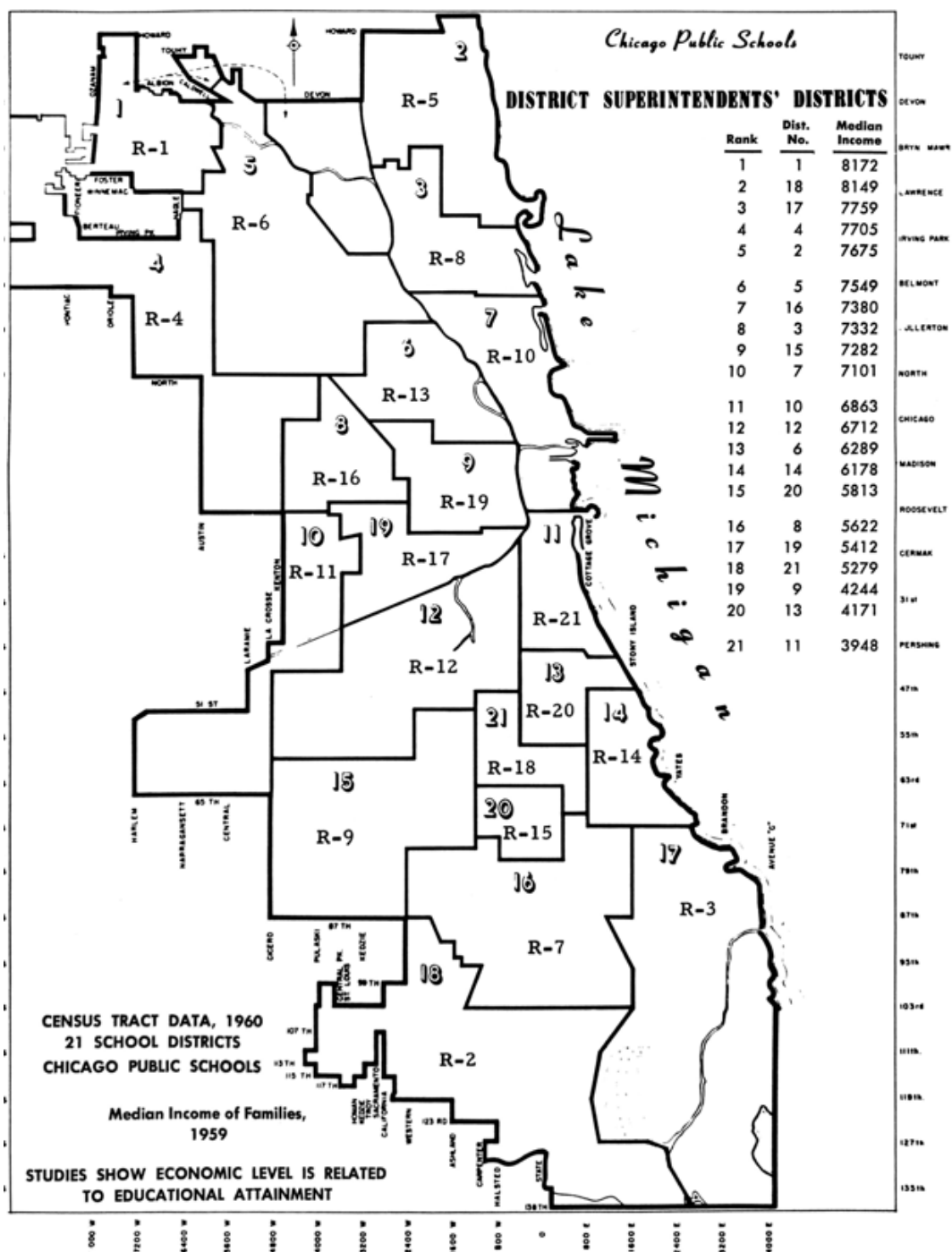


Figure 4 – Median Income by CPS Subdistrict - 1960 Census



However, black Chicago was unimpressed by the new Superintendent and the massive school construction program which won him national acclaim. Asked for his opinion of Superintendent Willis, James Savage, a stevedore living on S. Michigan Ave said,

"Willis is trying to make things cool off by building schools in overcrowded negro communities, hoping that with enough schools in the negro area the parents will forget that they are being segregated."¹⁰⁰

Protests against segregated schools in Chicago took on new importance in the 1950s and 60s and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), CORE and CUL took aim at the Board and Willis. Activists demanded new schools and an end to the Board's maintenance of segregated schools. At a meeting on April 17, 1962, the Chicago NAACP Executive Director Carl Fuqua chastised the Board of Education for not being more amenable to bussing to alleviate overcrowded schools.¹⁰¹ Black aldermen in the city similarly voiced displeasure over the Superintendent's maintenance of segregated schools. At Mayor Daley's urging a group of black alderman (William Harvey, Claude Holman, Robert Miller, Ken Campbell, Ben Lewis) met with Willis to discuss overcrowding. Alderman Miller left the meeting remarking that Willis attempted to confuse the leaders with double talk. Willis, on the other hand called it a productive talk.¹⁰² Besides new facilities and access to schools and programs outside of the black community, activists also demanded stronger supports for students within black schools. Activist Hyde Park High School teacher and President of the Negro

¹⁰⁰ Author Unknown, "Chicagoans Still Sour on Willis," *Chicago Defender*, April 14, 1962, 1.

¹⁰¹ Author Unknown, "Step Up School Bias Fight," *Chicago Defender*, April 13, 1961, 1.

¹⁰² Kenneth Field, "Negro Alderman 'Quiz' Ben Willis," *Chicago Defender*, February 10, 1962, 1.

American Labor Council (NALC) , Timuel Black stressed the need for improved guidance counseling services and access to building trades for black students when he testified about the 1963 proposed budget.¹⁰³

Meanwhile within the schools, the second great migration and the dramatic increase of black students in the schools began a demographic shift in the Chicago Public Schools that would see the city's black student population increase from 74,000 in 1950 to 250,000 in 1963.¹⁰⁴ The transformation within the schools mirrored the larger transformation within the city. In 1950 there were 492,000 African-Americans (13.6%) in the city in 1960 the black population had increased to 813,000 (23.6%).¹⁰⁵ This radical change in the composition of the Chicago Public Schools and the growing impatience with segregated and second class opportunities for black students and black teachers in Chicago set the stage for an era of growing militancy from students, parents, community members, activists organizations and teachers themselves as they attempted to chart two simultaneous paths, access to institutions and resources that had been previously unavailable while also demanding new investment and greater control over the institutions within the black community.

Conclusion

At the turn of the 20th century as industrial workers organized to confront consolidated business interest through unions and mass organization. Teachers similarly began organizing to

¹⁰³ Timuel Black, Testimony by Timuel Black of the Chicago Area Chapter of the Negro American Labor Council at the Budget Hearings 1962, December 11, 1962, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 29 Folder 1

¹⁰⁴ John Lyons, *Chicago Teachers Union, Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 - 1970*, University of Illinois Chicago, Dissertation, 2001, 230.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

confront local governments and advocate for increased pay, better working conditions, and job protections. In the years that followed, Chicago underwent a demographic transition that brought large numbers of the sons and daughters of black migrants from the deep south into the city schools. Settling into largely segregated black communities on the south and eventually west sides of the city, black migrants to Chicago demanded increased opportunities for their children including better, less crowded schools. These demands by black community leaders and parents were coupled with calls for increased black leadership in school administration and inside the classroom. The newly organized Chicago Teachers Union, like its big city counterparts within the American Federation of Teachers campaigned against segregated locals nationally and for inclusion of black members locally. Their inclusion though was tempered by the reality that black teachers within the CTU were more likely relegated to second class, Associate Member status, a condition that would not change until black teachers themselves demanded that their union live up to its egalitarian ethos. As outsiders lacking political clout with the CTU, black teachers had little power to exert change within the CTU in order to improve their standing. Lacking job security and operating in a local and national climate focused on integration, black teachers were less forceful than black community leaders and black families in their attempts to elevate their concerns about discriminatory certification examinations and their status as Active Associates within the Chicago Teachers Union. The continued transformation of the Chicago Public Schools by its students and teachers would during the early 1960s set the stage for a capital crisis, to which CPS would respond through a massive building blitz with profound consequences for black Chicago 50 years after it ended, and an existential crisis for the CTU as it actively resisted full participation by its black members.

Chapter 3 - From Sitting Down to Standing Up: Black Teachers and Black Students Mobilize

Introduction

As the 1962-63 school year came to a close, Chicago and the nation entered into a seven year period of radical transformation that would begin with mass mobilization, marches and boycotts and conclude with riots, and militant rejections of the very institutions that at the beginning of the 1960s African-Americans had sought greater access to. What was at stake for black Chicago was not simply better schools and increased pay, but liberal democracy itself. After years of slow and halting progress politically, black Chicagoans remained junior participants in the opportunities afforded them through education. Black students, families, teachers, activists, and civil rights organizations themselves would during the period from 1963 to 1970 set the stage for the rapid transformation of Chicago, its schools, and its institutions into a national example of political, economic, and cultural success culminating in the near simultaneous elections of former U.S Congressman and former state legislator Harold Washington to become the city's first African-American mayor and Jackie Vaughn to become the first African-American and first woman to lead the Chicago Teachers Union. This chapter examines the foundational elements of the transformation of the city's schools and their power structure from one once dominated by exclusive control by white ethnic communities to a decidedly more inclusive school system with black leaders and voices championing the extension of full democracy to African-Americans built on a foundation of black leadership made possible by the insurgence of black teachers who by 1968 were more willing to confront white leaders and examples of racism than they had been even in 1965 as demonstrated by the leadership

crisis at Jenner Elementary school.

By 1963, Chicago, like other heavily industrialized cities of the north, was at the beginning of an economic transformation which would cast a shadow over and shape the city's electoral politics, racial demographics, class structure, and even spatial environment. From 1947 - 1982 factory employment in Chicago dropped from a high of 688,000 to 227,000 job as whole industries like radio and television manufacturing, and meat packing left Chicago in an increasingly globalized economy.¹⁰⁶ In spite of early signs of industrial decline in Chicago in the early postwar years, Chicago remained a beacon for black southern migrants. Although by the 1970s few new black migrants were arriving in Chicago, white flight produced a seismic shift in the city's population as African-Americans share of the total population grew from 13% to 40% between 1940 and 1980.¹⁰⁷

As the wartime industry in Chicago gave way to regional service economy, heavy industry and its opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled workers, was replaced by financial and technical careers requiring substantially more education than was often accessible to black Chicago. White flight and the birth of the suburban white middle class meant that as Chicago entered into the Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, large, formerly dynamic economies of cities like Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, were increasingly dominated by high rates of unemployment, poverty, and what William Julius Wilson would call the "permanent underclass."¹⁰⁸ The collapse

¹⁰⁶ Jim Carl, "Harold Washington and Chicago's Schools between Civil Rights and the Decline of the New Deal Consensus 1955 - 1987," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3. (Autumn, 2001), p. 314.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 315.

¹⁰⁸ William Julius Wilson, *Power, Racism, and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Sociohistorical Perspectives*, New York: Macmillan, 1978, 73.

of the local manufacturing economy, coupled with a declining property tax base to support city services placed increased importance on education as the means to economic survival for poor and working class black students in Chicago. For the city's black teachers, two competing forces dominated this period. First, as the enrollment of black students continued to increase there was a greater need for their labor to staff often segregated schools on the south and west sides. On the other hand, white dominated political leadership within the Board of Education and within their own union sought to blunt the growing numerical strength of black teachers by a. maintaining a discriminatory certification system that limited opportunity for black teachers, and limiting the voting strength of black teachers within the union by relegating the overwhelming majority of them to Associate member status.¹⁰⁹

The promise of the promised land had by the 1960s worn off as black Chicago struggled with a housing crisis precipitated by de facto segregation that confined the city's growing black population to relatively fixed areas of the south and west sides. The city's solution to the housing crisis in Chicago, in keeping with the solution to overcrowded schools was to build new housing within the black community rather than support black expansion outside of the black belt on the south side or what Arnold Hirsch would call the "Second Ghetto" on the city's west side. From 1950 - 1960, the Chicago Housing Authority constructed over 100,000 new units of public housing in large developments like Cabrini Green on the near north side, the Robert Taylor Homes, on the south side and the Henry Horner Homes on the near west side. Not satisfied with vertical segregation as the means to improve conditions in black communities, civil rights

¹⁰⁹ Chicago Teachers Union, "Excerpts from Constitutions and By-Law Affecting Chicago Teachers Union Associate Member," September 24, 1963, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

activists challenged the de facto segregation apparent in Chicago and blockbusting real estate brokers.¹¹⁰

Forward momentum to confront entrenched white power interest within the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union can be traced to the first citywide boycott of the Chicago Public Schools by its students in 1963. The summer of 1963 saw demonstrations downtown against the construction of mobile classrooms. In July of 1963, the Congress Of Racial Equality (CORE) led a sit down at the Board demanding full integration. These and other efforts were supported by the CCCO under the leadership of Chicago Urban League Executive Director, Edwin "Bill" Berry.¹¹¹ In the fall of 1963, Protesting Willis' use of Willis wagons and his maintenance of segregation, CORE lead a series of sit-ins at the Board of Education from July 10-18 1963. The sit-ins began as a result of a demand by African-American Board of Education member, Raymond Pasnick that Willis either give the Board a report on unused classrooms or resign. Bacon said that the Board should not vote on a boundary change when they hadn't had a chance to study them. The Board passed the change 7-2 against protests from CORE. After 2 weeks away, Willis returned to a chastened Board of Education. Rather than comply with a court ordered injunction to implement a Board plan for student transfer, Willis evaded the sheriff by leaving through a side entrance of the Board of Education building and

¹¹⁰ "Blockbusting or panic peddling," as it was sometimes called, was the process whereby white real estate brokers would inspire panic among white homeowners by suggesting that African-Americans were moving in. Desperate white homeowners then often sold their homes to the agents at below market value. The agents then would in turn sell the homes at inflated rates to black home buyers. For a legal and historical examination of blockbusting see Dmitri Mehlhorn, "A Requiem for Blockbusting: Law, Economics, and Race based Real Estate Speculation," *Fordham Law Review*, 1998, 67, p. 1147 - 1148.

¹¹¹ John Lyons, *Chicago Teacher's Union, Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 - 1970*, University of Illinois Chicago, Dissertation, 2001, 236.

rather than comply and transfer students, issued his resignation on October 4, 1963. Editorials from the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Chicago Sun Times* criticized Willis, with the Daily News praising Willis for his massive building campaign while stating that the times had changed and Willis had not kept up with those changes. The civil rights community in Chicago rejoiced with Willis' resignation while many white teachers, the business community, white community organizations, and others implored the Board to take Willis back. On October 15, CTU president John Fewkes appeared on a local television show and criticized Willis and supported his resignation. His public criticism of Willis provoked a wave of letters to the union from teachers from mostly white schools denouncing his comments and supporting Willis. Individual teachers as well as whole faculties from schools in white communities wrote suggesting that Fewkes did not speak for them and in some cases renouncing their union membership.¹¹² Over 8000 signatures from community groups supportive of Willis were sent to Mayor Daley. Bowing to pressure from these groups, the Board voted not to accept Willis' resignation.¹¹³

In response to the Board not accepting Willis' resignation and his return, the Coordinating Committee of Community Organizations called for a citywide boycott of schools scheduled for October 22 known as Freedom Day. Among the CCCO demands were: integration of students and staff, publication of demographic data on the racial composition of students, teachers, and principals, hiring of social workers, counselors, and nurses without having to have teaching

¹¹² CTU president John Fewkes was deluged with letters condemning his support for Willis' resignation from the Beverly Schools Association, Community Organization of the Southwest Side, Hegewisch Parents, Lillydale Parents Association, and others. Several members of the CTU went so far as to renounce their membership of the organization due to his comments. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

¹¹³ Danks, Dionne. *Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools, 1963 - 1971*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2003, 29.

credentials. Among the groups supporting the Freedom Day were the Woodlawn Organization, the Negro American Labor Council, CORE, and Teachers for Integrated Schools. Local papers predicted that only a small number of the city's 600,000 students would participate. Willis and CTU President Fewkes called upon students and teachers to attend school. African-American leaders, teachers, parents, and community organizations operated Freedom Schools for students to attend and in some sites, learn African-American history.¹¹⁴ Instead of the modest numbers predicted by some, nearly 1/2 of the city's 450,000 students participated in the boycott with the largest numbers of students at Hyde Park, Farragut, Dusable, and Phillips High Schools participating.¹¹⁵

While black teacher groups like the Teachers for Integrated Schools and the Teachers Council for Quality Education supported the Freedom Day by providing curriculum materials for Freedom schools organized in churches and community centers on the day of the boycott, CTU president John Fewkes denounced the boycott. Only a month before Freedom Day, Fewkes was embroiled in a bitter public argument with black parents. Parents Association for Child Education criticized union president John Fewkes for labeling the group irresponsible for engaging in sit-in at Beale elementary to protest the current principal. Fewkes criticized the group after meeting with the schools union delegate who was also the assistant principal.¹¹⁶ While sit-ins were becoming more common place as a means to protest perceived injustices in

¹¹⁴ Author Unknown, "School Boycott on Today," *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1963, 1.

¹¹⁵ Author Unknown, "School by School Story of Boycott," *Chicago Defender*, October 23, 1963, 4.

¹¹⁶ Author Unknown, "PACE Strikes Back at CTU," *Chicago Defender*, September 23, 1963, 1.

the civil rights movement nationwide, CTU called upon civic, religious, and other organizations to support the Board and law enforcement in prevention of “invasions” of schools by individuals and groups. These individuals and their “sit ins” disrupt schools. Law enforcement should support keeping schools free of people not authorized by the principal to be on school grounds.¹¹⁷

CTU and Discipline

In the wake of the controversy over the Willis resignation, CTU turned its attention to an issue that had risen in importance to its members as the numbers of black children in Chicago increased; school discipline. While earlier concerns of school discipline in Chicago were dismissed by Fewkes as episodes of general “rascality,” by the 1960s the CTU described a situation in the schools that threatened the future of the system and its teachers.¹¹⁸ Fewkes claimed that offices were regularly deluged with calls from teachers complaining about unruly children. CTU called upon the Board to put the discipline issue on its agenda for serious study and action. CTU went further in claiming that parents often support students no matter how fantastic their stories were. School discipline to Fewkes was a major concern that threatened the teaching ranks and drove the most capable teachers out of CPS.¹¹⁹ The perceived discipline crisis in the schools provoked a statement from Willis blaming the crisis on school boycotts.

¹¹⁷ Chicago Teachers Union, “CTU Press Release on Sit Ins,” Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

¹¹⁸ John Fewkes to James McCahey, March 25, 1939, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 17, Folder 2.

¹¹⁹ John Fewkes to Board President Claire Roddewig, November 5, 1963, Chicago Teachers' Union Papers, Box 37 Folder 11.

According to Willis:

Large cities are in a state of crisis. Racial strife, population mobility, chronic unemployment etc. have altered the setting and the role of public schools. Suspensions are up nearly 50% from the previous year. Increasing numbers of physical assaults on teachers are being reported. Teacher assaults are up 100% in the same sections of the city where school boycotts have had their greatest effect. Reports have been received of students facing physical reprisals for not honoring boycotts¹²⁰

At the same time that the CTU and CPS were focused on discipline, civil rights groups were repeatedly attempting in vain to meet with CTU leadership. At their March 11, 1964 meeting, the CORE Schools Committee agreed that a meeting with Fewkes was necessary to improve relations.¹²¹ Fewkes, seemingly wanting to address race related questions in one meeting responded that the CTU was very busy with collective bargaining but if CORE was interested in being more specific in its request for a meeting and include the NAACP and the Chicago Urban League it could be scheduled. At a meeting on April 15, 1964, CTU met with leaders from CORE, the NAACP, and the Chicago Urban League in which the organizations presented their concerns over the conditions of black schools and the treatment of black teachers. No discernible progress or commitments for ongoing dialogue were made at the meeting.¹²² Responding to a request to meet by the Negro American Labor Council, Fewkes, CTU vice president John Desmond and Active Associates leaders Rosa Kinney, Arnita Parker, Gerald

¹²⁰ Ben Willis, Statement to the Board of Education, March 11, 1964, Chicago Urban League Papers Series II Box 76 Folder 864.

¹²¹ Rosylin Dean to John Fewkes, March 13, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3

¹²² Notes from Meeting with Race Leaders, John Fewkes, April 15, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

Bullock, and Otho Cobbins met with NALC's Timuel Black, Al Raby, Charles Gant, and Leo Sparks to discuss blacks within CTU and member concerns.¹²³

That same day, CTU invited church, civic, and governmental groups to participate in a citywide conference on school discipline to be held on March 31, 1964 at the Lasalle Hotel. The agenda for the event included talks by Superintendent Willis, Cook County State's Attorney, Daniel Ward, John Desmond, NAACP Executive Director Carl Fuqua, Rabbi Nathan Weiss and NALC President Timuel Black. The conference, which had the stated purpose of exploring the causes of increased violence in and around schools and to make recommendations for community, administrative and legislative action featured workshops titled "Maintaining Order in and Around the School," "Providing for the Emotionally Disturbed Child," "Improving Channels of Communication Between Schools and the Community," and "Improving Public Support of Teachers and Schools." Recommendations emerging from the conference included:

1. Sponsoring a conference on the increasing violence in the schools,
2. Parents must tell children that they must come to the aid of teachers,
3. Assign an adjustment teacher for every 500 students in "difficult schools,"
4. Assign one to three assistant principals in "difficult schools,"
5. Establish a sufficient number of social adjustment classes to accommodate no less than 1500 students on the waiting list,
6. Establish sufficient number of Educably Mentally Handicap classes to accommodate all students who are on the waiting list,
7. Providing reading consultants and tutors at "difficult schools,"

¹²³ Conference Agenda, Chicago Conference with the Negro American Labor Council, March 19, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3

8. Assign truant officers for every 700 students in “difficult schools,”
9. Increase psychological services by employing schools psychologists,
10. Construct three schools for the maladjusted, two for boys and one for girls,
11. A conference with the judge of family court arranged by CTU.

Also, at the conference, Superintendent Willis reiterated his assertion that there was a strong correlation between boycotts and student violence as well as underscoring that the Board maintains three social adjustment schools (Montefiore, Moseley, and Motley). Similarly he stressed that the Human Relations Bureau of the Board was conducting weekly workshops in 15 schools to teach new and veteran teachers how to hold the attention of students who did not have the motivation to learn while stressing that some teachers need special training in dealing with the changing pupil situation in some schools.¹²⁴

By contrast, four years later when school administrators, teachers, support staff and Model Cities representatives met for the Model Cities Conference and Workshop Toward Resolution of Educational Problems in North Lawndale to highlight the declining quality of education in District 19, the committee put forth a vision for improvement that highlighted systemic rather than individual student failures.¹²⁵ The task force put forth recommendations including the need for inclusion of Afro-American contributions and teacher sensitivity when dealing with students of North Lawndale as well as the need for improved, updated, and sanitary physical conditions in the schools of the community. The committee suggested that conditions could be improved through the demolition of deteriorating buildings, grouping of students by age

¹²⁴ Program “Violence in the Schools,” March 31, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 11.

¹²⁵ Danns, *Something Better*, p. 72

into two different schools, the lowering of class size and an increased allocation for textbooks and materials. According to Danns:

“The conference was significant because it illustrated the initiative of District 19 administrators and teachers to come together to examine the weaknesses of the educational system, for which they were partly responsible. The conference report indicated a comprehensive attempt by educators to examine the totality of the school problems including their shortcomings, systemic problems and community problems as well. Not only did it highlight the problems but also created the opportunity for them to come up with solutions that seemed to have the best interest of students at heart.”¹²⁶

The Hauser and Havighurst Reports

Black parents, with the support of the NAACP and frustrated by the Boards refusal to take steps to integrate schools, in 1961, sued in the case of *Webb v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago*. Though many parents had applied for transfers out of overcrowded schools in black communities, General Superintendent Willis denied the requests. The suit alleged that CPS gerrymandered school district boundaries in order to create and sustain all black schools. The case was suspended in 1963 when an out of court settlement was reached that would have the Board conduct a study of conditions in CPS and eliminate any inequities that it found.¹²⁷ The study, *Report to the Board of Education of the City of Chicago by the Advisory Panel on Integration of Public Schools* colloquially known as the Hauser report was produced for the Board in 1964. The committee which authored the report, chaired by University of Chicago Sociology Chairman Philip Hauser, had as its charge to:

“analyze and study the school system in particular with regard to schools attended entirely or predominantly by negroes, define any problems that result therefrom, and formulate and report to the

¹²⁶ Ibid, 73.

¹²⁷ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 139 - 140

Board as soon as may be conveniently possible, a plan by which any educational, psychological, and emotional problems or inequities in the school system that prevail may best be eliminated."¹²⁸

The Hauser report was a comprehensive study of segregation, educational opportunity, the law, overcrowding in CPS, racial segregation of students and staff in Chicago, the differences in materials and physical plants in the schools, and finally student attendance and mobility. The report began by comparing the trajectories of black migrants to Chicago with past immigrant groups concluding that, though like other migrants and immigrants, African-Americans faced challenges in moving out of segregated communities, immigrant groups did not face legal and extra-legal mechanisms aimed at keeping them segregated in their respective ethnic enclaves.¹²⁹ According to the report, only 10 percent of the city's schools were integrated using a definition of integration developed by the authors.¹³⁰ The study also found that of 847 black high school teachers, 71 percent were teaching in black schools with student populations that were over 90% black.¹³¹ Furthermore, black schools were more likely to have significant numbers of less experienced teachers teaching on temporary certificates than schools in white communities with fewer numbers of teachers with advanced degrees.¹³²

The report made thirteen recommendations concerning teacher training, finance, school

¹²⁸ Report to the Board of Education City of Chicago by the Advisory Panel on the Integration of the Public Schools, March 31, 1964, 2.

¹²⁹ Report to the Board of Education City of Chicago by the Advisory Panel on the Integration of the Public Schools, March 31, 1964, 5-6.

¹³⁰ The committee define integrated as being a school in which ten percent of the students are black and at least ten percent are white. Ibid, 14.

¹³¹ Ibid, 16.

¹³² Ibid 17 - 18.

and community relations and integration of students and teachers. Among the more notable recommendations of the Hauser report were recommendations that:

1. As rapidly as possible enrollment patterns be made more open to all students. In developing these patterns, the primary concern of the Board should be to maximize the individual's freedom to school the school he will attend, with the framework provided by the pattern.
2. Optimal use be made of all existing school facilities;
3. In locating all new schools and redrawing existing school attendance boundaries or school district boundaries that the factor of fostering racial integration be included as a major consideration;
4. The Board of Education take positive steps to achieve integrated faculties in the schools and teachers colleges while at the same time protecting the assignment preferences of teachers as far as possible
5. The Board of Education adopt policies designed to insure for all schools, as far as is legal and practicable, a fair distribution of teachers with varying lengths of experience and various types of professional credentials.
6. The Board of Education vigorously encourage all teacher education centers in the Chicago area to develop more effective programs for the education of teachers for schools with high student turnover, heavy retardation, and limited education achievement.
7. the Chicago teacher and administrator in-service education program be extended to include systematic exposure to ideas and materials related to:
 - a. The history of minority groups in America and the world at large

- b. the content and method of teaching children of different cultural heritages
 - c. human relations practices
8. the Board of Education allocate substantially increased budget funds for acquisition of learning resources and that for those schools with special problems of high student turnover, heavy retardation, and lower educational achievement, a compensating allocation of funds be made, over and above the city-wide average, to assist such schools to attain their full potential.¹³³

The report generated mixed response ranging from enthusiasm by several Board members to ambivalence by Willis. The civil rights community in Chicago's reaction to the report were favorable though few had faith that Superintendent Willis would make the changes recommended in the report.¹³⁴ The Chicago Teachers Union objected to the report's recommendations on teacher distribution of teachers and any effort to restrict where its members could choose to teach.

At approximately the same time, University of Chicago sociologist Robert Havighurst was leading a comprehensive survey of the school system which concentrated on school improvement matters such as curriculum, class size, special education, and school psychology. Notably, after considerable conflict with the Board over the study, Willis was allowed to join the committee and used his authority to block any surveying of teachers or parents on anything related to race. Consequently, the 500 page report only mentions black students five times, two of those mentions relating to the larger demographic transformation of Chicago described in the

¹³³ Ibid, 29 - 33.

¹³⁴ Danns, *Something Better for Our Children*, 46.

opening pages.¹³⁵

Black Teachers in the Early to mid 1960s

Black teachers within the CTU stepped up their campaign for full membership and representation. By 1964, the Active Associates, estimated that approximately 5000 of the city's 20,000 teaching positions were being filled by substitute teachers, who were overwhelmingly African-American.¹³⁶ In the spring and fall of 1964 Active Associates campaigned for a referendum by union membership to grant full membership to Active Associate members, a move that John Fewkes is alleged to have labeled “dangerous.”¹³⁷ In November the CTU advised delegates that the policy committee of the CTU recommended that the referendum granting full membership to FTBs be defeated.¹³⁸ Front page stories in the CTU *Union Teacher* weighed arguments for and against full membership for FTBs while Fewkes and CTU leaders published flyers urging members to vote no. Urging a no vote, Fewkes asserted that

“Active Associates now have every democratic right and privilege enjoyed by regular members except the right to vote for and hold major offices. Substitutes can become career teachers and regular union members by passing an exam. Keep Your Union

¹³⁵ Robert Havighurst, *The Public Schools of Chicago*, Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 23,

¹³⁶ Report to Active Associates Group Chicago Teachers Union, May 6, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

¹³⁷ The United Teachers Coalition, a rival faction challenging the leadership of Fewkes published an opposition newsletter in which it among other things endorsed full membership for FTBs or Active Associate members. *The Spark* Newsletter, Issue No. 3, November 1, 1964. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

¹³⁸ Letter to Delegates, November 18, 1964, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

Professional."¹³⁹

Black teacher groups on the other hand urged black teachers to support the referendum likening the situation for black teachers within CTU to the ongoing struggles in Selma, Alabama and Mississippi.¹⁴⁰

In an election with some significant discrepancies, the referendum to grant full membership to FTBs was defeated 5217 to 2275.¹⁴¹ In its press release on the results the CTU stated that it "hopes that substitutes will become qualified career teachers and regular members of our professional organization."¹⁴² While black teachers within CTU were unsuccessful in using the bureaucratic mechanisms within the union to gain full membership and representation, they and community partners in the near north neighborhood of Cabrini Green were more successful in asserting their voice and advocating on behalf of black students and black faculty.

Black Teachers and Black Parents Stand Up at Jenner

The crisis at Jenner elementary in 1965 and 1966 marked the beginning of a period of

¹³⁹ Flyer Advising a No Vote on Referendum to Give Associates Voting Rights, March 23, 1965, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

¹⁴⁰ Letter to Teachers and Union Members, The Teachers Committee of the Negro American Labor Council, March 7, 1965, Chicago Teachers Union Paper Box 37 Folder 3.

¹⁴¹ The CTU Rules Committee asserted that CTU vice president Desmond unilaterally decided to keep polls at some schools open for a full two days and allow some schools to mail in their ballots without consulting the rules or Executive Committee of CTU. The Rules Committee recommended that the Rules Committee should investigate Desmond and if necessary revise the CTU Constitution and By-Laws to add language on how to hold referendums. Letter to CTU Rules Election Committee, April 15, 1965, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 39 Folder 6.

¹⁴² Press release on referendum for Associates, March 25, 1965, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 37 Folder 3.

student boycotts that Dionne Danns ably chronicles in her book *Something Better for Our Children*. The initial teacher complaints that sparked the controversy and the reaction by members of the Chicago Teachers Union signaled the beginning of a tumultuous period in the history of the CTU and CPS. Between the period that African-American teacher, Joan Bowser filed her initial complaint against new principal Mildred Chuchut in 1965 until the first city wide teachers strike authorized by the Chicago Teachers Union in May of 1969, the Chicago Teachers Union would emerge as an obstacle to community control of schools, guardian of a discriminatory teacher certification system and ardent opponent of efforts by the U.S. Justice Department to increase racial balance within the city's teaching force.

Two student boycotts of Jenner in 1966 signaled a shift in the civil rights movement in Chicago, deepened an already growing cleavage between the Board of Education and its superintendent Ben Willis, and demonstrated the tenuous relationship between African-American and white teachers in the city. The student boycotts of 1966 captivated the press in Chicago which provided front page coverage of the crisis at Jenner throughout the 1965 – 66 school year. The two local newspapers that devoted the most coverage to the story, the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Tribune* told two somewhat different stories to two different Chicagos. The *Defender*, long the champion of civil rights for the cities African-American population highlighted race as a central issue causing parents and teachers to organize against embattled principal Mildred Chuchut, while the *Tribune* significantly downplayed race as an issue choosing instead to examine the crisis by examining efforts that the Board of Education was making to address parent concerns.

Named for the British scientist who became famous for his pioneering work in smallpox vaccination, Edward Jenner Elementary school located at 1009 N. Cleveland opened its doors in

1900 to serve the largely Italian immigrant community of Chicago's near north side. By the beginning of the Great Depression, the Italian immigrant community on the near north side had swelled in population forcing the city to construct a number of housing projects that collectively became known as the Francis Cabrini Green housing project.¹⁴³ While there was already a small community of African-Americans in this near north side neighborhood, the 1950s saw an increase in the numbers of African-Americans in the Cabrini Green projects. As the Chicago Housing Authority pursued its plans of high and mid-rise public housing projects on the south and west sides of the city, the Cabrini extension buildings were constructed. The number of students attending Jenner increased dramatically as the area was rapidly transformed into an almost exclusively African-American community by the early 1960s. Jenner itself became the most populous elementary school in the city with 3369 students enrolled in 1959.

Frustration with the Board of Education's reluctance to take up the issue of segregation and the public perception that the system was going to great measures to prevent its schools from being integrated fueled several lawsuits accusing the Board of Education of violating African-American the civil rights under the newly inked Civil Rights Act of 1964. The pace of school construction also became a source of tension within the civil rights community, which began branding temporary classrooms located at overcrowded schools "Willis Wagons." In a massive protest directed at Willis and the Board of Education, the CCCO with the support of its member organizations, the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, CORE and several neighborhood organizations, organized "Freedom Day" for October 22, 1963.¹⁴⁴ The one day boycott of the city's schools by

¹⁴³ Hirsch, *Making of the Second Ghetto*, 105.

¹⁴⁴ In 1964 Willis resigned as superintendent of CPS after the Board of Education intervened refused to seek an injunction over school integration. The board however refused to accept his

its African-American students and their sympathizers resulted in nearly half of the systems 535,000 students being out of school attending “Freedom Schools” in churches, synagogues, and community centers all over the city.

A Freedom Day II in 1964 however was met with considerable opposition from civil rights groups including the NAACP and SCLC on the grounds that students should not be encouraged to miss anymore school. Even African-America Alderman that had supported the first “Freedom Day” opposed a second boycott.¹⁴⁵ Undaunted by the mixed support, CCCO moved ahead with Freedom Day II though significantly fewer students boycotted the schools than during the first Freedom Day. At Jenner, like other predominantly African-American schools in the city, absence rates on both Freedom Days were high, 99% and 90% respectively. Though the newly constructed Byrd Elementary and an expanded Cooley Upper grade center had reduced the student population from its high point of 3369 in 1959 to 2571 by 1964, retiring principal Julia Gilatto opposed both boycotts and lamented their potential deleterious effects in an interview given to the *Chicago Tribune* as part of its “Interesting Chicagoans” column.¹⁴⁶ Gilatto, a veteran CPS teacher then principal had served as the principal at Jenner since arriving at the school in 1951 after stints as principal at Cooper and Lewis Elementary. Reflecting on her apparent success at Jenner, Gilatto stated her opposition to segregation while at the same time

resignation leading to what Danns characterizes as its near total capitulation to his demands. The board refusal to accept his resignation and Willis’ efforts to evade authorities rather than comply with the court ordered injunction hardened the resolve of the civil rights community in Chicago and provided the impetus for Freedom Day.

¹⁴⁵ Lyons, *Chicago Teachers Union: Politics and the Cities Schools, 1937 – 1970*, 237.

¹⁴⁶ Gilatto went on to state in the April 4, 1965 article that class sizes were down from an average of 40 students per class in 1958 to 32 by 1964.

recognizing the segregated conditions at Jenner by 1964. “I proved to my own satisfaction that children can get as good an education in a school that is not integrated as in an integrated school.”¹⁴⁷

At the May meeting of the Jenner Parent Teachers Association (JPTA), members were introduced to Ms. Gilatto’s successor, another CPS veteran named Mildred Chuchut. The festive meeting was highlighted with the presentation of a corsage to the new principal by the outgoing Jenner PTA president Helen Barlow. *Chicago Defender* reporters covering the event remarked upon the cordial remarks and general optimism expressed by parents and Chuchut who looked forward to “many sessions” with the group in the future.¹⁴⁸

Within the first month of Chuchut’s tenure at Jenner, 6 of the school’s 81 teachers including Ms. Joanne Bowser resigned from the school. In a complaint filed with the Board of Education, Bowser complained of unprofessional behavior by Chuchut. She complained, in what would become known as the “Bowser Letter”, that Chuchut refused to let teachers conduct early morning tutoring sessions, closed the school library, refused to allow staff members to join community organizations without her approval and once commented that Jenner students were “Negroes first students second.” By November of 1965 the Bowser Letter had been circulated to the cities press organs. White teachers at the school for their part were organizing against Chuchut following the lead of Sidney Zwick and Roy Morrison who were leading a series of protests at Crane High School on the city's west side.

In late November, 30 teachers at Jenner including one of 16 African-American teachers at

¹⁴⁷ Louise Hutchinson. “Interesting Chicagoans: Parents Wish Fulfilled by Julia Gilatto”, *Chicago Tribune*. April 4, 1965, 16.

¹⁴⁸ “Jenner School PTA Meets New Principal,” *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition). May 29, 1965.

the school, sent a similar complaint to the Board of Education describing “dictatorial practices” similar to those outlined in the Bowser letter.¹⁴⁹ A front page story of the *Chicago Defender* the headline “Teachers Blast Principal for her Racist Policies” presented race as a central issue in what had until now been described in both the *Tribune* and *Defender* as a crisis surrounding the leadership style of Chuchut.¹⁵⁰ The story was the first to detail Bowser’s complaint that Chuchut, in referring to students at Jenner remarked, “they are Negroes first and students second.”

On December 4, a front page story in the national edition of the *Chicago Defender* explained the position of African-American teachers at the school and their refusal, with one exception, to sign the complaint to the Board of Education.¹⁵¹ Explaining their reluctance to sign the complaint, James Alexander, spokesman for the African-American teachers, suggested that African-Americans did not sign on to the teacher complaint letter because it did not address racism. Alexander and Anthony Grosch, spokesman for the 30 dissident teachers that filed the complaint agreed that race was not included in the teacher’s complaint since it might scare away local newspapers from covering the story.¹⁵² Al Raby, himself a former teacher and now president of CCCO suggested in the story that African-American teachers backed away from the

¹⁴⁹ Bill Van Alstine. “Teachers Blast Principal for Her Racist Policies,” *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition), December 1, 1965, 1.

¹⁵⁰ In a December 11th Letter to the Editor, the teachers that had sent a complaint to the Board of Education, now calling themselves the Concerned Teachers of Jenner School (after a similar group calling itself the Concerned Parents of Jenner School) complained that the headline containing the racism charge was a misrepresentation of their issues. In response the *Defender* staff claimed that the group mentioned racist language used by Chuchut in its original mimeographed complaints distributed to the press.

¹⁵¹ Bill Van Alstine. “Negro Teachers Back Away from Jenner Hassle.” *Chicago Defender* (National Edition), December 4, 1965, 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

complaint out of fear for their jobs.¹⁵³ Two days later Alexander recanted his original statement claiming that he:

did not see any evidence of her [Chuchut] being biased and I don't think she should be dismissed. She may be a cup of tea that Jenner school needs to develop into a good educational institution... The race issue should not be toyed with... The negro teacher will fight but only for the right thing.¹⁵⁴

The fractured relationship between the Board of Education and Superintendent Willis was under considerable pressure from the Jenner dispute as well as other allegations about bias towards African-American schools made by CCCO in its complaint with the U.S. Representative Adam Clayton Powell's House Education and Welfare committee.¹⁵⁵ At the December board meeting, Willis lashed out at charges that African-American schools lacked basic supplies and stated that the troubles at Austin high were a "community problem not a school problem."¹⁵⁶ Board member James Clement later accused Willis of always blaming communities rather than attempt to solve problems. In its first significant sign of independence from the superintendent

¹⁵³ By 1965 a growing tension within the city's largest teachers union, the Chicago Teachers Union surrounding the position of African-American teachers within the union and their membership rights threatened to undermine solidarity between the systems white and black teachers. Over 80% of the cities African-American teachers were classified as Full Time Basis substitutes. The FTB status as it was known carried the same pay as fully certified teachers however with considerably less job protection.

¹⁵⁴ "Jenner Teachers Give Full Backing to Their Principal." *Chicago Defender* (Daily Edition), December 6, 1965, 1.

¹⁵⁵ "CCCO Issues New School Complaints." *CCCO Newsletter*, December 8, 1965. Congress of Racial Equality Papers (Box 4 Folder 26) Chicago Historical Society. A complaint with the HEW by CCCO in 1963 resulted in the withholding of \$30 million by the US Dept. of Education until the charges of race based gerrymandering of local school attendance areas were investigated.

¹⁵⁶ James Yuenger. "Board Overrides Willis on Promotions." *Chicago Tribune*, December 9, 1965, 5.

since refusing to accept his resignation, the board overruled Willis in the promotion of principals to their positions.¹⁵⁷ At the same meeting when confronted with the Jenner teacher complaint and calls by teachers and parents for the dismissal of Chuchut, Willis stated that nothing should be changed at the school.

By December 12th Sheila Harter of the Concerned Teachers of Jenner School threatened a teacher strike, walk-out or sit down if the board did not take up the Jenner grievances.¹⁵⁸ Harter also suggested that parents might keep students out of school if the grievances weren't heard by the board. Later that week CTU president John Fewkes weighed in on the situations at Jenner and Crane high school suggesting that among other things that the morale at the school (Jenner) was low. This *Tribune* report is the first to mention race in stating that Chuchut was charged with having "an unbending and bigoted attitude."¹⁵⁹ The following day the *Tribune* reported of pickets at Jenner led by Arthrie Woolridge. Demanding a full time nurse, speech therapist and psychologist, the group vowed that they would continue to protest until the Board of Education acted on their demands. Curiously *Tribune* writers made no mention of the controversy surrounding Chuchut and the CPJS as an organization. Even more curious the paper failed to mention the groups primary demand, the removal of Chuchut. Conversely the *Chicago Defender* reported the list of demands by the CPJS and a summary of the Bowser letter and complaint by

¹⁵⁷ The board over Willis' objections voted not to disclose promotions to principal posts until they discussed them behind closed doors. Previously, Willis submitted the names of individuals to be promoted to principal positions 48 hours before a board meeting and the board with little discussion or time to question them voted on them.

¹⁵⁸ Bill Van Alstine, "Jenner Teachers, Parents Consider Strike or Boycott," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, December 12, 1965, 1.

¹⁵⁹ James Yuenger, "CTU Checks Schools, Asks for Changes," *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 1965, B13 – B14.

the CTJS.¹⁶⁰

On Christmas Day 1965 the *Defender* reported that the Board of Education was scheduled to discuss the Jenner matter at its January 12th meeting. Arthrie Woolridge and the Concerned Parents of Jenner School (CPJS) vowed to resume protests and threatened a student boycott after the Christmas holiday if its demands were not met. In response the Board of Education dispatched an officer from the Board department of Integration and Human Relations to the school twice weekly. Nonetheless the CPJS were drawing considerable support for the ouster of principal Chuchut from the civil rights community that had only a year before grown weary of student boycotts as a tactic. Civil rights groups from around the city rallied in support of the Jenner parents at the Community House at 515 W. Oak on January 12th after the Board of Education meeting had once again failed to take any action to resolve the Jenner dispute. Comedian Dick Gregory, Rev. James Bevel of the SCLC, Rev. C.T. Vivian and representatives of the CTJS spoke to the crowd of nearly three hundred on the eve of an announced student boycott set for January 17th – 19th.¹⁶¹ On January 15th the CPJS held a press conference in which it detailed plans for the three day boycott emphasizing that students would attend “Freedom Schools” in neighborhood churches and community centers. Willis responded to the demands by saying “that the parents’ concerns have been answered in a letter by me...it is the staff consensus that the transfer of Chuchut is not supported by the available evidence.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ “Parents March on Jenner Principal,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, December 20, 1965, 12.

¹⁶¹ “Rally to Back Parents of Jenner Pupils,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, January 13, 1965, 1.

¹⁶² Bill Van Alstine, “Three Day Boycott at Jenner,” *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, January, 15, 1966, 1.

On January 17th 1966 the three day student boycott at Jenner elementary began with Ms. Arthrie Woolridge stating that the boycott would continue until Chuchut was out of Jenner. Civil rights groups CORE, SNCC, SCLC and CCCO all expressed their support for the boycott. The CPJS claimed a victory after the 1st day attendance results indicated that 98 % of the school's 2450 students were absent. On day two of the boycott 97% of the school's population was absent. Significantly, the group included an additional demand that the Board of Education reclassify Jenner as needy and deprived in order to make the school eligible for federal ESEA funding.¹⁶³ On day two of the boycott, the *Chicago Defender* gave its "Onion for the Day" to the Board of Education members that claimed that they were unaware that a boycott at Jenner was brewing in spite of the media coverage of the lead up to the boycott. By the third and final day of the student boycott the Board of Education indicated to the *Chicago Defender* that it might hold a special board meeting to try to resolve the Jenner dispute. Board member Bernard Friedman also expressed his disappointment that Chuchut was promoted to the principalship at Jenner in spite of complaints from teachers at her previous school Otis Elementary that were not communicated to the board by superintendent Willis. After 3 days of student boycotts that elicit sympathy from the civil rights community and condemnation by the Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers Union, Woolridge and the CPJS called the boycott off calling it and sympathy boycotts at nearby Manierre and Waller High Schools a huge success.

Also, on the final day of the boycott principal Mildred Chuchut made her first public appearance and statements since the controversy erupted. In a press conference called by the Chicago Education Association of which Chuchut was a member of the board of directors,

¹⁶³ In 1965 federal funding through Title I of Lyndon Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (PL 81-174) began flowing to school districts. A key component of how aid was to be distributed was to create compensatory programs for economically disadvantaged youth.

Chuchut claimed that she asked that teachers that wanted to run extra tutorial programs get a signed permission slip from parents. Other teachers complied with the request while Joanne Bowser refused saying that the programs had never been forced to go through this procedure. Subsequently when students showed up to her tutorial program without permission slips they were turned away. Chuchut went on to detail unprofessional behavior by teachers such as leaving students in the halls with no supervision. The press conference in the school's library ended with Chuchut refusing to answer questions about racial bias.¹⁶⁴

At an emergency meeting of the Board of Education on January 21st Board president Frank Whiston appointed a committee of three board members to investigate the dispute at Jenner. Calling it unprecedented and illegal, Superintendent Willis suggested that the committee should not be constituted as the Jenner dispute was a day to day matter outside of the policy scope of the Board of Education. Nonetheless the board moved ahead with plans to hold hearings on the Jenner dispute. Also during that board meeting the board rejected a call for a collective bargaining vote by the Chicago Teachers Union until a court challenge by the Chicago Education Association could wind its way through the courts.¹⁶⁵ The board however did not comply with a CPJS ultimatum issued after the boycott that unless the board set a termination date for Chuchut they would call another boycott.¹⁶⁶

On the same day that the special committee of the Board of Education investigating

¹⁶⁴ Casey Banas, "Jenner Principal Gives Her Side in Boycott," *Chicago Tribune*, January 20, 1966, 9.

¹⁶⁵ "School Board Calls Jenner Probe," *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, 1966, A12.

¹⁶⁶ "Bill Van Alstine, "Jenner Dispute Delayed," *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, January 22, 1966, 1.

Jenner elementary held its first hearing, Mildred Chuchut gave her second press conference on the affair. Chuchut used the press conference to call for the dismissal of the 15 or more dissident teachers that had protested her.¹⁶⁷ Claiming that she was never given a chance to prove herself and an administrator, Chuchut denied all allegations made against her while refusing to answer questions of racial bias. She went on to state that she would find it difficult to continue to administer the school under the current conditions. Before the press conference, 11 teachers, 7 African-American 4 white defended Chuchut against charges of racism. James Alexander and Anna Watson representing faculty supportive of Chuchut claimed that dissident teachers had gone into the community using race as a weapon against Chuchut. Alexander stated:

We negroes resent the misrepresentation by so-called paragons of racial love and harmony, who may be bigoted themselves and are using elements of race to gain their own ends.”¹⁶⁸

Also, that day the board committee looking into the Jenner dispute held its first meeting with 60 parents in a closed session. Reiterating his opposition on the probe, Willis called the committees work extralegal setting a dangerous precedent of the board interfering with the day to day operations of the schools.¹⁶⁹ In response to Willis’ attack on the legitimacy of the committee, committee chair Friedman stated that the Board of Education is on trial at Jenner while bemoaning the fact that no one representing the school’s administration was present at the meeting. Board attorney James Coffey took issue with Willis’ characterization of the committee

¹⁶⁷ While the Chicago Tribune headline and story explained that Chuchut asked for the transfer of the 15 teachers, the Chicago Defender stated that she asked for their firing but was open to transfer as a compromise. CTU president John Fewkes and Board president Frank Whiston later agreed that the call for the firings were tantamount to harassment of the teachers involved.

¹⁶⁸ “Jenner Principal Asks Firing of Teachers,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, January 25, 1966, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Casey Banas, “Willis Lashes Probe of Jenner,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 26, 1966, 1.

as extralegal by stating that the board was acting within its duties in convening the committee.¹⁷⁰

On February 1st the board committee held its second meeting on the Jenner dispute in which it was to hear from teachers on both sides of the dispute. The committee also extended a formal invitation to Chuchut to appear before the committee. For the second time Chuchut refused to appear before the committee stating that if the board wanted her cooperation they should go through the established board grievance procedures. At the February 1st meeting Joanne Bowser presented her original allegations to board members.

Two weeks later when the committee was again spurned by Chuchut in its attempt to hear her side of the dispute, committee members hinted that they would perhaps ask Willis to direct Chuchut to appear.¹⁷¹ By February 1965 the Jenner dispute had attracted the attention and support of Dr. Martin Luther King who was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* as saying:

"We must emphasize that while Jenner is but a single and bitter example of the system's insensitivity and failure to educate... It is but one thread in a vast fabric of educational and administrative inadequacy that is woven about the entire city. It is the total pattern that must be changed and will be changed."¹⁷²

Dr. King called upon the Board of Education to solve the dispute and indicated that the SCLC will be directly involved in working to improve the conditions in the Chicago Public Schools. King spoke at a rally at the Wayman AME church held after the board committee indicated that it would compel Chuchut to appear.

On February 24th the committee finally heard from Ms. Chuchut in a closed session that

¹⁷⁰ Casey Banas, "Board is on Trial at Jenner: Friedman," *Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 1966, 1.

¹⁷¹ "Miss Chuchut Spurns Parley," *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 1966, A4.

¹⁷² Casey Banas, "Dr. King Backs Dissidents at Jenner School," *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1966, A4.

Friedman characterized as open and frank. The meeting ended with the committee agreeing to present its recommendation at the next Board of Education meeting scheduled for March 23. The committee also agreed to make a transcript of the meeting available to the CPJS and CTJS as soon as it could be produced.¹⁷³

On March 2 the transcript of the meeting was made available and the next day both the *Tribune* and *Defender* carried front page stories of Chuchut's allegations against teachers and community members. Chuchut complained to the committee that the only objective of the dissident teachers was to make trouble and that the community had a history of trying to oust previous principals. According to Chuchut all of her efforts to make incremental changes at the school were thwarted by a group of dissident teachers that organized against her. She went on to detail how on the morning of the boycott a sound truck drove through the community imploring parents to let their children sleep rather than send them out into the cold. Furthermore, the dissident teachers had never discussed their grievances with her, instead choosing to throw them down on the office counter with no remark.¹⁷⁴

The transcript of Chuchut's testimony provoked an angry response from Sheila Harter, representing the CTJS. Harter demanded that the teachers be given a chance to respond to Chuchut's charges calling them "an incredible collection of fabrications, distortions, evasions admissions and sheer inanity."¹⁷⁵ The CPJS responded to the transcript by delivering to the Board of Education a 1 week ultimatum to schedule a public hearing on its demand that Chuchut

¹⁷³ Casey Banas, "Board Hears Miss Chuchut," *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1996, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Casey Banas, "Jenner Principal Hits Teachers, Community," *Chicago Tribune*, March 3, 1966, 1.

¹⁷⁵ "Morale Drops Again, Jenner Teachers Say," *Chicago Tribune*, March 5, 1966.

be removed. Denouncing Chuchut's testimony as "Chuchut's big lie," the CPJS president took aim at Chuchut's claim that parents were not truly concerned about their children but were instead interested in causing trouble.¹⁷⁶ The parents indicated in their ultimatum that if no hearing was held or if they were not satisfied with the outcome, Dr. King had pledged that he would lead a boycott in spite of having been issued a court injunction by an Alabama federal district court. The court enjoined the SCLC against all school boycotts in a case involving a protest for voter registration in Birmingham.¹⁷⁷ A *Tribune* editorial chided Dr. King saying that he: "Apparently does not realize that the patience of the courts with illegal demonstrations has been exhausted."¹⁷⁸ Friedman responded by appealing to the parents at Jenner to wait until the committee finished its report before there should be a public hearing.¹⁷⁹ Responding to the CPJS demand for a full time nurse for the school board committee member Bernard Friedman lashed out at superintendent Willis saying that the shortage of nurses could be traced directly to "irresponsibility or ignorance" on the part of Willis.¹⁸⁰

The presence of Dr. King and the daily media coverage of the Jenner controversy led to a massive protest and march from the Board of Education headquarters at 228 N. LaSalle to a lot adjacent to Jenner where the assembled protesters heard speeches by Woolridge, Raby and a

¹⁷⁶ Bill Van Alstine, "Jenner Parents Deny Chuchut's Big Lie," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, March 8, 1966, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Editorial, "School Boycotts Prohibited," *Chicago Tribune*, February 14, 1966, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ "Asks Delay in Jenner Hearing," *Chicago Tribune*, March 10, 1966, 18.

¹⁸⁰ Bill Van Alstine, "Ben Rapped Over Nurse Shortage," *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, March 12, 1966, 1.

number of other prominent ministers and community leaders. Woolridge and the CPJS had by then received pledges of support from nearby schools Schiller, Manierre, and Sexton as well as support from the south, west sides of the city and south suburbs.¹⁸¹ Placards from the march indicated the degree to which the Jenner dispute resonated across the city. “The West Side Organization Supports the Concerned Parents.” “The South Shore Commission of Human Rights Supports the Concerned Parents,” The Oakland Community Supports the Concerned Parents,” “The Spanish American Federation of Lincoln Park Supports the Concerned Parents,” were among the expressions of city wide and to a lesser extent interracial support generated for the CPJS.¹⁸²

The March 17th *Chicago Defender* headline “Hundreds Join Jenner Rally in Protest Against Principal,” understated the perception of Woolridge and other protesters that the protest was about an overall failure of inner city schools and the Jenner administration. Similarly marchers carried signs expressing anger at the Board of Education, Willis and Mayor Daley.¹⁸³ Curiously, the largest rally and public expressions of support for the parents at Jenner elementary drew no media coverage from the *Chicago Tribune*. In fact the week leading up the rally and week after it saw only one story in the *Tribune* reporting that NAACP’s support for the removal of Chuchut.¹⁸⁴

The long awaited recommendations of the Board committee investigating the dispute at

¹⁸¹ “Jenner Protest Today,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, March 16, 1966, 1.

¹⁸² Bill Van Alstine, “Hundreds Join Jenner Rally in Protest Against Principal,” March 17, 1966, 1.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Casey Banas, “NAACP Urges School Board to Oust Jenner Elementary Chief,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 22, 1966, 9.

Jenner included additional services to be brought to the school including: a social center, establishment of parent workshops, assignment of a parent coordinator to the school, and consultants to aid new teachers at the school. The Board also voted unanimously to allow the Human Relations Department to continue its efforts towards reconciliation.¹⁸⁵ Responding to the offer the CJPS raised the stakes by issuing a new ultimatum with new demands, including new facilities, expansion of library, vocational programs and additional services for students with disabilities.¹⁸⁶ The CPJS voted to allow the Board of Education one week to respond to its latest demands or face another boycott. Woolridge dismissed the proposed new services from the Board of Education saying that they were not asked for nor were they needed.¹⁸⁷ One week later Woolridge, with no explanation reported that the CPJS would not proceed with a second boycott.¹⁸⁸

The gulf between the Board of Education and superintendent Willis was evident in a motion by Board member Warren Bacon to conduct a meeting between all parties so that the board would be able to evaluate, corroborate or refute Willis' conclusions on the matter. The proposed meeting however would never materialize as a student delivered a note to Ms. Chuchut that there would be a 5 day student boycott set to begin Monday April 18th. Board of Education

¹⁸⁵ "Jenner Dispute Eases; Board Delays Action," *Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 1966, 3. At the same board meeting the Board of Education suspended its memorandum of understanding with the Chicago Teachers Union, Chicago Education Association and Chicago Teachers Federation paving the way for the systems first collective bargaining vote.

¹⁸⁶ Bill Van Alstine, "New Threat by Parents at Jenner," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, March 29, 1966, 3.

¹⁸⁷ "Jenner Group Boycott Put off for Week," *Chicago Tribune*, March 28, 1966, 4.

¹⁸⁸ "Jenner Group Cancels Plan for Boycott," *Chicago Tribune*, April 4, 1966, 10.

member Thomas Murray indicated to the press that the board would seek a court injunction against the boycott.¹⁸⁹

On Saturday April 16th Mildred Chuchut was admitted to the hospital for an undisclosed reason. CPJS though pressed on with its demands stating that even if Chuchut were to step down or be removed the boycott would continue until other demands were met. The spokesperson for the CEA stated that Chuchut would be out for at least a week. Board attorney Coffey and Murray make preparations for a lawsuit to which Woolridge responded that parents arrested for violating any court injunction would not post bail and their children would not return to school until they were released.¹⁹⁰

The second Jenner boycott began with 635 of the 2523 students attending classes at the school. Boycotting students attended Freedom Schools in nearby churches and community centers staffed by 70 teachers lead by Ms. Joanne Bowser. While board members prepared for a possible lawsuit, Superintendent Willis responded to boycotting parents by questioning their commitment to their children's education.¹⁹¹ Board members Thomas Murray and Frank Whiston stated that the board would wait to see what the 2nd day attendance figures were before seeking a court injunction.¹⁹² The day two attendance figures revealed that 757 students attended class prompting Whiston to delay any court action. Board member Bernard Friedman expressed disappointment that the CPJS did not attempt to reconcile with Chuchut though he admitted that

¹⁸⁹ "5 Day Boycott of Jenner Set for Monday," *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1966, 2.

¹⁹⁰ "Principal Ill as 2d Jenner Boycott Looms," *Chicago Tribune*, April 18, 1966, 10.

¹⁹¹ Casey Banas, "Hint Suit in Jenner Boycott," *Chicago Tribune*, April 19, 1966, 1.

¹⁹² Ibid

she may have been “a little authoritarian and committed a breach of good manners.”¹⁹³ On the 3rd day of the boycott the Board of Education truant officers went door to door in the Cabrini community to inform parents of the vast array of services that Jenner received compared to other CPS schools.¹⁹⁴ That evening Dr. Martin Luther King spoke to a capacity crowd at the St. Matthew church.

By day four of the boycott participation had receded, nearly 65% of the schools population was out. At a press conference on Wednesday, Willis reiterated his support for Chuchut while announcing that district administrator Dr. Bessie Lawrence would serve as interim principal while Chuchut recovered from surgery.¹⁹⁵ The CPJS however welcomed the news of Chuchut’s replacement cautiously given Willis’ continuing support for Chuchut and notices served by 30 truant officers to parents indicating that they could face prosecution if their children remained out of school.¹⁹⁶ Workers from civil rights organizations followed truant officers through the Cabrini community handing out flyers exhorting parents to “hold on.”¹⁹⁷ On the fifth and final day of the boycott Woolridge claimed a major victory though raising the possibility that the boycott might resume after the spring vacation if CPJS demands were not met.

The next week witnessed a calming of tensions and a concerted effort on the part of Dr.

¹⁹³ Casey Banas, “Pupil Boycott Foes Line Up,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 20, 1966, 1.

¹⁹⁴ “Truant Officers Fight Boycott,” *Chicago Defender*, April 10, 1966, 1.

¹⁹⁵ “Boycott Holds in Fourth Day,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, April 21, 1966, 3.

¹⁹⁶ Casey Banas, “Jenner Head is Replaced for 6 Weeks,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 1966, 1.

¹⁹⁷ “Boycott Holds in Fourth Day,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, April 21, 1966, 3.

Lawrence to reach out to Woolridge and members of CPJS. The Board of Education committee investigating Jenner agreed to meet with Dr. King and the CPJS to avoid a possible resumption of the boycott after Spring break.¹⁹⁸ Despite their pledge to resume the boycott, CPJS and Lawrence reported a general cooling of tensions by the end of April with Lawrence telling reporters in June that both she and Woolridge were happy with the progress the school was making though the demands for a full time nurse, speech therapist and psychologist were not met.

In July of 1966, after recovering from her surgery, Ms. Mildred Chuchut petitioned for reinstatement from her medical leave. Superintendent Willis was unavailable to discuss Ms. Chuchut's future with her during July. The full Board of Education took up the matter of Ms. Chuchut in its August meeting and voted to transfer her out of Jenner Elementary.¹⁹⁹ In December 1966 the School Committee on Community Organization honored Dr. Bessie Lewis with a capacity dinner party. The event, which was attended by Board member Cyrus Adams III, honored Lawrence for her tireless efforts to meet the needs of the Cabrini community in the wake of the crisis at Jenner.²⁰⁰

At the conclusion of the 1965-66 school year the Jenner Elementary community was again settling into the predictable routines of life in an elementary school. The school was however anxious about who would lead the school in the coming years. The civil rights community in Chicago which had only two years before chafed at student boycotts as a means to

¹⁹⁸ "Urges Dr. King Board to Talk About Jenner," *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1966, 1.

¹⁹⁹ "A Victory for Parents," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, August 18, 1966, 19.

²⁰⁰ Margaret Smith, "COCO Honors District School Superintendent," *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, December 10, 1966, 21.

change conditions in the schools was heartened by the support given to the parents at Jenner and the success they had in changing the discourse on schooling in Chicago to include more parents. More importantly the episode at Jenner had exposed in clear detail the fault lines within the Board of Education and the intransigence of the Willis regime to deal with the frustrations of African-American parents in the schools. It was perhaps only fitting that at his last meeting as superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, parent protests over the construction of a new high school in a predominantly African-American neighborhood ended with parents and community members again charging the Board of Education with ignoring their voices.

At the end of the 1965-66 school year little had changed for black teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union except for a heightened awareness of their own voices and the limits of integrationist politics of only a few years before. Thus by 1966 black teachers in CTU and activists elsewhere sought new answers and new, more radical approaches to securing full membership within their union and improving the conditions facing black children in Chicago.

1966 - 1968 Rising Teacher Militancy

In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, newly appointed chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, in a speech in Greenwood, Mississippi, after the shooting of activist James Meredith called for Black Power, a phrase that would later connote a shift away from integrationist philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. and other older civil rights leaders to a more aggressive demand for not only full citizenship for African-Americans but for control over the institutions affecting the lives of black people.²⁰¹ Black power was a cultural call for black people to unite and recognize their heritage and build community while also defining for

²⁰¹ Site Black Power book here.

themselves their goals, and to lead and support their own organizations and institutions within the black community. This expression of Black Power would manifest itself in more radical politics of black teachers, black students, black parents and black communities seeking a radical transformation of a school system in which nearly 50% of its students were black while only 30% of its teachers were African-Americans.²⁰²

In 1966 black CTU delegate Bobby Wright formed the Black Teachers Caucus within CTU.²⁰³ The BTC joined a host of other black teacher organizations though representing a distinctly radical orientation towards the unions role in supporting the growth and development of black children. BTC took the radical position that white teachers in black schools were detrimental to black children and black teachers whose job prospects they hurt.²⁰⁴ Unlike more moderate groups like the Teachers for Integrated Schools, the Teachers Council for Quality Education, the BTC saw little benefit in integration of student body or teaching force. Rather than as allies in a shared agenda for improving the conditions in black schools the BTC advocated that liberal white teachers devote their time to educating working class whites on the city's southwest and northwest sides of the city on the need for Black Power.²⁰⁵ The BTC was explicitly black, limiting membership to only African-American teachers.²⁰⁶ While the BTC advocated for black power politics in the city's schools, the Concerned FTBs organized in 1967

²⁰² Cite from Board figures

²⁰³ Elizabeth Todd-Breland, *A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago Since the 1960s*, University of North Carolina Press, 2018, 121.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 122.

²⁰⁶ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 185.

in response to CTUs slow progress on improving pay and security for Full Time Basis substitutes.

The Concerned FTBs, led by James McQuirter, Lonnie Hubbard, and Tom Smith had 1300 members. The CFTBs challenged the fraught certification system in Chicago²⁰⁷ The Concerned FTBs picketed both the Board of Education and CTU meetings arguing that Board of Education certification requirements were discriminatory and that all FTBs who met minimum state requirements and who had successfully taught for two years should be fully certified. The CFTBs also challenged CTU for voting rights and for not doing enough to press the issue of certification with the Board. The CFTBs campaign for full membership referendum in 1965 and their constant pressure on CTU leadership led the union to, in 1967 grant FTBs voting rights in union elections while still refusing to negotiate with CPS on certification requirements.²⁰⁸ Frustrated by CTUs failure to address the certification issue, the CFTBs would engage in a series of Wildcat strikes to dramatize their concerns and pressure CPS to reform its teacher certification requirements.

As the CTU pressed the Board of Education for collective bargaining rights, the

²⁰⁷ Teacher and principal certification in Chicago was managed by a Board of Examiners, a three person body that administered both a written and oral examination necessary to become a fully certified teacher or principal in Chicago. One of the early challenges to district leadership that CTU fought was on behalf of two of its members, Raymond Cooke and Lyle Wolf, who claimed that anti-union bias by Board examiners when he was attempting to become a principal. In a sworn affidavit, J.J. Zmrhal, one of the examiners recounted that the two men did indeed perform well but was deemed unqualified by Superintendent Johnson and thus failed the oral examinations. Kermit Eby to Superintendent William Johnson, October 5, 1937, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Folder 18 Box 1. The oral examination became a focus of black teacher concerns while later the Concerned FTBs challenged the basic premise that anything beyond state licensure was necessary to teach in Chicago.

²⁰⁸ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 178.

Concerned FTBs launched a series of Wildcat Strikes over the refusal of CTU to address their concerns that would threaten to stall or derail CTUs collective bargaining efforts. Recognizing their shared grievance with CTU leadership, the CFTBs, BTC, and Teachers Division of Operation Breadbasket formed an alliance to press for certification against CTU leadership.²⁰⁹ On November 22, while CTU was in the heat of collective bargaining efforts with CPS, 1339 FTBs walked off the job. CFTB spokesman Lonnie Hubbard indicated that the teachers would return to work but felt that the union would not press vigorously enough for their demands.²¹⁰ CPS Superintendent John Redmond promised to review procedures for certification examinations.²¹¹ Though the one day strike was successful in bringing attention to the plight of FTBs, Hubbard and the CFTBs continued to exert pressure on CTU and the Board of Education challenging the Board narrative about the strike and CTU President John Desmond's veiled attacks on the group by calling attention to the low wages of FTBs in comparison to school janitors and cafeteria workers.²¹²

As salary negotiations between CTU and the Board reached an impasse in January of 1968, CFTBs threatened to defy CTU and not participate if a strike was called.²¹³ In spite of an 11th hour tentative agreement being reached between CTU and CPS, FTBs, announced that

²⁰⁹ Elizabeth Todd-Breland, *Political Education*, 124.

²¹⁰ Casey Banas, "Teacher Union Calls Redmond Boycott Tactic Illegal," *Chicago Tribune*, November 22, 1967, A7.

²¹¹ Editorial, "Needless and Unwise Teachers Strike," *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1967, 11.

²¹² Dave Potter, "Distorted Strike Figures Cited," *The Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, December 9, 1967, 1.

²¹³ Author Unknown, "Strikes Off but FTBs Ready to Stage Walkout," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 8, 1968, 5.

because their certification demands were not part of the negotiation, they would engage in a strike of their own against the wishes of Desmond and CTU leadership.²¹⁴ On January 13, FTBs met at St. Mark's Methodist Church to finalize strike plans and affirmed that the strike would continue in spite of admonitions from Desmond and Redmond. CFTBs demand that FTBs be fully certified after two years of teaching while CTU suggested four years.²¹⁵ On the first day of the strike, Hubbard stressed that they had given CPS and CTU long enough to remedy their grievances and the FTBs were prepared to stay out as long as necessary to win their demands. CTU president Desmond urged teachers to cross the FTBs picket lines and got to their classrooms.²¹⁶ FTBs picketed 16 schools, the Chicago Tribune reported that 590 of the districts 5617 FTBs stayed away on the first day of the strike. On the second day of the strike 535 FTBs were out. By the sixth day of the strike the 336 teachers remained out on the picket lines.²¹⁷ Despite their lack of numerical strength, the striking FTBs over the course of the 10 days that they were out on strike, against the wishes of CTU and CPS brought much needed attention to the second class status of the FTBs as evident by a favorable editorial in the Chicago Defender titled "Teachers are Right" which called the strike a moral indictment against the system.²¹⁸ By defying the CTU leadership and risking their jobs by striking with no job protections at all, FTBs

²¹⁴ Author Unknown, "Subs Set for Tuesday Walkout," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 13, 1968, 1; "Author Unknown, "Sub teachers Angered by Strike Settlement," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 9, 1968, 5.

²¹⁵ Author Unknown, "Sub Teachers Strike Still Seen," *Chicago Tribune*, January 15, 1968, 4.

²¹⁶ Casey Banas, "Teacher Subs to Strike Today," *Chicago Tribune*, January 16, 1968, 1.

²¹⁷ Casey Banas, "Sub Teachers Strike Fails Goal of 2000," *Chicago Tribune*, January 17, 1968, 1; Author Unknown, "336 Substitute Teachers out for Sixth Day," *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1968, A4.

²¹⁸ Editorial, "Teachers are Right," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 26, 1968, 13.

demonstrated a willingness to assert their positions against entrenched interests within the union and CPS.

Conclusion

In the years between the 1963 Freedom Day Boycott of the Chicago Public Schools and the wildcat strikes of black teachers in 1968, black teachers in Chicago, mirrored the national shift in black consciousness from a focus on integration to more militant focus on questioning the legitimacy of institutions like the Chicago Teachers Union that some perceived as detrimental to the advancement of black teachers, and black children. While CTU leadership continued to press for collective bargaining as its major goal, black teachers advocated for not only collective bargaining rights and improved wages and working conditions but a CTU agenda that also focused on improving the educational conditions for black students. This shift in thinking took place over a short period of time. In 1965, when a single black teacher challenged perceived racial bias against Jenner principal Mildred Chuchut, black teachers at the school, likely fearing reprisals or job loss, were largely absent from the year long fight with the principal and Board of Education. Only 3 years later, black teachers, frustrated by their own union and the Board of Education publicly and forcefully challenged both to improve the status of black teachers.

Chapter 4 - Collective Bargaining and Faculty Desegregation: 1969 - 1979

Introduction

Following a substantial victory in winning a path towards equal pay and employment rights, the Concerned FTBs and other black teacher organizations focused on their attention on how the CTU could use its political power to improve education for black students. After winning collective bargaining rights for teachers, the Chicago Teachers Union soon found itself on the brink of its first strike and at odds with the Board of Education and many black teachers who increasingly viewed the union as an obstacle to the black control of black institutions. The 1969 and 1971 strikes were pivotal in giving expression to black teacher angst and frustration with the CTU which by the middle of the 1970s was replaced with growing frustration with the Board of Education and the specter of mass transfers of black and white teachers in order to satisfy long standing demands from the federal government that CPS take affirmative and demonstrative steps to desegregate its teaching population.

The Path to Collective Bargaining

In the wake of collective bargaining victories in New York and Executive Order 1088 issued by President Kennedy in 1961 legitimizing public sector unions in the federal government, CTU like other teacher unions began a more aggressive campaign to secure collective bargaining rights for its members. CTU's path towards collective bargaining was less dramatic and punctuated than in many other cities and began with a 1964 Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and CTU that outlined issues that would be bargained over and the process by which negotiations would take place and importantly named CTU and the

local affiliate of the NEA as representatives of the bargaining unit.²¹⁹ Many rank and file members were displeased with what they saw as a watered down collective bargaining agreement and Fewkes was openly criticized by members and challenged in that year's election. By 1965 a more radical faction developed within CTU the Teachers Action Council (TAC), to aggressively advocate for a collective bargaining election to decide which union would be the sole bargaining unit for Chicago Public Schools teachers. At the same time that TAC was campaigning for collective bargaining rights and pressuring CTU leadership to be more aggressive in its approach, CCCO was organizing a third Freedom Day and Martin Luther King Jr had descended on Chicago to dramatize the plight of the poor. Against this backdrop Mayor Daley, being squeezed on all sides relented and instructed the Board to allow for a collective bargaining election of which CTU won in a landslide over the rival IEA.²²⁰ The board recognized CTU as the sole bargaining agent for Chicago teachers and began bargaining the unions first contract in the spring of 1966.

At the same time that Chicago teachers went to vote for collective bargaining, the CTU elected a new president, John Desmond, to replace the retiring Fewkes. Desmond, Fewkes' long-time lieutenant, narrowly defeated Charles Skibbens to become president. Desmond, like his predecessor, concentrated on bread and butter issues like salary, paid leave, and benefits for members. Desmond, unlike his predecessor though, proved more open to addressing racial issues within the schools. In 1967 CTU supported Superintendent Redmond's desegregation plan and was clear to state that violence in schools is not a racial issue.²²¹ In spite of these positions,

²¹⁹ Francis Landwermeyer, *Teacher Unionism*, 297.

²²⁰ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 169.

²²¹ *Ibid*, 175.

Desmond continued his predecessor's prioritization of white members needs and concerns over black teachers in spite of the changing demographics in the schools and within the teaching ranks. By 1968 one third of CPS teachers were African-American yet Jacqueline Wright (later Vaughn) and Glendiss Hambrick were the only two African-Americans in CTU leadership. Desmond blocked all efforts by CPS to integrate the teaching force by opposing policy proposals to transfer teachers involuntarily.²²² And to the consternation of Black Power and Civil Rights activists, CTU continued to prioritize higher pay for teachers over increased funding for schools. Finally, in the decade-old struggle to grant full certification to FTBs Desmond, like his predecessor, did little to champion African-American teacher issues.²²³

Joining the Concerned FTBs, other black teacher groups rose to champion the cause for increased voice for black teachers and unionism that prioritized the needs of black children. The Black Teachers Caucus of the Chicago Teachers Union, founded by Bobby Wright alongside Timuel Black's Teachers Committee for Quality Education, along with groups like the Chicago Black Teachers Association and the Teachers Division of Operation Breadbasket, emerged alongside the Concerned FTBS as voices for black teachers within and outside of the Chicago Teachers Union. As the Chicago Teachers Union mobilized teachers for what would be the union's first strike since gaining collective bargaining rights in 1966, black teacher groups defiantly called upon the union and the Board of Education to do more to improve the positions of black teachers and black students. At Carver and Dusable Upper grade black teachers

²²² Resolutions on Faculty Assignments, Chicago Teachers Union, March 20, 1967, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 25 Folder 7.

²²³ John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 175.

expressed their dissatisfaction with the curriculum and methods in ghetto schools. Teachers at the schools condemned the school curriculum, insensitive white principals, and high percentage of black as FTBs, and lack of communication between black teachers and parents.²²⁴

As talk of a pending CTU strike escalated, in February of 1969 Superintendent Redmond announced the elimination of the oral examination component of teacher certification and provided a path to full certification for all FTBs with at least one year experience and who successfully passed their respective content tests. FTBS seeking to obtain a regular certificate were offered examinations four times during the year beginning on April 12, 1969. Under the new policy, there would be no limit to the number of times that candidates could take the subject matter examination if they were unsuccessful.²²⁵ In spite of what on the surface appeared to be a victory for FTBs, James McQuirter questioned the need for any type of standardized test for FTBs with a college degree and experience. Black teachers questioned the relevance of principal recommendations for certification when only 20 of the system's nearly 600 principals were black. Finally, black FTBS questioned the public statements by the Education Testing Service which administered the certification examination and filed suit alleging discrimination in its testing.²²⁶ Nonetheless, among some black teachers the elimination of the oral test and a path to full certification was an important step forward that CTU took credit for, a claim that black

²²⁴ Washington, Betty, City's Black Teachers Talk of a Revolt, *Chicago Daily Defender (Big Weekend Edition)*, May 25, 1968, 1.

²²⁵ Board of Examiners; Board of Education, Announcement of Revisions in Teacher Certification Requirements and Procedures, February 10, 1969. Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 77 Folder 866.

²²⁶ Christmas, Faith, "FTBs Victorious in School Fight", *Chicago Daily Defender*, February 12, 1969, 1.

teachers questioned. Of the 2381 FTBs who took the exam to gain full certification, only 714 were successful in passing the exam.²²⁷ Two years later in 1971, new teacher Kay Ward looked on as many of her peers were trapped in FTB status.

Quite a few, they were FTBs for quite some time because they just, couldn't pass. They knew they weren't going to pass. It was the orals. Then, after a while, we were grandfathered in. The union had nothing to do with that. Then, after a while, we were grandfathered into the state system. Sometime in the '80s, we were all grandfathered in. They looked at all your transcripts, every course you had taken, which was a good thing. My certificate, I still have it, still active, is first to grade nine.²²⁸

On May 22, 1969 when the Chicago Teachers Union walked out in its first ever strike, black teacher organizations and caucuses within CTU mobilized to cross the unions picket lines. Nearly half of the city's black teachers crossed the CTU picket lines. Only a few days before, black teacher organizations publicly stated to the tribune that they would not honor the unions picket lines and would keep black schools open.²²⁹ Throughout the south and west sides of the city, black teachers at largely black schools crossed the picket line. At Tilton elementary on the city's west side, only 2 of the schools 42 teachers honored the CTU strike.²³⁰ Close to half of Chicago's black teachers crossed the picket line.²³¹ At the conclusion of the two day strike, teachers voted overwhelmingly to ratify the contract which improved teacher salaries by \$100

²²⁷ Press release from Chicago Public Schools on FTB testing, August 8, 1968. Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 77 Folder 866

²²⁸ Ward, Interview by author, August 8, 2019.

²²⁹ Elmer, John, "Union, School Board Set Talks Today," *Chicago Tribune*, May 19, 1969, 1.

²³⁰ Herman et. Al, "Eerie Calm Grips Many Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, May 23, 1969, 3.

²³¹ Elizabeth Todd-Breland, *Political Education*, 125.

per month guaranteed no layoffs, and granted automatic certification for FTBs after 3 years of satisfactory teaching.²³² In spite of the deal tensions remained between the union and black teachers, many of whom crossed the picket line.²³³

In the aftermath of the strike, and as CTU sought to mend the rift with black teachers, The Board and CTU faced a challenge by the United States Attorney General Thomas Foran. In the letter the Attorney General claimed to have received complaints from black parents alleging that their children had their civil rights deprived. According to Foran, the Justice Department found that the transfer and assignment practices of CPS deprived black children of equal protection thus the Chicago Public Schools has an obligation to correct the deficiencies found in the examination of the schools. Finally, the Justice Department asked CPS to provide a report in 2 weeks of whether or not the district intends to disestablish the pattern of faculty assignments and equalize the distribution of certified and experienced teachers and subs. 215 of the 578 schools had all black or all white faculties. "Residential patterns alone cannot explain the similarities between the racial composition of the student bodies and faculties. Black schools are assigned a disproportionate number of new and non-certified teachers." ²³⁴ After 4 months of correspondence between the Board and Foran, the Board agreed that it would comply with the Departments request to develop a plan to desegregate the faculty of the Chicago Public Schools.²³⁵

²³² Negronida, Peter, "Its Back to Classrooms Today, *Chicago Tribune*, May 26, 1969, 1.

²³³ Negronida, Peter, "Schools Open, Strike Strain Still Lingers," *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1969, 6.

²³⁴ US Attorney General Thomas Foran, Letter to Frank Whiston, Board President, July 9, 1969. Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 77 File 875.

²³⁵ Whiston, Frank (Board President), Letter to US Attorney General John Mitchell, November

The 1969 - 70 school year saw a renewed struggle between black teacher organizations and the CTU and an escalation of tensions surrounding the Redmond plan to desegregate the teaching force. In January, upset that the proposed 1970 contract did little to improve black schools, members of the Black Teachers Caucus, Operation Breadbasket, and the United Educational Employees vowed to again not honor a CPS strike and pledged to keep working “for our black children.” Teachers further dismissed the recommendations from the union’s “Inner-city school Committee” and the unions plan to charge teachers an agency fee, regardless of membership in the union calling it a “militancy tax levied against all black teachers for their own community destruction.”²³⁶ By the middle of January black teachers called for a mass meeting to vote on a referendum on the relevance of the union at Trinity Episcopal Church.²³⁷

Desegregation Context Redmond Plan to 1977 Faculty Integration Plan

CPS had a new superintendent in James Redmond, after the sudden departure of Willis during the summer of 1966. In contrast to Willis, Redmond, a white liberal born in Kansas City, Missouri was an integrationist.²³⁸ Redmond signed a 5 year contract worth \$32,500 per year. During his 6 years as superintendent of the New Orleans public schools, Redmond successfully fought Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis for control of the public schools after the state attempted to take over the schools rather than comply with a court order to integrate the city’s

25, 1969. Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 77 File 875.

²³⁶ Christmas, Faith, “900 Black Teachers Vow Not to Strike,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 10, 1970, 1.

²³⁷ Author Unknown, “Blacks Blast Teacher Pact,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 13, 1970, 3.

²³⁸ Ibid, 172.

schools.²³⁹ To implement the districts plans to integrate the schools, Redmond's plan to enroll 5 black first graders in two formally all white schools was met with a bomb detonated in Redmond's parking space. After enduring his and New Orleans teachers' pay being withheld by the Louisiana legislature, Redmond resigned his post in 1961 to become a consultant then school superintendent in Syosset, New York before his 1966 appointment to lead CPS.²⁴⁰

In January 1967, as a result of a Title VI complaint from CCCO, CPS received the United States Office of Education for Civil Rights report and recommendations about necessary reforms in the city's schools.²⁴¹ The report focused on key areas of concern to the government, 1. Faculty assignment, 2. Student assignment policies, Apprenticeship programs, and Enrollment practices at the districts vocational schools. After a year of study and with the support of a grant from the Office of Education, the Redmond plan recommended:

A. Faculty assignment -

- a. Hire personnel experts as consultants,
- b. Work with the Chicago Teachers Union and other teacher organizations
- c. Review teacher assignment policies to plan for increased integration of faculties,
- d. Develop plans to equalize the distribution of experienced teachers to the extent possible,
- e. Identify characteristics of school which distinguish some schools as less

²³⁹ Redmond's Career Show's Meteoric Rise, *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1966, 2.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Danns, Dionne, "Redmond's School Desegregation Plan and Reactions," in *Desegregating Chicago's Public Schools, Historical Studies in Education*, 19.

desirable by teachers.

B. Student assignment -

- a. Hire objective experts to consult with staff,
- b. Review attendance boundaries and student assignment policies,
- c. Determine feasibility of actions with the Board power to reduce desegregation

C. Open Enrollment for Vocational and Trade Schools

- a. Arrange a conference with the U.S. Office of Education to explore procedures to increase integration of vocational and trade schools,
- b. Investigate opportunities for career development programs.

D. Apprenticeship Training

- a. Work with the Office of Education and the U.S. Department of labor to review Mayor's program to increase enrollment of Negro and other minorities,
- b. Develop plans to work with apprenticeship councils to increase minority representation in apprenticeships,
- c. Develop more effective communication mechanisms to inform minority groups about apprenticeship programs,²⁴²

Community groups, the Chicago Teachers Union, business community, parents, university experts, served as consultants in developing the final recommendations that would detail specific policies to address within the broad outline initially put forth by Redmond.²⁴³ In

²⁴² *Proceedings of the Board of Education, City of Chicago, January 25, 1967, 2400.*

²⁴³ Stringfellow, Christina, *Desegregation Policies and Practices in Chicago During the*

August of 1967 the committee produced specific policy recommendations, most controversially dealing with student assignment and teacher assignment. In both cases the district would attempt to achieve integration through movement of both minority and white students and teachers. In the case of student assignment, modest plans to bus approximately 1,100 black students on the city's southeast and northwest sides were met with strong opposition from whites from the Belmont Cragin, Portage Park, Dunning, Montclare, and South Chicago communities. In January of 1968 when the Board held a meeting to discuss the plan about 1500 people crowded into the meeting showed up to protest even hanging Redmond in effigy.²⁴⁴ Black Chicago was less than enthusiastic about Redmond's plan also. The CCCO, which had brought the original complaint that spurred the development of the plan criticized the plan for not going far enough to affect change for more students. Similarly, some black residents of the southeast side questioned the one-way nature of the student transfers.²⁴⁵

Black Teachers and Desegregation

Less controversial to the public but as controversial to both black and white teachers, the Redmond plan rested on the forced transfer of teachers to achieve greater racial balance in the public schools. Responding to plans to achieve faculty desegregation through transfers, the Illinois Federation of Teachers adopted a resolution on faculty assignments stating that it was deeply concerned with inequities between black and white schools, noting that local school boards should draw up plans with timetables for implementation in achieving s more equitable

Superintendencies of James Redmond and Joseph Hannon, Dissertation, Loyola University, 25.

²⁴⁴ Danns, "Redmond's School Desegregation Plan and Reactions," 33.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 25.

spread of faculty qualifications and faculty integration.²⁴⁶ The CTU for its part also adopted its own separate resolution, though only focused on student desegregation, calling on CPS to work with the CTU and the Illinois Department of Instruction, and the IFT to seek solutions in Chicago and Illinois to resolve the “most serious problem facing modern education.”²⁴⁷ Finally, the CTU called on the Illinois General Assembly to appropriate additional money to enact legislation to improve the quality of education for all students.²⁴⁸

By 1969 little had changed in successfully integrating Chicago’s students or teachers and weary of halfhearted efforts on behalf of the Board of Education, the United States Department of Justice began crafting a federal plan to desegregate the Chicago school. On June 1, 1970 the Department released its *Recommendations for Desegregating the Staff and Equalizing the Distribution of Experienced Teachers in the Public Schools of Chicago*. Noticeably absent from the Justice Departments solutions was a solution to student desegregation. Given the Nixon administration’s opposition to busing as a means to achieve integration, the absence of student desegregation as an objective is not surprising however, the absence represents a significant shift from the federal policy of the previous 16 years.²⁴⁹ The Justice Department Plan recommended

²⁴⁶ Chicago Teachers Union, Resolution on Faculty Assignments, March 20, 1967. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 25 Folder 7

²⁴⁷ Chicago Teachers Union, Resolution on School Segregation, March 20, 1967. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 25 Folder 7

²⁴⁸ Chicago Teachers Union, Resolution on Integrated Education, March 20, 1967, Chicago Teachers Union Papers, Box 25 Folder 7

²⁴⁹ In 1968 the Nixon administration, against the advice of Attorney General John Mitchell who advised that Nixon pursue full compliance with desegregation mandates of the Johnson administration, pursued its “Southern Strategy” of relaxing pressure on southern school districts to desegregate their student populations leading White House aid Harry Dent to comment that after a hearing of the Fifth Circuit of appeals that “for the first time the Justice Department is

that CPS:

1. Assign all new employees to schools in order to make racial composition of the teaching staff more representative;
2. Reassign to another school all teachers from schools in which the racial composition don't meet standard of representation within 10%;
3. Strengthen the policy under which teachers can seek transfer. Redistribute experienced teachers throughout the system based on seniority,
4. Use a computer program for selection of transfer teachers;
5. Establish a review board to hear appeals;
6. Correct principal segregation²⁵⁰

Reactions from the CTU and black teachers were swift and strong with some black teachers stating that if they were transferred to white schools as outlined in the Justice Department plan, they simply would not go. The Chicago Teachers Union also objected to the plan because it would violate teacher tenure rights. The Board of Education's response to the plan called for approximately 12% of the faculty to be reassigned based on race.²⁵¹ By the summer of 1971 the Board and the CTU had reached a compromise integration plan. Union leadership recommended voting yes to accept the union board proposal to integrate faculties and

seated next to the south rather than the NAACP." Lawrence McAndrews, "The Politics of Principle: Richard Nixon and School Desegregation." *The Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 3 (1998): 189.

²⁵⁰ Martin, John Henry; Lieberman, Myron; Elsbree, Willard, *Recommendations for Desegregating the Staff and Equalizing the Distribution of Experienced Teachers in the Public Schools of Chicago, Illinois*, June 1, 1970. Chicago Urban League Papers Series III Box 78 Folder 884

²⁵¹ Christmas, Faith, May Boycott White Schools, *Chicago Daily Defender*, September 16, 1970, 1.

equalize per pupil costs. The plan was adopted by the union Executive Committee and the House of Delegates at its June 14 meeting. Major provisions of the plan included:

1. No assigned teacher would be transferred,
2. Per pupil costs will be equalized by assigning additional teachers to lower class size.
3. Schools already meeting 75% - 25% faculty integration goal (no more than 75% of one race) will not be affected. FTBs could potentially be transferred if their schools are not in compliance with 75 - 25 goal
4. Rejected HEW plan to use an electronic lottery to transfer experienced teachers with a potential court ordered plan.²⁵²

In spite of the ratification of the 1971 agreement by both the union and the Board of Education, Chicago's teaching force and its students remained largely segregated through 1974 though small numbers of teachers were being transferred in order to begin integrating the city's teaching force. Born and raised in Detroit, Barbara Eason-Watkins grew up in a family that stressed the importance of education. Eason-Watkins came to Chicago and began teaching in 1974 at Mahalia Jackson Elementary School on the city's south side. Eason-Watkins' early experiences entering CPS as a black teacher demonstrate the fraught position that black teachers found themselves in CPS and how even in 1974, certification in CPS was not a foregone conclusion, even for a highly qualified teacher like her.

When I started working in Chicago, I only taught at schools that were 100% African American. That was a first for me... They initially were going to send me up north after that first year, then I went downtown to talk to a Miss Dixon who was in the human resources department. And she was able to get them to allow me to go out south, because it was just going to be too much of a drive, and I had a young son at the time. It was going

²⁵² Chicago Teachers Union, CTU Members to vote on Integration Plan, *Chicago Union Teacher*, June 1, 1971, 1. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 117 Folder 1

to be hard for me to go from Chicago to the north side, and I had a south side babysitter... And she was an African American woman in HR, she was the only one at the time. And everybody said, "Go see Miss Dixon, go see Miss Dixon. And then I went to a school in the Pullman area. Then I ended up at Carver, because again they kept redistributing teachers based on segregation and numbers. From people that I knew, it was supposed to work both ways. But often just as those of us who needed to be on the south side were trying to make arrangements to do that, I heard there were many people from the north side who simply would not come south.²⁵³

In 1970, new teacher Kay Ward began her teaching career at Scanlon elementary on the city's far south side Roseland community, a neighborhood rapidly transforming from Polish and Irish to African-American. Ward, having grown up in Lilydale and Morgan Park, was a part of a growing number of African-American students rapidly integrating the schools on the far south side of the city. Ward's experience and the experience of her friends who were also young black teachers further illustrates the degree to which transfer and the prospect of teaching in white schools was a real possibility beginning black teachers.

Kay Ward recalls:

When I first went in, there were quite a few African-American teachers who, to integrate, faculties wound up far north. I have a friend, she was right at O'Hare. She lived on 90th and Carpenter. There were quite a few I knew who went way north and not by choice. That was different went you said, "Okay, I want to transfer here." But it was like, "No, you've got to go because you've got to integrate these schools. My first school, which was Scanlon, when I went there, Scanlon had never had an African-American teacher. The first time they had a black teacher was 1970, the year before I arrived. Yeah. Two black teachers came in 1970. As they [white teachers] retired, black teachers would come in. Then the pendulum swung the other way quickly. Soon the teachers were majority black. One thing I will say, we had a very good relationship. The older white teachers, they took us under their wings.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Eason - Watkins, Interview with the author, June 17, 2019.

²⁵⁴ Ward, Interview by author, August 8, 2019.

By 1976 HEW authorities were frustrated by the lack of progress by CPS to integrate its teaching force and took a harder position on faculty integration. This time the HEW proposed a hard ratio of majority to minority teachers stating that all CPS schools should have a ratio of 55% majority to 45% minority teachers. Predictably, under the guise of protecting against a massive teacher transfer and violation of seniority rights, the CTU and the Board of Education adopted a confusing and convoluted plan that sought to have 75 - 85% of CPS schools with a nonminority to majority ratio of 25 - 75%. By 1977 30 - 40% of the schools would have a ratio of 30 - 70% and by 1977 at least 80 - 85% of schools would have a 30 - 70% ratio.²⁵⁵ However, before the full membership was able to ratify the agreement, the HEW rejected the plan and referred the matter to an administrative hearing.²⁵⁶ In response the Board filed an unsuccessful lawsuit in federal court seeking an injunction that would have prevented the federal government from withholding funds on the basis of its discrimination charge against CPS. CTU filed an amicus brief in support of the CPS suit.²⁵⁷ Judge Everett Hammarstrom found CPS guilty of discrimination in the assignment of faculty on the basis of race. CPS was also found guilty of failing to adequately identify and assess students' race and national origin and to address their needs. In response, on February 24 the union House of Delegates approved the following recommendations:

²⁵⁵ Chicago Teachers Union, "House approves revised integration plan," *Chicago Union Teacher*, February 1976. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 2

²⁵⁶ Chicago Teachers Union, "House Urges 'yes' vote," *Chicago Union Teacher*, September 1976. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 2

²⁵⁷ Chicago Teachers Union, "Faculty Desegregation decision moves closer," *Chicago Union Teacher*, November 1976. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 2

1. CTU requests that the Board appeal the Hammarstrom decision to prevent cut off of any funds to the Chicago Public Schools,
2. Immediate collective bargaining before any final plan is adopted affecting Board employees covered under the union contract,
3. The purpose of the negotiations would be to develop a legally acceptable plan that minimizes teacher reassignment,
4. The Union would seek elimination of any plan to assign teachers based on experience,
5. CTU attorneys would seek other legal means to protect member rights.

Notably though, Judge Hammarstrom found "no correlation between the level of teacher experience at a particular school and the quality of educational service delivered to the students of that particular race has been presented. Accordingly, there is no violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution or Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. No evidence has been presented to establish that teachers in minority schools have lesser levels of teaching experience which affects their proficiency."²⁵⁸ While CTU and the Board worked on competing proposals to identify which teachers would be transferred to meet the HEW racial ratios, CTU president focused on the potentially detrimental effects of using the proposed lottery for transferring teachers.²⁵⁹ Given the judge's ruling that there was no connection between teacher experience and educational quality, in May of 1977 CTU suggested a plan that would place teachers on tiers

²⁵⁸ Chicago Teachers Union, "House acts on integration ruling," *Chicago Union Teacher*, March 1, 1977. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 3

²⁵⁹ President's Remarks, House of Delegates Meeting, April 14, 1977, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 132 Folder 3.

for eligibility for transfer with all FTBs in one tier, the second tier would be teachers with between 4 - 8 years' experience and the third tier would be teachers with over 8 years of experience.²⁶⁰ Finally, the Illinois State Board of Education set a June deadline for CPS to submit a student desegregation plan.²⁶¹ Despite CTUs efforts to protect seniority, and counter proposals, on May 25, 1977 the Board of Education adopted the *Plan for the Implementation of the Provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Related to: Integration of Faculties, Assignment Patterns of Principals and Bilingual Education Programs*. During the summer of 1977 teachers and principals were transferred and reassigned to comply with the May 25 federal goals. The final plan established three district goals:

1. Integrate faculties by September 1977
2. Eliminate any identifiable pattern of principal assignment
3. Provide appropriate bilingual services²⁶²

a race-based transfer policy that resulted in nearly 2000 black and white teachers, or 7% of the total CPS teaching force being transferred. The inclusion of senior teachers among those transferred led CTU to include transfer and seniority rights of so-called supernumeraries or teachers laid off as a result of declining enrollment declines, on its collective bargaining agenda

²⁶⁰ Chicago Teachers Union, "Board nears faculty integration decision," *Chicago Union Teacher*, May 1, 1977. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 3.

²⁶¹ Chicago Teachers Union, "New Deadline Student Desegregation," *Chicago Union Teacher*, May 1, 1977. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 3

²⁶² Chicago Board of Education, *Plan for the Implementation of the Provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Related to: Integration of Faculties, Assignment Patterns of Principals and Bilingual Education Programs*. October 12, 1977, Chicago Board of Education Archives [get file number].

for 1977-78 contract.²⁶³ For black music teacher Norman Malone, the transfer would transform his teaching career. As a young black teacher, and musician himself, Malone quickly earned the respect of his peers, quickly becoming the music department chair at his school, yet that respect and seniority did not protect him from being involuntarily transferred from the districts first public magnet school Whitney Young High School.

That was the year that the board decided that there weren't enough integrated teachers throughout the system. No department chairman was supposed to be involved. I was the only department chairman in the city that was moved. It was quite a surprise. I was transferred to Sullivan, the farthest north high school in the city... They didn't quite know how to deal with me there. Then I was offered Lincoln Park. It was Waller High School at the time. It was the hell hole of the city, and the district superintendent, Dr. Margaret Harrigan and a new principal, Mary Shannon decided that they were going to change.²⁶⁴

The prospect of being transferred out of their respective neighborhoods and away from serving black students and black communities was an omnipresent factor of life for black teachers in Chicago. On the city's west side, fifth year black teacher Regina McClellan, describing the transfer process that teachers underwent:

The transfers came without much notice. Teachers within each school knew their assignment dates down to the hour. We tracked mentally how many maternity leaves or sick leaves our colleagues had. Teachers did not want to go north or far southeast to work. We understood because in most African American schools during the 70/80's the teachers were African American because we wanted to be close to home (with less drive time). While our school, which was located on the west side, had Caucasian and African American teachers, we did not have any Hispanic or Asian teachers.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ House of Delegates Agenda, September 8, 1977, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 132 Folder 6.

²⁶⁴ Malone, Interview by author, June 11, 2019.

²⁶⁵ McClellan, Interview by Author, September 23, 2019

African-American teacher Joyce Brown was similarly nervous about being transferred. After attending DuSable High school. Brown sought to return to DuSable and teach there and serve the community that had provided her with so much hope and opportunity.

I wanted to go back to DuSable where I had graduated from. And where I've never had any bad teachers... All of my teachers loved me. And as a poor child going to college my teachers supported me. They would check on me. So, when I graduated [from college] I wanted to go back to my high school to teach. I had a letter from Byron Minor that was my principal. I had a letter from him and everything. And I went down to the board, they looked at me. And they said to me, "No, you can't go back." Because DuSable was mostly black. And I had tears in my eyes like "What?" I, can't go to DuSable? They said, "Here's a school that's not far from your house. You want to go there?" I was like, "Yeah." Okay. Because I didn't have a car. And all of my friends had to go way North to teach. It was awful... I had to take three buses. People would take two or three buses to get to work. It was crazy. DuSable was a 100% black faculty, 100% black students. There was a lot of love in that school. And people got you and pulled you through. That was the environment I was used to.²⁶⁶

CTU won a significant victory on the supernumerary issue, widely viewed by teachers as one that protected white teachers, since the black teaching population, though growing, was in general less experienced than white teachers [look for data on seniority by race]. In the 1977-78 contract article 42 - 3 established that the supernumerary teacher would be designated with no regards to race.²⁶⁷ Reporting to the CTU membership on negotiations with the HEW and Board of Education on teacher transfer provisions of the contract, CTU President Healey remarked that U.S. Secretary of Education Joseph Califano praised the union as hard negotiators but that the

²⁶⁶ Brown, Interview by author, September 3, 2019.

²⁶⁷ "Salary - Seniority - Stability - Substitutes Assigned - A Smashing Victory," House of Delegates Meeting, September 30, 1977, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 132 Folder 7.

union was a “fair and forward union”²⁶⁸ With contractual language protecting against involuntary transfers, integration of the Chicago teaching force receded from the union’s agenda.

After hearing appeals from CTU president Healey, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) informed CTU on June 5th 1979 that it would eliminate teacher integration from its determination of eligibility for ESSA funds for CPS. Facing a third round of transfers the HEW agreed with CTU that substantial progress had been made with the transfer of 4000 teachers and only 125 schools remained out of compliance with HEW plan.²⁶⁹ The ruling could not come at a better time for the district as the 1979-80 school year would bring unparalleled financial crisis to the district.

Despite CPS receiving ESSA funds for the first time since 1968, the district’s financial position was unstable. After the Board failed to secure bids for much needed bond sales in 1979, the district lacked funds to pay interest on existing debts nor meet payroll. After Governor Jim Thompson refused a bailout package for the district, by December of 1979 the Board had run out of funds and could not meet its \$41.5M payroll resulting in 48,000 employees of the Chicago Board of Education not receiving paychecks before Christmas. CTU threatened a work stoppage if teachers were not paid by January 4.²⁷⁰ CTU filed suit against the board asking CPS to sell Midway airport site to the City of Chicago in order to meet its payroll obligations.²⁷¹ For some

²⁶⁸ President’s Message, Chicago Teachers Union House of Delegates meeting, October 13, 1977, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 132 Folder 8.

²⁶⁹ Chicago Teachers Union, “Victory in Transfer Hassle,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, June 1979. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 4

²⁷⁰ Author Unknown, “Teachers go Unpaid,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 22, 1979.

²⁷¹ Meg O'Connor, “Sell Land to meet payroll: teacher suit,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 27, 1979.

black teachers who had previously not been engaged with CTU, Christmas with no pay energized them to become more involved with the union.

1971 Strike

While the CTU increased its efforts to resist the involuntary transfer of teachers, the union flexed its collective bargaining power to increase salaries for members. With a membership now totaling 22,000 members, the union sought a substantial pay increase and a multiyear contract. As they had during the 1969 strike, black teachers and community organizations crossed CTU picket lines. Still skeptical of the union and its motives, groups like the Teachers Division of Operation PUSH, and the Black Teachers Caucus called upon black teachers to keep black schools open and educate black children.²⁷² Notably, in black districts on the south and sides of the city, only 11 schools made the union's honor roll for strike participation.²⁷³ Though successful in winning 8% salary increases for both 1971 and 1972, CTU remained divided along racial lines as the teaching force was increasingly black though the radical politics of the 1960s were fading among black teachers.²⁷⁴

The union's gains in 1971 were tempered by the Board of Education layoffs of approximately 277 teachers and reducing the school year by 11 days provoking the union to set a strike date to oppose the Board action. A 1972 strike was only averted when the Board agreed to restore positions and reduce the furlough days from 11 to 5.²⁷⁵ As they had in 1971, black

²⁷² Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, 134.

²⁷³ Chicago Teachers Union, "New Contract Provisions," *Chicago Union Teacher*, January 1, 1971. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 117 Folder 1.

²⁷⁴ Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, 135.

²⁷⁵ Chicago Teachers Union, "House Postpones Strike," *Chicago Union Teacher*, May 28, 1972.

teacher groups threatened to cross union picket lines “so that our children don’t suffer.”²⁷⁶ The 1971 Strike was the last time that the specter of significant numbers of black teachers crossing the CTU picket lines was a significant threat. In subsequent strikes of the 1970s and 1980s when black teachers did cross the picket line they would simply report to work at central office since the schools were closed with so many teachers out. Following the 1971 strike, as black teachers increasingly became strong supporters of the bread and butter wage and benefits agenda of CTU, black teachers themselves increasingly became delegates and union activists and very few teachers crossed the picket line as black CTU activist Connee Fitch Blanks explained:

As strike coordinator my role was to report how many would be out on the picket line. Report how many members were out on the picket line, to report who crossed the picket line. Not very many people crossed the line. And what they would do is if they would cross the line, they would cross it at the district office.

Joyce Brown, a high school English teacher, later counselor at Kenwood Academy began her teaching career in 1970 and found herself in a multicultural environment of union activism led by Jeff Jennings, father of future CTU president Karen Lewis. Surrounded by black activists like Jennings and others, she joined CTU in order to receive guidance and support.

“You talk about mentoring and people just guiding you. So I was a brand new baby teacher. I didn't know about anything. And the people at Kenwood, they just nurtured all of us first year teachers. And one of the things they told us to do was to join a union and join Valic... We had lunchroom talks. You could sit around the lunchroom and, Jeff Jennings, Karen Lewis' dad, he was a strong union person. And we just loved him to death. So all the old school people would get us in the lunchroom and tell us why we couldn't come to work, why we weren't going to cross the picket line. And I just fell into line. Because it was all about protecting your rights and getting a fair share, raises, and class size. So that's what

Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 117 Folder 1.

²⁷⁶ Faith Christmas, “Cry Fraud in Teachers Strike,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, May 24, 1972.

they explained to us as young people. We just went along with it. I've never been a part of anything like that. People loved Jeff. He was like the faculty spokesman. He would be the first one with his hands up. I often tell Karen, "You are your father's daughter after all."²⁷⁷

Though Brown and countless other new black teachers took the advice of more veteran black teachers to join the union and not cross the picket lines, she was troubled by the treatment of those who did in fact cross the picket lines and the frequency of strikes in the 1970s and 80s.

I did not like the way they treated the scabs. People who crossed the line. I just... I did not like it. I mean they did terrible things to them if they crossed the line. The other thing is that I did not like the multiple strikes. I just did not like it. I wish there was another way. It was disruptive... So I never marched the picket lines because I just thought that was unprofessional. All that chanting. I just thought that was unprofessional... It was really, really, really hard. So I was just... I've just been conflicted about that. There has to be a way to solve it without being out of school for a month. And it's just not good for kids. We cannot lose any teaching and learning time.

Not necessarily a union activist herself, Ward eventually became the union delegate at Scanlan and recalls the degree to which black teachers in her school were somewhat ambivalent about CTU:

I've never been in a school where they were just super militant. People paid their dues. If it was time to vote, they would come in and vote. You usually had to get on the intercom, "We need everybody to come down." I know when I was delegate, sometimes I'd have to go around and say- "You didn't vote." All of the schools where I was, was pretty much the feeling, was like, "We pay our dues because we have to." Now, if we went on strike ... I do remember at Scanlan, there was one teacher, she did cross the line and people got a little PO'd about that. But we were really gung-ho. Most people, including myself, just saw the union as, if something goes wrong, they'll be there to fight my battles."²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Brown, Interview by author, September 3, 2019.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

1973 Strike

In February 1973, CTU and the Board of Education again found themselves at a negotiating impasse over the 1973 teachers' contract. On February 23, the first day of the walkout, Jesse Jackson and Operation Push and CTU President Healey announced the support of Operation PUSH of CTU's contract demands.²⁷⁹ Whether as a part of PUSH broader campaign to build alliances with organized labor or out of a recognition of the changing demographics of the Chicago teaching force, PUSH's support for the strike marked the first time in CTU's history that a significant black community organization publicly supported a CTU strike and signaled the end of organized black resistance to CTU strike efforts.²⁸⁰ The 10 day strike, the longest of CPS history to that point resulted in 2.5% pay raises for teachers and the creation of 210 new positions.²⁸¹

1975 Strike

In 1974, CTU focused its efforts on two issues of importance to the union, student discipline and the 1975 contract. In February of 1974 CTU President Healey met with Cook County State's Attorney Bernard Carey to push for stricter criminal prosecution for student accused of assaulting teachers as well as people caught trespassing on school property.²⁸² Simultaneously, the CTU was negotiating a contract for the 1975 school year. After an 11-day

²⁷⁹ Chicago Teachers Union, "Push Pitches In," *Chicago Union Teacher*, February 23, 1973. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 117 Folder 5.

²⁸⁰ Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, 134.

²⁸¹ CTU Fact Sheet, 1987. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

²⁸² John Kotsakis, "CTU and States Attorney meet on school crimes," *Chicago Union Teacher*, February 1, 1975. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 1.

strike secured a 7% raise and reduced class sizes that would create 324 new teaching positions. From 1975 through 1980 the district and its teachers union entered a period of relative labor peace as they found common ground in subverting the Federal government's attempts to desegregate the teaching force. Notably, there was no visible opposition to the strike from the civil rights community in Chicago or community-based organizations.

Conclusion

In 1969 Roy Stell and James McQuirter openly questioned the legitimacy of the Chicago Teachers Union, defied its first strike and threatened to organize a parallel union for black teachers. By 1979, many black teachers like Stell, McQuirter and other radicals within the union accepted union leadership and the growing political power of black teachers like Jackie Vaughn and Glendiss Hambrick who were themselves executive officers within the union. In a nearly biannual pattern, these teachers through the 1970s, organized alongside white teachers for bread and butter wage and benefit improvements. Notably, as black teacher leadership and voice became more visible within CTU, besides wages, benefits, and working conditions, the union's focus on discipline as a substantial area of focus diminished. Faculty integration emerged as the dominant organizing issue of the 1970s as both black and white teachers opposed Board plans to integrate faculties through involuntary transfer. By 1979, besides its annual discipline survey published in the *Chicago Union Teacher*, CTU made little public mention of discipline as the intractable issue facing the schools and teachers. By 1979, black teacher leadership was on the rise at the same time the district teetered on the edge of fiscal insolvency. The 1980s would witness a continued rise of black teacher leadership, though that leadership, would be limited in its efforts to work towards its dual purposes of improving black teachers rights and improving the education of black children by the bleak fiscal reality of CPS which became all too obvious

around Christmas of 1979.

Chapter 5: From Black Organization to Black Power: Black Teachers in the 1980s

Introduction

The period between 1980 and 1987 saw a substantial transformation of black teachers positions within the union culminating in the 1984 election by the CTU House of Delegates of Jackie Vaughn as the union's first African-American president and a black majority among the system's teaching force. In May of the same year, when the Board of Education was considering a proposal to reduce the maximum time that a student could be suspended from 20 to 10 days, Healey and CTU successfully protested the move along citing that the joint union / Board committee was still developing recommendations for considerations.²⁸³ Finally, the school system and its union would be forced to account for nearly two decades of inaction to integrate the schools' student populations. The strikes of 1980, 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1987 would prove seminal in laying the foundation for school reform in Chicago that would have national consequences. At the same time the 1981 voluntary consent decree to integrate the system's student population was a first of its kind voluntary effort using considerable local and federal resources to address the consequences of segregation on the city's families and its communities. Finally, the election of Jacqueline Vaughn to the presidency of the Chicago Teachers Union would usher in a new emphasis on teaching quality, professionalism and reform for the city's teachers.

²⁸³ Chicago Teachers Union, "CTU Protest stops new rules proposed for student discipline," *Chicago Union Teacher*, May 1975. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 1.

CPS and CTU Demographics

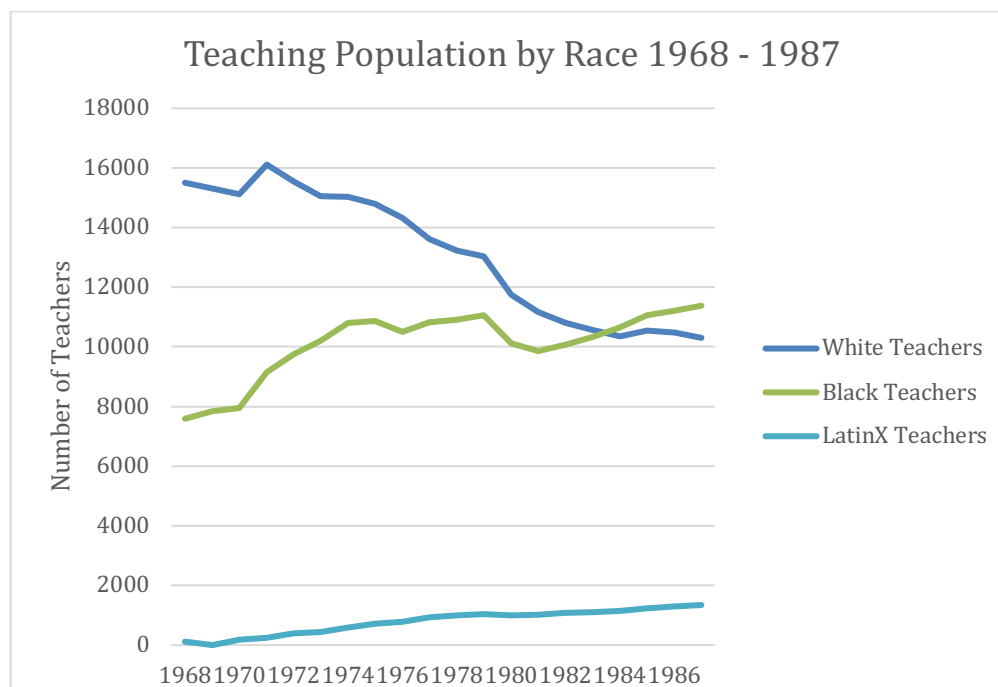
By 1980, the Chicago Public Schools and the city that they serve had undergone a radical demographic transformation. In 1963, researcher Robert Havighurst estimated that black students comprised approximately 46% of the school district's student population up from roughly 20% of the systems student population in 1950.²⁸⁴ Conversely, the city's white and other student population shrank from 80% to 53% over the same time period. By 1969 black teachers represented 34% of the city's teaching force.²⁸⁵ Five years later, in 1974, the percentage of teachers that were black had climbed to 40%. In 1979, at the beginning of negotiations for what would be the nation's most ambitious consent decree to reduce student segregation and provide compensatory programs for racially isolated schools, black teachers represented 43% of the systems teachers. Only 5 years later, when Jackie Vaughn would become the Chicago Teachers Union's first African-American president black teacher representation peaked at 47%. Combined with the system's career service employees, African-Americans represented 52% of the district staff.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Havighurst, Robert, *The Public Schools of Chicago*. Chicago Board of Education, 1964, 54.

²⁸⁵ Robert Havighurst, *The Public Schools of Chicago*, the Board of Education Chicago, 1964, 35.

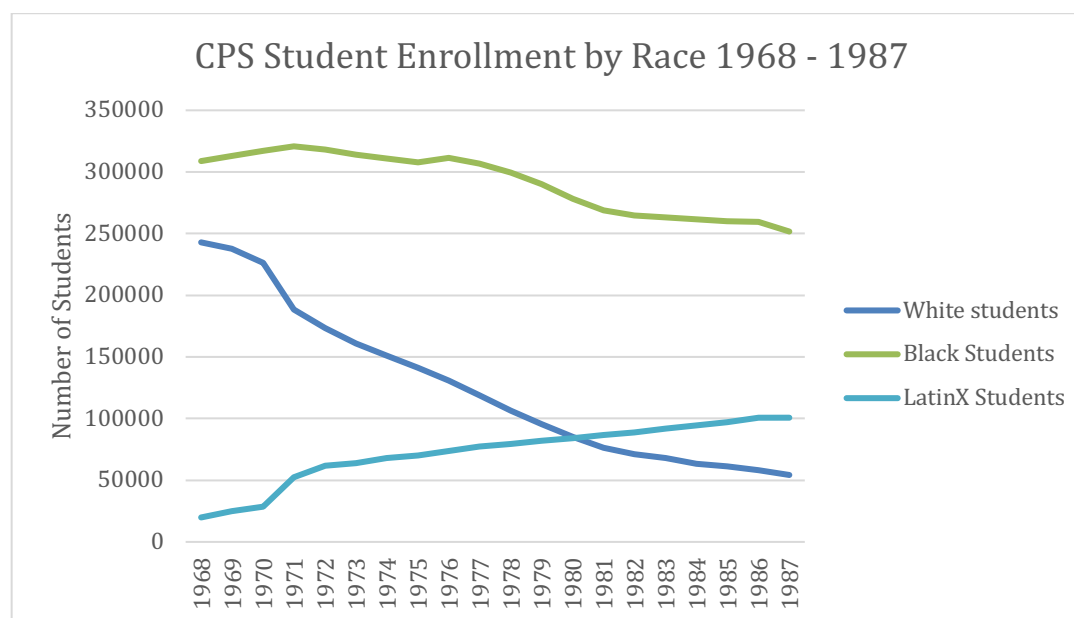
²⁸⁶ *Racial Survey: Administrative and Teaching Personnel, September 26, 1969, Racial / Ethnic Survey: Administrative and Teaching Personnel, September 30, 1974, Racial / Ethnic Survey: Staff, October 31, 1979, Chicago Board of Education, Racial / Ethnic Survey: Staff, October 31, 1984*, Chicago Board of Education Archives, Office of Accountability, Racial / Ethnic Survey of Staff 1969 - 1990, Box 1.

Figure 5 – Teaching Population by Race in CPS 1968 - 1987



Racial Survey: Administrative and Teaching Personnel, 1968 – 1987. Chicago Board of Education Archives

Figure 6 – Student Population by Race in CPS 1968 - 1987



Racial Survey: Student, 1968 – 1987. Chicago Board of Education Archives

1981 Consent Decree

Twenty years after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People declared war on the Chicago Board of Education to force the school system to desegregate, the U.S. government was successful where the NAACP, black elected officials, student activists, community organizations, and others had been unsuccessful.²⁸⁷ On September 24, 1980 the U.S. Department of Justice filed suit against the Chicago Public Schools alleging that the district operated a dual school system which racially segregated students.²⁸⁸ The consent decree contained four broad goals:

1. desegregate CPS schools to the extent practicable,
2. provide compensatory programming for any schools remaining segregated,
3. maximize the student population that will experience integration,
4. no arbitrary burdens of desegregation shall be placed on any racial or ethnic group.²⁸⁹

The decree, coming after a year of contentious negotiations between the HEW and the Board of Education gave the Board broad discretion in developing its plan for desegregation while not imposing any particular definition of a desegregated school. The degree detailed a thorough list of strategies that could be utilized by the Board to desegregate schools including:

1. Voluntary student transfers,
2. Magnet schools

²⁸⁷ Author unknown, "Step up School Bias Fight," *Chicago Defender*, April 13, 1961, 1.

²⁸⁸ United States of America vs. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, Memorandum Opinion. Archives, Chicago Board of Education Legal Box 27.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

3. Voluntary pairing or clustering of schools,
4. Redrawing attendance boundaries
5. Adjusting feeder patterns
6. Mandatory reassignment and transportation
7. Combining techniques,
8. Bilingual education,
9. Remedial and compensatory programs,
10. Improved curricula
11. Pre-service and in-service instruction for administrators, principals, teachers,
and other school personnel,
12. Selection and evaluation of the performance of principals and leadership staff,
13. Administration of discipline in a nondiscriminatory manner.²⁹⁰

On faculty assignment, the Board agreed to “promptly implement a plan to assure that the assignment of full-time classroom teachers to schools will be made in such a manner that no school is identified as intended for students of a particular race, color or national origin.”²⁹¹ However, the plan strengthened the districts commitment to its 1977 agreement with the HEW by stipulating that no later than November 1, 1981, full time classroom teachers in each school must be plus or minus 15% of systemwide racial, experience, and training categories.²⁹² In the months after adoption of the 1981 Consent Decree, the Chicago Teachers Union was

²⁹⁰ Ibid

²⁹¹ Ibid

²⁹² Ibid

unsuccessful in seeking assurances that the district would not transfer veteran teachers in order to comply with the Consent Decree. However, the union was successful in delaying the midyear transfer of 406 teachers until the beginning of the 1982 - 83 school year.²⁹³

1980 and 1983 Strikes

After the financial crisis that led to CPS failing to meet its payroll obligations for its 48,000 employees before Christmas in 1979, the Board of Education finances were placed under the authority of a statewide commission appointed by the Governor and Mayor, known as the School Finance Authority (SFA). The five-member panel consisted of two members appointed by the Governor, two members appointed by the Mayor, and 1 chairman mutually appointed by both. Not until Mayor Harold Washington's election in 1983 was an African-American appointed to the Board, when in 1985 Louise Lawson replaced Jay Pritzker.²⁹⁴ The SFA had statutory authority of the Board of Education budget and served as the fiscal authority approving the sale of bonds and other district investments.²⁹⁵ Former Chief Financial Officer of the City of Chicago under Mayor Richard M. Daley and former SFA member Donald Haider explained:

The authority was there to ensure that the Board didn't live beyond its means and often that meant limiting what they could spend on their collective bargaining agreements. The Board, through its misuse of funds from the capital markets to pay payroll in 1979. Those funds were supposed to sit in escrow, so when the Board used them, they lost access to the capital markets. The authority provided

²⁹³ Author Unknown, "Union efforts head off massive teacher transfer," *Chicago Union Teacher*, February 1982, 24. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 119 Folder 3.

²⁹⁴ Chicago School Finance Authority, *6th Report to the Governor of Illinois, The Mayor of the City of Chicago, the Illinois General Assembly and the Chicago City Council*, 1986, 3.

²⁹⁵ Author Unknown, "Teachers Go Unpaid," *Chicago Tribune*, December 22, 1979, 1. April Hattori, "Shades of 1980 as School Finance Authority sets bond sale to bail out Chicago Board," *The Bond Buyer*, 1982, 1.

that access because the markets didn't trust the Board after that stunt.²⁹⁶

As fiscal stewards of the Board, the SFA chafed at the prospect of approving multi-year contracts for CTU and the district's other collective bargaining units as a means to hedge against declines in projected revenue from the Illinois General Assembly or property tax revenues. Thus, CTU and CPS would remain in a state of perpetual contract negotiations. Connie Fitch-Blanks recalled of the nearly annual cycle of negotiations and strikes:

We were constantly negotiating. Almost as soon as one strike would end we'd be back at the table negotiating again. Those were horrific days, going through all of those strikes. I was a single mom, not getting paid. That was horrific. And then, what the union would arrange for us was to get, not scholarships, but loans from the Credit Union for \$500.00. And you can imagine how far that went. It was hard having to catch the students up. And get them back in school and back on a routine.²⁹⁷

In the fall of 1980, the CTU authorized a strike seeking increased wages, better benefits, as well as protesting the layoff of nearly 4000 teachers. After a 10 day strike CTU secured 8.5% raises for members. In 1983, CTU again authorized a strike. In what was the longest Chicago strike at that time, CTU after 15 days won a 5% pay increase for members as well as provisions to contain health care costs for teachers. The fragile alliance between CTU and civil rights and community organizations was tested when On October 12, Operation PUSH, the Midwest Council, the Woodlawn Organization, Chicago Black United Communities, the Task Force for Black Political Empowerment, Tranquility Marksmen & Parent Equalizers, and the Black United Front of Chicago filed a federal suit against the Board, Robert Healey and other union leaders seeking an injunction to end the strike. The spokesmen for the groups said they weren't taking

²⁹⁶ Haider, Interview with author, February 11, 2020.

²⁹⁷ Fitch-Blanks, Interview by author, August, 27, 2019.

sides but simply wanted children back in school. Healey met with the group and said that the union saw their action as taking sides against the union as injunctions are common tools used to break strikes.²⁹⁸ Newly elected Mayor Harold Washington unsuccessfully called upon both sides to enter into mediation with Judge Marvin Aspen, who had been assigned to the community lawsuit against CTU.²⁹⁹ After 15 days, the 1983 Strike was finally settled with teachers receiving a 5% raise and 2.5% bonus. In spite of the substantial gain for CTU, after 6 strikes in 14 years public openly wondered at what costs, the city and its school system was paying for its unending labor strife between the city and its teachers.³⁰⁰

Jacqueline Vaughn

Surprisingly little has been written on the life and career of Jacqueline “Jackie” Vaughn. Born Jacqueline Barbara Robinson in St. Louis on July 27, 1935, Jacqueline moved to Chicago with her mother at the age of two after the death of her father. After the death of her mother at age 5, Jacqueline was raised by relatives. A graduate of the Chicago Public Schools, Jackie attended Shoop Elementary and Morgan Park High School. She earned a Bachelor’s degree from Chicago Teachers College in 1956 and a Master’s Degree in Special Education from Chicago State University in 1965.

Her first teaching assignment was at Einstein elementary where she joined the Chicago Teachers Union. In only her second year at the school she ran for and was elected union

²⁹⁸ “Community Groups File Suit,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, October 17, 1983, 2.

²⁹⁹ Media Advisory, Chicago Teachers Union, October 21, 1983.

³⁰⁰ Laurent Belsie, “Many Ask if Chicago teachers Strike Was Worth It,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 26, 1983, 8. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 10.

delegate, serving in the position from 1957 until 1961 when she accepted a position as a field representative of the CTU. Her rise through the ranks of the then John Fewkes controlled union was rapid. By 1963 Wright had been elected to serve as an Elementary Functional Vice-President. In 1968, Vaughn became the first African-American elected to a CTU Executive office when she was elected Recording Secretary.³⁰¹ By 1972, Vaughn's leadership and position in the union resulted in her being elected to serve as Vice President to newly elected CTU President Jack Healey. From 1972 until she became CTU President in 1984, Vaughn cultivated her role as the spokesperson for black teachers concerns on the CTU Executive Committee.

Kay Ward, a contemporary of Jackie, remembered the pride and respect that Vaughn inspired among black teachers:

Jackie was my homegirl. She grew up in Morgan Park. We both graduated from Morgan Park High School. We were both alums. Jackie was our voice. She would take our concerns and make sure that the union heard them. We didn't always get what we wanted but we knew that Jackie was looking out for us. And the respect that people had for her... She was very low key ... If you saw her and talked to her, she was very low profile. As opposed to Bob Healy, when you went to the meetings, he was always, barking at people and making a show. Jackie was just really cool and calm. But she demanded respect. Many things changed under her leadership.³⁰²

In her role as CTU Vice President, Vaughn reported to union membership at the monthly House of Delegates meetings on Board of Education meetings, special education, and teacher development related issues. Jackie similarly served as a significant voice within the national American Federation of Teachers where she was elected Vice President in 1974.³⁰³ In

³⁰¹ Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, 132 - 133.

³⁰² Ward, Interview by author, August 8, 2019.

³⁰³ Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, 133.

September of 1979, Vaughn was also elected Vice President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.³⁰⁴ Prior to her election as CTU President, Vaughn had assumed a public position and stature unusual for other CTU officers besides the president. In 1979 Vaughn was invited to lead a session titled “How Labor Education Benefits Educational Workers” in Lusaka Zambia at the request of the Zambia National Teachers Union.³⁰⁵ Vaughn similarly represented CTU and the AFT as a delegate to educational task forces and symposia in South Africa, Italy, France, Japan, and Sweden.³⁰⁶

On May 18, 1984 CTU members re-elected Robert Healey to his 7th term as CTU President. The Healey led United Progressive slate which included Vaughn as Vice President, Tom Reece as Financial Secretary and Rochelle Hart as Recording Secretary defeated perennial challenger and former Black Power activist James McQuirter and his McQuirter slate alongside the Teachers Action Committee candidate, George Schmidt.³⁰⁷ On July 9, 1984, Vaughn was elected President by the CTU House of Delegates to succeed Healey who had recently accepted a position in the Illinois Federation of Labor. In her first statements to members as President Vaughn made a significant departure from the bread and butter unionism of her predecessor by stressing the importance of reform, "I made it clear last spring following our education reform

³⁰⁴ Author Unknown, “Vaughn Elected ISFL Vice President,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, October 14, 1979, 2. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 4.

³⁰⁵ Author Unknown, “Vaughn Conducts Zambia Training,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, April 1, 1979, 16. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 118 Folder 4

³⁰⁶ “A Celebration of the Life of Mrs. Jacqueline B. Vaughn,” Funeral Program, January 26, 1994, Chicago Teachers Union Papers, Box 111 Folder 1.

³⁰⁷ Author Unknown, “Healey Slate Sweeps All in Biennial Election,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, June 12, 1984, 2. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 119 Folder 5.

conference that reform is an on-going process and we are going to continue to have seminars on the various issues."³⁰⁸

As vice president then president of CTU, Vaughn understood the broader societal winds urging for education reform and the unique opportunity to steer union politics in order to reflect those trends and her own politics. In her first columns inside the *Chicago Union Teacher*, Vaughn argued for a reform agenda within CTU.³⁰⁹ In 1986 Vaughn reverently featured her learnings from a multiyear collaboration with Nikkyoso, the Japan Teachers Union. Notably she stressed the nation building character adopted by Nikkyoso, while it also strove to improve the economic, social, and political status of Japanese teachers. In 1984 Nikkyoso took leadership in advocating for reform on Japanese schools and education.³¹⁰ In spite of her desire to reposition CTU as a union *and* a professional organization, when a child sex abuse scandal emerged in 1986 she and the union actively campaigned against mandatory fingerprinting and background checks of teachers arguing that such measures would not identify potential child abusers and were demeaning to the 40,000 Board employees.³¹¹ Between February and April of 1986 10 School employees, 6 of them CPS teachers, 3 suburban teachers and a custodian were arrested or dismissed from their employment in connection with child sexual abuse charges.³¹² In April of

³⁰⁸ Author Unknown, "CTU Officers Fighting for Member Rights," *Chicago Union Teacher*, October 1984, 4. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 119 Folder 5.

³⁰⁹ Vaughn, Jacqueline, "Union Starts Down Road to Renewing Profession," *Chicago Union Teacher*, January, 1985, 2. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 1.

³¹⁰ Vaughn, Jacqueline, "Nikkyoso of Japan: A Teachers Union and a Professional Organization," *Chicago Union Teacher*, January 1986. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 2.

³¹¹ Vaughn, Jacqueline, "CTU Tackles Fingerprinting and Other Issues Important to Members," *Chicago Union Teacher*, March 1986, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 2.

³¹² Latz, Jean, "Abuse Fear sparks teacher guidelines," *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1986, 1.

1986, the House of Delegates adopted its own principles for working with children to avoid putting members in “compromising positions” or false accusations against members. Those principles included the following recommendations to teachers:

1. Use discretion when touching children for purposes of praise, reward, or comfort.
2. Notify the principal or principals designees in case of any injury to a student.
3. Report instances of physical abuse administered by parents to their children in the school.
4. Establish and maintain effective communications between school and home.
5. Make parents aware of school rules, regulations, discipline code and any dress code.
6. Treat children with respect and demand respect at all time.
7. Always hold conferences in public areas.
8. Always have an adult witness to any student-employee conference.
9. Keep anecdotal records of any conferences with students.
10. Exercise caution when separating children who are fighting.
11. Do not transport students in your car.³¹³

In addition to these principles for working with students CTU further elaborated a process for notifications when and if a teacher was accused of child abuse.³¹⁴

After years of fighting CTU to better reflect its membership, Jackie Vaughn’s ascent to union presidency did not represent to some black teachers a radical change in CTU’s politics. As Norman Malone stated:

³¹³ Vaughn, Jacqueline, “Union Adopts New Policy Statement for Members of Accused of Child Abuse,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, April 1986. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 2.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

You know, not much really changed with Jackie in there except for the fact that she was a real fighter. She got things done, and the union hasn't been the same since she died but we just continued to go about our business. One thing I remember her fighting for was extended pay for teachers. Getting through the summers was rough and she fought for us to get extended pay. Some teachers didn't like it but, with a family, I liked the stability.³¹⁵

Teacher Kay Ward, reflecting on what it meant to have Jackie Vaughn as president recalled: Nothing that we stood for was really different under her but I did feel like with her as president, we were more respected.³¹⁶

As vice president and then as president, Vaughn embraced education reform and teaching reform that can explain a seeming paradox: while the bureaucracy and day-to-day functioning of CTU changed little as a result of having a black president, it was clear that the union was internally pursuing a reform agenda that would change the profession even if the mechanics of the job of teaching changed very little.

CTU and School Reform

In 1983 the United States Department of Education published “A Nation at Risk” which famously stated that “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”³¹⁷ The subsequent national discussion on the state of elementary and secondary education prompted calls within and across Illinois to reform education. In response to the Nation at Risk report, on March 3, 1984, Illinois Speaker of the House Mike Madigan convened a group of 400 representatives from business, education, industry, government, and grassroots organizations to

³¹⁵ Malone, Interview by author, June 11, 2019.

³¹⁶ Ward, Interview by author, August 8, 2019.

³¹⁷ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, 5.

evaluate current practices and recommend meaningful reforms.³¹⁸ Similarly, U.S. Senator for Illinois, Paul Simon convened an ongoing task force to examine the state of education and propose solutions. In November of 1987, U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett on his visit to the Chicago Public Schools labeled CPS the “worst in the nation. On a subsequent visit to Chicago Secretary Bennett visited Spencer elementary. Young teacher Regina McClellan was among the teachers that the Secretary spoke with. McClellan recalls:

Let me tell you about the time that William Bennett spent a day at our school. He gave us the honor of saying we were the best school in the city. I was so proud and President Vaughn put me in check. She asked me, “What did we have to be proud of with the title of the best school in the worst school system?”³¹⁹

In her early months as president of the CTU, she split her attention between contract negotiations for the 1984 - 85 contract and developing a robust reform agenda for CTU and its members. Given the districts precarious financial position and what the SFA itself characterized as a bloated schools bureaucracy, its little surprise that both the Board of Education and CTU again found itself at odds and unable to reach an agreement during the 1984 contract negotiations. However, in 1984, the CTU negotiating team was substantially different. On May 18, 1984 CTU members overwhelmingly, elected Robert Healey to his 4th term as CTU president. However, two weeks after his reelection as President and Jackie Vaughn’s re-election as vice president, Healey resigned to accept a position as Secretary -Treasurer on the Chicago Federation of Labor.³²⁰ The 10 day strike which began on November 28, 1984 was punctuated by

³¹⁸ Author Unknown, “Education Reform in Illinois Gets Down to Business,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, March 18, 1984, 1. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 119 Folder 5.

³¹⁹ McClellan, Interview by author, September 23, 2019.

³²⁰ Author unknown, “CTU Officers fighting for members rights,” *Chicago Union Teacher*, October 12, 1984, 4. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 10.

a rally in support of striking teachers held by Operation PUSH on December 4.³²¹ The final settlement saw 4.5% salary increase for teachers, elimination of health insurance cost increases and a 2.5% bonus payment in lieu of makeup of 5 strike days.³²²

Five months after the conclusion of the 1983 strike, negotiations between CPS and CTU began for the 1985 contract. Manfred Byrd, became the district's second African-American Superintendent, replacing its first, Ruth Love. Byrd, a lifelong Chicagoan and veteran CPS educator who began his career as a 6th grade teacher at Howland elementary in the city's North Lawndale community in 1954. Byrd rose through the ranks from teacher to assistant principal, to principal, and then to Deputy Superintendent in 1968, becoming the highest ranking African-American in the Chicago Public Schools. In spite of strong support from west side leaders and community groups, Ruth Love was appointed by the Board to be superintendent in 1981 over Byrd.³²³ The public and both sides of the negotiation expressed optimism that a strike could be averted.³²⁴ Nonetheless, negotiations quickly broke down. As one reporter wrote, "School Superintendent Manford Byrd permitted his optimism to outpace reality."³²⁵ With additional state aid in hand, Byrd and the Board offered teachers a salary increase far below what they were

³²¹ "On the Line," December 4, 1984, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 10.

³²² Author Unknown, "Solidarity Saves Contract," *Chicago Union Teacher*, December 21, 1984, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 10.

³²³ Ben Joravsky, "A Kind of Death: Humiliation, anger, failure, guilt -- the aftermath of being fired," *Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 1992, SM13.

³²⁴ Jack Houston, "Teachers, Board See Few Obstacles to Pact," *Chicago Tribune*, August 8, 1985, 4.

³²⁵ Casey Banas, "Odds Were Against Walkout, Then Something went wrong," *Chicago Tribune*, September 3, 1985, 1.

seeking.³²⁶ In negotiating the 1985 CTU contract, Byrd and Vaughn appealed to the School Finance Authority for approval to negotiate a 2-year contract. After receiving assurance from Governor Thompson that the state would increase education funding overall and funding to CPS, the SFA agreed to a two-year contract. As the strike date loomed, Illinois Republican Governor Jim Thompson intervened and emerged with a tentative agreement between the two sides. Thompson's intervention was widely praised while, by contrast, Mayor Harold Washington was traveling abroad.³²⁷ After a 2-day strike, CTU won a 2-year contract with a 6.5% increase in year 1 and a 3% increase in year 2.³²⁸

Also, in 1985, under Vaughn's leadership, CTU published its reform agenda called *Perspectives from the Classroom*. Putting forth a vision for education reform, rooted in improving teaching and learning, the agenda included 47 recommendations including:

- (1) Statewide statutory minimum teacher salary, funded by the state;
- (2) career compensation based on peer review;
- (3) creation of a single statewide certificate authority;
- (4) more stringent requirements for teacher recruitment and internships;
- (5) teacher evaluations based on peer review to be mutually developed by unions and local authorities;
- (6) annual evaluation of non-tenured teachers;

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Phillip Lentz, "Thompson Makes a Striking Impact, Settlement Role Wins Applause," *Chicago Tribune*, September 5, 1985, 1.

³²⁸ Author Unknown, "Members win 2 year contract," *Chicago Union Teacher*, September 19, 1985. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 1.

- (7) teacher tenure based on peer review committee;
- (8) state guidelines on teacher to administrator ratios;
- (9) sole authority for teachers to issue grades;
- (10) state reimbursement for kindergarten and compulsory kindergarten attendance;
- (11) mandatory programs for potential drop-outs;
- (12) teacher voice in curriculum and materials;
- (13) role of teacher and principal defined;
- (14) tuition assistance to encourage retraining and re-certification.³²⁹

In September, Vaughn and the CTU reiterated these recommendations to the Simon Task Force on the Chicago Public Schools.³³⁰ At the same time the CTU was developing its reform agenda on the teaching profession, it submitted its proposal to reform the appointed Chicago Board of Education. In its proposal, CTU proposed the establishment of a citizens committee to present nominations to the mayor for appointment. The Mayor would be restricted to appoint Board members only from the list of nominees. Citizens committee would also review member performance. The mayor would not be allowed to reappoint members who failed to pass performance evaluation of the committee. Finally, the proposal sought to increase the size of the Board of Education to 15 members.³³¹

³²⁹ Chicago Teachers Union, *Perspectives from the Classroom: Education Reform Proposals of the Chicago Teachers Union*, January, 18, 1985. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 2.

³³⁰ Chicago Teachers Union. *Recommendations of the Chicago Teachers Union to the Simon Task Force of the Chicago Public Schools*. September 23, 1985. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 2.

³³¹ *Chicago Teachers Union Position Paper on Elected School Board*, March 6, 1985. Chicago

The 1987 Strike

In a period of black leadership in City Hall, CPS, and the Chicago Teachers Union, few would have predicted the catastrophic struggle for power that became the Chicago Teachers Union strike of 1987. The seeming successes that union had in securing a rare multi-year contract in 1985, re-election of President Vaughn and her United Progressive Caucus in 1986 coupled with a compromise teacher evaluation plan meant that Vaughn's leadership was firmly established and the union was moving forward with its reform agenda.³³² Developments in Springfield however threatened to undermine the 1987 contract negotiations before they had officially begun. Governor Jim Thompson's 1987 budget forecast \$93M cut to general state aid which threatened the Boards already precarious financial positions as well as jeopardizing the SFA's ability to enter into another multi-year contract with the union.³³³ In June, the CTU set June 30 as the ideal timetable to conclude negotiations to conclude, concurrent with the close of the Illinois legislative session with hopes of having a signed agreement in place before school started in September.³³⁴ Throughout the summer Vaughn called upon Illinois House Speaker Mike Madigan and SFA Chairman Jerome Van Gorkam to support the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to take up school funding.³³⁵ Vaughn took her case to the public

Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 11.

³³² Author Unknown, "New Policy Improves Procedures for Teacher Evaluation," *Chicago Union Teacher*, February 13, 1987, 3, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 3.

³³³ Author Unknown, "Governor's Budget Forecasts Bleak Future for Education Reform," *Chicago Union Teacher*, March 1987, 2. Chicago Teachers Union Paper Box 120 Folder 3.

³³⁴ Author unknown, "CTU Sets Contract Negotiations Timetable," *Chicago Union Teacher*, June 1987, 2, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 120 Folder 3.

³³⁵ Jackie Vaughn to Mike Madigan, July 8, 1987; Letter to Governor Thompson, July 8, 1987, Letter to Jerome Van Gorkam, July 9, 1987, Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

and community leaders urging the public to write to the Governor and other elected officials to call for a special session.³³⁶

As the summer progressed with no sign that the General Assembly would convene to address school funding, CTU began preparing its public relations campaign to support a strike.³³⁷ On August 20th the CTU authorized a strike vote in spite of a request by Mayor Washington and the Board of Education for teachers to resume classes while contract negotiations continued.³³⁸ As the specter of a looming strike increased, Vaughn took to the media to make her case that in fact the Board of Education would end its fiscal year with a projected surplus of \$185M and that the Boards insistence on hiring new administrators was unnecessary.

It claims to be broke, forces a strike, settles the strike, and then acts surprised when it turns out there was money in the bank all the time. Furthermore, the Board should embrace reform by restructuring the system to increase parental participation in decision making.³³⁹

By late August as it became increasingly apparent that there was little reason for optimism that the impasse between the Board and its teachers would be resolved, Governor Thompson indicated a willingness to intervene when he indicated a willingness to request that the State Supreme Court advance CPS the necessary \$48.5 million dollars from an escrow fund related to

³³⁶ Editorial Comments to WBBM, WLS, WGN, WMAQ TV, July 13, 1987; Letter to the Editor, *Chicago Sun Times*, July 13, 1987; Letter to Community Leaders, July 15, 1987; Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

³³⁷ Michael Harrington to CTU Officers, Memorandum August 6, 1987, Chicago Teachers Union. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

³³⁸ Linda Lenz and Harry Golden, "Hike Pay or we Hike - Teachers," *Chicago Sun Times*, August 21, 1987, 3.

³³⁹ Jackie Vaughn, Letter to the Editor, *Chicago Sun Times*, August 25, 1987, Chicago Teachers Union Papers, Box 111 Folder 12.

long distance phone calls, a move applauded by Vaughn.³⁴⁰ On August 28, the Court agreed to the Governor's request and released \$48.5M from escrow ensuring the district's solvency to begin the school year but leaving unresolved future payments that would fund any increase in teacher salaries.³⁴¹ Seemingly fulfilling his pledge to increase funding to CPS, Governor Thompson claimed no authority to intervene if CTU went on strike.³⁴²

On September 9, 1987 CPS and CTU began what remains the longest teachers strike in the districts history after the Board failed to agree to the 10% raise demanded by the union as the Board and Mayor Washington claimed that there was no money in the budget to pay for raises.³⁴³ At the outset of the strike, both sides were entrenched and parents were frustrated with both sides. Florence Cox, president of the Chicago area Parent Teacher Association stated, "I'm fed up with everybody; the board, the union, and the Governor."³⁴⁴ By day two of the strike, CPS calculations of how long the strike would have to last in order for the Board to be able to afford raises for teachers had been leaked to the press. "From the 5th to the 15th day of a strike, no money is saved because we lose \$3 million in state aid money each day," Saigh said. "Then on

³⁴⁰ Casey Banas, "Governor May Ask Court to Release School Funds," *Chicago Tribune*, August 28, 1987, 4.

³⁴¹ Linda Lenz, "Schools Spare New Cuts," *Chicago Sun Times*, August 29, 1987, 2. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

³⁴² Henry Locke, "Thompson, I'm not Responsible if School Teachers Go on Strike," *Chicago Defender*, September 2, 1987, 1.

³⁴³ Harry Golden and Linda Lenz, "Mayor Backs School Board," *Chicago Sun Times*, September 4, 1987, 1. Chicago Teachers Union Papers Box 111 Folder 12.

³⁴⁴ Casey Banas, Stevenson Swanson, "City Teachers Poised to Strike," *Chicago Tribune*, September 8, 1987, 1.

the 16th day, we save another \$2 million for a savings of \$7.5 million for a 16-day strike.”³⁴⁵ In the second week of the strike, the Board agreed to allow community groups to monitor negotiations that were by then still far apart and proceeding in bad faith according to Vaughn. The coalition of community groups, many of whom had been plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed to end the strike of 1984 vowed to be at the Board negotiations every day of the strike and threatening their own mass protest.³⁴⁶ Vaughn ratcheted up the vitriol when in describing the 1985 strike resolution to a reporter said, of Superintendent Byrd, “The point is he (Byrd) lost face... A black man in a black community lost face to a black woman, that’s the issue.”³⁴⁷ Asked if she thought that Byrd was out to get her, Vaughn replied “no question.”³⁴⁸ Byrd for his part responded by suggesting that Vaughn’s comments were the “opening shot” in making the strike about him personally.³⁴⁹ Vaughn’s seeming personal attack against Byrd were criticized by the local media.³⁵⁰ By day 11 little progress had been made as the union reported that 97% of its members were striking amid heightened tensions after the Board began offering hot meals to students at 20 schools around the city.³⁵¹ On September 15, CTU and other striking unions, held a major

³⁴⁵ Casey Banas, Jean Latz Griffin, Jean Davidson, Michelle Norris, “School Board Counting Days Til Strike Pays,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 10, 1987, 1.

³⁴⁶ Jean Latz Griffin, Fred Marc Biddle, “No Progress in school strike despite pleading by Parents,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 13, 1987, A1.

³⁴⁷ Casey Banas, “School Strike Turning into a Test of Wills,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 14, 1987, 1

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Editorial, “Childish Acts from a Teacher,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1987, 4.

³⁵¹ Charlie Gofen and Devoda Byers, “Pupils Cross Teacher Picket Lines to Get Free Lunches at 20 Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 23, 1987, 7.

demonstration at City Hall which brought an estimated 1000 teachers chanting “We Want Harold” to City Hall.³⁵² 14 days into the strike Chicago Tribune humorist Mike Royko wondered out loud whether the public was more upset that the teachers were on strike or that the Chicago Bears were also on strike.³⁵³ By day 15, calls for fundamental reform of the Chicago Public Schools once the strike was resolved. On day 19, both sides reached a tentative agreement for a 2 year contract with 4% raises in both years but at the expense of 1700 teacher layoffs.³⁵⁴

³⁵² Andrew Martin and Casey Banas, “Teachers Resume Talks, Rally Near City Hall,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 1987, 7.

³⁵³ Mike Royko, “During the Strikes, Bear this in mind,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 1987, 7.

³⁵⁴ Casey Banas, “Union, Schools Reach Pact,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 4, 1987, 1.

Figure 7 – Jacqueline Vaughn on the Picket Line 1987 Strike



Jackie Vaughn and teachers on the picket line during the 1987 strike
Chicago Teachers Union Visual Materials Box 2 Folder 5

Aftermath of 1987 Strike

The 19-day Chicago Teachers Union strike, which remains the longest in the city's history had profound impact on the trajectory of the school system. The untimely death of Harold Washington on November 25, of 1987, only a few weeks after the strike settlement provided renewed energy by activists, philanthropy, elected officials, the Board of Education, and CTU to deliver on his ambitious goal of school reform. Days after the conclusion of the strike, Mayor Washington sought to harness the civic energy surrounding the strike to push for reform. On October 11, 1987 Washington's Education Summit, attended by a crowd estimated to be close to 1000 led to a pledge by Washington to increase parental voice in education through the creation

of a Parents Advisory Council

Teachers themselves questioned why the strike lasted 19 days and wondered about the costs to the union though the union victory on class size was significant. According to Kay Ward:

The 19-day strike was quite distasteful and financially challenging. I had just purchased a home the year before and did not work that summer, so I was "PO'd"!! My daughter, who is adopted, came to live with me the second week of the strike. I had no idea we would be out two more weeks. Even though the financial issues were important, class size was key. If there were a significant number of students in a classroom with diverse academic and/or socio-emotional needs, having 30+ students could make it close to impossible to meet their needs adequately.

Joyce Brown recalled:

I didn't march on the picket lines because I had children and it was hard on all of the people that had children. I was the daycare for all of my colleagues. Initially we were in solidarity but it went so long that we started to lose faith in both sides. Harold Washington was our Mayor and we loved him. He was being really diplomatic. He appeared genuine when he said that 'we just don't have the money.' So we couldn't figure out who to believe at times and couldn't see why we couldn't come to a resolution. We trusted that Jackie Vaughn was doing the best for us, but it became such a huge financial burden for all of us. The fact that by then we were a closed shop, that really helped because there was some tension with people who hadn't joined the union and weren't paying dues and those of us that were paying. That helped keep us together even though I was never a real staunch unionist."³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Brown, Interview by author, September 3, 2019.

Table 2 – CTU Strikes 1969 - 1987

Year	Strike Duration	Settlement	CTU Leader
1969	2 days	13% pay raise, 725 new teachers hired	John Desmond
1971	4 days	8% pay raise, 600 new teachers hired	John Desmond
1973	12 days	2.5% pay raise, 210 new teachers hired	John Desmond
1975	11 days	7% pay raise, Employees lost salary when Board ended school year 16 days early	Robert Healey
1980	10 days	8.5% pay raise, 3100 teachers laid off, 504 teachers rehired	Robert Healey
1983	15 days	5% pay raise, healthcare costs contained, school year extended, teachers receive 2.5% bonus for lost strike days	Robert Healey
1984	10 days	4.5 % pay raise, school year extended, teachers receive 2.5% bonus for lost strike days	Jackie Vaughn
1985	12 days	9% pay raise over two years, education reform joint committee formed	Jackie Vaughn
1987	19 days	4% pay raise, 1700 teachers laid off	Jackie Vaughn

Conclusion

The 1980s were an important period in the development of the Chicago Teachers Union and black teachers within it. The demographic trend that had begun in the 1960s reached its zenith as black students and latinx students significantly outnumbered white students and the district was forced to take significant steps to reduce segregation and create compensatory programs for racially isolated schools. Thus, after the 1977 faculty desegregation plan and updates to the plan through 1981, coupled with the 1980 consent decree addressing student segregation, CPS entered a period of stability on the issue of desegregation. Nonetheless, the 1980s would be a contentious period of ongoing labor conflict between CTU with its increasing black teacher power base, and the black lead central offices. The rise of Jackie Vaughn to

become the union's first black and female president coincided with an increased focus on school reform nationally and locally. Whereas throughout its recent history, student discipline had been the major non bread and butter issue that was prominent in internal union discourse, Vaughn's shift towards reform and professionalism set the stage for CTU to become a national leader in professional development among its members, culminating in the opening of the CTU Quest Center by Vaughn. The biennial drumbeat of strikes and labor unrest, coupled with growing demands for reform by community leaders, the Chicago civic community, philanthropy and Mayor Harold Washington, culminated in the School Reform Act of 1989, a radical decentralization effort to empower schools and communities. Throughout the period, black teachers, increasingly the backbone of the CTU, placed their faith in Vaughn, though they were primarily concerned with wages, benefits, and workplace conditions. Black teachers, once a radical challenge to the Daley / Willis / Fewkes power structure, were themselves a major force in the Washington / Byrd / Vaughn power structure, though significantly mitigated by the School Finance Authority.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The birth of the Chicago Teachers Union in 1937 from the amalgam of unions and professional associations representing teachers in Chicago was a watershed moment in the history of education in Chicago and the nation. AFT local 1, representing at the time the largest, most well-organized teachers union in the nation, presented a significant opportunity to advance the interests of teachers as a group and teaching as a profession. The long early struggles of the CTU for a single salary schedule for all teachers, alongside the decades-long fight for collective bargaining, positioned the CTU to exert considerable and unified political power in the city. That unity, however, was challenged by a new demographic reality facing the city in the years leading up to the first collective bargaining agreement in 1968. This new reality for schools, teachers, students, and their families meant that increasingly by the late 1960s and early 1970s the CTU found itself increasingly at odds with a growing number of black teachers, black students, and the communities within which they lived.

The progress that was made by the Chicago Teachers Union from 1965 to 1984 illustrates a sea change in its relationship with black teachers after a 70 year period of stasis in which, though black teachers continued to grow in numbers, the union did little to adapt. This period of stasis was followed by a period of rapid changes illustrative of punctuated equilibrium theory. Dramatic changes to the educational environment in Chicago, namely the rapid growth of the black population in Chicago and its schools, provided the necessary environmental factors that contributed to a transformation of CTU that did not occur during its preceding history as the Chicago Teachers Federation and later Chicago Teachers Union. While CTU made yearly progress in increasing wages and benefits for members in the years immediately following collective bargaining, it faced an existential crisis brought on by an increasingly frustrated,

militant, and organized block of black teachers. They sought for themselves recognition as full and vibrant teachers in a city school system and union that had relegated them to second class citizens by designating the vast majority of them as FTBs and Associate Members, while at the same time demanding the same work and union dues as white teachers. Thus, by 1969 black teachers fought two interlocking struggles in Chicago. First, they fought the Board of Education to eliminate discriminatory examination practices that undergirded the two-tiered system of employment within which teachers, most of whom were black, failed to pass the Board of Examiners oral examination and were thus allowed to teach under the Full Time Basis substitute certificate, a certificate that paid less, offered no job security, and no potential for long term stability. At the same time, black teachers fought the CTU over its unwillingness to challenge the Board on the FTB issue on their behalf. Similarly, they actively challenged their nonvoting status within the union as a significant barrier to their full inclusion and representation.

Black population growth, white flight and the rising political strength of black citizens can perhaps partially explain the fact that in some critical areas of empowerment of black teachers, teacher integration, and student integration, the Board of Education was often a step ahead of the CTU. It was the Board of Education, perhaps responding to a string of wildcat strikes by black teachers in 1968 that were strongly opposed by CTU leadership, that ended its practice of lower pay for FTBs and developed pathways to full certification for FTBs. When CTU president John Fewkes attempted to claim credit for the development, in spite of the fact that FTB status was not an issue that the CTU was bargaining for, grassroots black teacher groups were angry and dismissive. Nonetheless, CTU, while urging its members to continue to maintain a two-tiered system of membership, representation, and voice for its members, lagged behind the Board in elevating the station of black teachers.

When the U.S. Department of Housing, Education, and Welfare withheld Elementary and Secondary School Act funds from CPS over its unwillingness to integrate its teaching force and desegregate its student population, the Board of Education developed plans to involuntarily transfer black and white teachers to integrate the city's teaching force, surely out of expediency and economic peril, over the objections of the CTU. The union cited choice and seniority rights of teachers to unsuccessfully fight transfers, which began in 1971 and would continue in large and small numbers through to the 1990s. By the time CPS began its program of teacher integration however, the integrationist politics of black leaders had changed significantly to emphasize the building and strengthening of black institutions rather than integration with whites. Thus when the Board began its program of teacher transfers, black teachers were frustrated about the inconvenience of often having to travel to the other side of the city for work, but also upset that they were limited in their ability to teach black children, a particular calling deeply rooted in a long tradition of self-help and mutual aid.

In 1980 when the Chicago Public Schools entered into a first-of-its-kind consent decree to desegregate the district's student population and more aggressively integrate its teaching staff, CTU once again found itself lagging behind the Board. While the union initially had little to say about the creation of magnet schools and compensatory programs in schools that would remain racially isolated, in subsequent years, the union would aggressively argue against supplemental resources directed to such schools and school programs. Black teachers had become increasingly ambivalent about the union and its activism, instead viewing the union as nothing more than a protection against administrative bullying and dependable advocate for lower class sizes and higher wages.

In the early and mid 1980s three developments portended a shift in teacher power and

potentially the education of black children that would help black teachers and black families begin to realize their dreams of educated, empowered, and equipped students in the district schools. First was the development of a national school reform dialogue, of which Chicago was one important predicate, that created momentum for local activism about the needs of students in Chicago. Second, the elevation of Ruth Love and Manford Byrd as the district's first black superintendents, the election of Harold Washington as the city's first black mayor and the election of Jackie Vaughn as the first black president of the CTU meant that governance, management, and operation of the city's 673 schools were firmly controlled by seasoned black leadership. Finally, in 1984, for the first time in the city's history, black teachers outnumbered white teachers. If Chicago was at the vanguard of black leadership, black teachers were fuel for the city. After militant activists became institutionalists and reform minded challengers to the city's long-standing histories of entrenched white leadership, black teachers fought for reform on behalf of black children and aggressive bread and butter unionism.

Given the rapid change within the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public Schools and each institution's relative ability to adapt to the needs of black students and teachers, a punctuated equilibrium perspective would predict a period of stasis or little change in the years following the death of Jackie Vaughn in 1994. In fact, in the 26 years since Jackie Vaughn's untimely death the union has had two white presidents, and two black women presidents, black teachers have continued to decline as a percentage of the teaching population in Chicago, and the promise of local control has been replaced by a resurgent centralization ethos among local elected officials and a long period of labor peace only interrupted by teacher strikes in 2012 and 2019.

Chicago's unique position in national discussions of teacher unionism began in the 1960s

and continues through the early years of the 21st century. While labor unrest was not uncommon during the years immediately following collective bargaining gains of the early 1960s, Chicago was unique in comparison to its urban counterparts. Like New York, in the mid 1960s the pursuit of integration in Chicago was an attempt to ensure that black students and teachers had access to resources that had been given to white students and teachers.³⁵⁶ Unlike New York, black teachers in Chicago were increasing in numbers in the schools and in the district's teachers union. In 1963 black teachers in New York represented 8% of the total teaching population compared to an estimated 20% in Chicago. By 1969 the black teaching force in New York had only increased to 9% while in Chicago black teachers represented 34% of the total teaching population.³⁵⁷ Thus by the 1970s and 1980s as the population of teachers in CPS and CTU continued to increase, black teachers were able to exert considerably more power on CPS and CTU than black teachers in New York. More analogous to Chicago was the position of black teachers in Newark, New Jersey though the comparison is limited by the size of the school system in Newark (87 schools in 1967 compared to 622 in Chicago). In Newark, following the riots of 1967, the city eliminated oral examination requirements to be eligible for a teaching position and granting permanent status to the city's existing black teachers. In 1968, the Newark Teachers Union (NTU) elected Carole Graves, an African-American woman to become the first black president of the NTU. In Newark, where black teachers were the major political force in the union by 1971, violent attacks between white ethnics and black teachers highlighted tensions between the city's white ethnics and the city's black mayor and Board of Education.³⁵⁸ Thus the racial realignment of the schools

³⁵⁶ Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York*, 65.

³⁵⁷ Collins, *Ethnically Qualified*, 124.

³⁵⁸ Golin, *The Newark Teachers Strike*, 144.

and teachers union in Chicago was preceded by a decade by teachers in Newark, New Jersey.

I expected to find that because of black teacher activism and the transformation of the city's teaching force, the CTU had by the 1980s become a more progressive, social justice-oriented union actively courting relationships with black community organizations and parents, thus ensuring that the interests of black children were front of mind in its orientation. This turned out to be only partially true. While certainly by 1987 the needs of CPS students, who were by then over 50% black, were a major concern of CTU, it is difficult to understand to what degree that transformation is a byproduct of CTU's internal transformation or the political context within which the CTU was operating, which was increasing in a defensive posture as a result of the *Nation at Risk* report and subsequent national dialogue on reform. There is evidence from Jackie Vaughn's early career in CPS and CTU that even without external pressure brought on by the larger national dialogue, CTU would have embraced a reform agenda centered upon improving the profession. The extent of that counterfactual agenda may not have gone as far as CTU opening under Vaughn's leadership the CTU Quest Center, but concern for the profession was evident in her monthly updates to the House of Delegates. Nonetheless, Vaughn's leadership gave expression to thousands of black teachers demand that the union serve the interests of teachers and black children. Unfortunately, after 6 strikes in the 17 years preceding the strike of 1987, the public was increasingly frustrated with the nearly annual dance between the Board and its teachers. In the spring and summer of 1987 many predicted yet another clash between CTU and Board, but few would have predicted the length of the strike, the seemingly modest gains, nor the way in which the strike would lead to reforms that led to a radical experiment in decentralization that was the centerpiece of black power politics in the 1960s.

The rise and climax of black teacher political power within CTU and the slow receding

from power in CTU, together with the gradual decline of the black teaching population in Chicago and the consequences of that decline for black students and black communities, is a significant subject for future analysis. Chicago's recent celebrations of the district's unprecedented increases in virtually all success metrics come at a time when the percentage of the teaching population in Chicago that is black resembles more closely the early 1960s than the 1980s. The role that black teachers have played in providing a foundation for student success in the 1980s and 1990s, and the embrace of a reform agenda that places professional growth and the strengthening of the system's teaching corps through efforts by Jackie Vaughn and the CTU Quest Center, deserve significantly more attention. The CTU's 94% success rate of teachers earning National Board Certification (nearly twice the national average) is a testament to the resiliency of Vaughn's focus on professional growth for teachers.³⁵⁹ CTU's success rate in its program for National Board Certifications far outpaced the Chicago Public Schools' similar program and eventually led the district to abandon that program and partner with CTU to promote the union's program.³⁶⁰

A quote often attributed to Winston Churchill said that "Americans can always be trusted to do the right thing, once all other possibilities have been exhausted." Similarly, the Chicago Teachers Union was dragged kicking and screaming into the modern era of full rights of African-Americans to participate in civic life. As union leadership sought to retain power and minimize the growing power of black teachers, it and its largely white membership, under the guise of protecting the profession, voted to maintain its two-tiered membership for teachers. By 1965,

³⁵⁹ Nurturing Teacher Leadership, <https://www.ctuf.org/questcenter/ntl/> (Accessed, March 17, 2020).

³⁶⁰ Kajiwar-Ansai, Interview with Author, March 20, 2020.

when that referendum took place, black teachers in Chicago made up nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total teaching population with no signs that the number of black teachers would decrease. Whether to maintain his own personal leadership in a union that was increasingly agitated over the union's internal racial politics or a genuine belief that FTBs were less qualified teachers, John Fewkes and the union membership found itself at odds with black teachers and the communities from which they came.

By the late 1960s, and with black power politics reaching a crescendo locally and nationally, CTU placed its faith in John Desmond to lead the organization through this tumultuous time. While Desmond publicly supported the demands of black teachers, CTU was still slow to reform its membership, only responding after black teachers put considerable pressure on the Board to put FTBs on a path to full pay and teaching rights in CPS. As the numbers of black teachers continued to increase in the 1970s and as black power politics in Chicago shifted, black teachers became less overtly critical of CTU. During this time, black teachers were increasingly the face of a teachers union engaged in 8 strikes between 1969 and 1987. Black teachers during that same period moved from outsiders, to insiders, to power brokers. Thus, the literal face of the Chicago Teachers Union was a black woman. Jackie Vaughn found herself balancing two separate and at times incompatible agendas. On the one hand she continued the fight for improved wages and benefits for members. At the same time she was taking steps to push for reform and professionalization of the teaching corps. Nowhere was the tension between these two agendas displayed more vividly than the 1986 child sex abuse scandal in CPS involving Chicago Teachers. In her response, Vaughn issued vague or common-sense principles for working with students while devoting considerably more space to space to emphasizing due process rights of members and opposing CPS fingerprinting of all staff. Thus,

the practical limitations of reform on behalf of students were on full display. Despite these limitations, Vaughn, by launching the CTU Quest Center, aggressively pursued a professional reform agenda for Chicago Public Schools teachers that would provide the foundation for the unions future success in building a culture of professional development.

For Further Study

While this study has provided some initial insights into black teacher leadership in Chicago, still unresolved by this study are several important questions that are central to understanding the arc of black teacher union activism in the Chicago Public Schools. They are:

- (1) Given the small sample size of informants, would a larger sample that included more ardent union supporters reveal less obvious ways that having greater black teacher voice in CTU affected black teacher experience in CPS?
- (2) How did black educators' decision-making change as they assumed leadership of Chicago's schools in classrooms and administration?
- (3) How were the caucuses within CTU altered by the growing black teacher voice and presence?
- (4) What were consequences in terms of community support among black communities for Jackie Vaughn and CTU after the 1987 strike?
- (5) How has the decline of the number of black teachers in Chicago affected black students and black communities in Chicago?
- (6) What role did a declining property tax base in Chicago play in limiting funding and budgetary options for the Chicago Public Schools?
- (7) To what extent did the School Finance Authority exercise an outsized role in shaping the

educational realities of Chicago's school children and the communities within which they live?

- (8) As black teacher identity shifted from outsiders to insiders and power brokers, how did that shift affect their decision-making?

Appendices

Protocol Title: The Chicago Teachers Union: The 1968 and 1969 Strikes

Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form that fully explains that this study is voluntary, describing the risks and benefits so that you can make an informed decision about your participation in this study.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Kyle Westbrook, Principal Investigator, Doctoral Candidate

Department and Institution: Educational Policy Studies, College of Education, University of Illinois Chicago (1040 W. Harrison, Chicago, IL 60608) 312.996.4532

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the history of race relations within the Chicago Teachers Union surrounding the strikes of 1968 and 1969.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be asked a series of interview questions that will ask you to recall your experiences in the CTU during the late 1960s. Your interview will be videotaped as well as audiotaped. All videos and audio recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Time required:

1 hour

Risks and Benefits:

None

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be revealed to readers of the dissertation in an effort to establish credibility and reliability. All interviewees will be asked to approve their comments that find their way into the study.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Kyle Westbrook, Ph.D. student, Department of Policy Studies, University of Illinois Chicago.

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB, OPRS, 203 Administrative Office Building - M/C 672, 1737 West Polk Street, Chicago, IL 60612.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Oral Interview Protocol: African-American Teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union

Interviewer: “Good [morning/afternoon/evening] [Ms. / Mr. _____]. First, let me thank you for generously agreeing to participate in this interview about your experiences as an African-American teacher during the period from 1963 to 1987. Though you may have only taught for a small portion of that time, your experiences will provide on the ground view of the ways in which African-American teachers experienced being a member of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) during that period.

For the purposes of this interview I will be recording this interview with a voice recorder. The recording of this interview will remain in my care until the time that this study is complete and it will either be destroyed, or saved for deposit in a willing archive to be identified later.

Do you consent to this interview?

Do you agree to voluntarily participate in this interview?

1. Please state your first, and last name clearly for the record.
2. Where and when were you born?
3. Where did you grow up?
4. Where have you lived?
5. What jobs besides teaching have you had?
6. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
7. What year did you first become a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools?
8. What school(s) did you teach in?
9. Did you become a member of the Chicago Teachers Union?
10. What was it like to be a black teacher in a largely white union?
11. What was your relationship to the black teachers caucuses and affiliated organizations?
[Timuel Black: What led you to start the Teachers Council for Quality Education?]
12. Timuel Black: What were the goals of the TCQE?
13. Timuel Black: Were members of TCQE also members of CTU?
14. Do you know black teacher that were actively involved in CTU politics at that time? If so, how were those teachers viewed by you and other African-American teachers?
15. What were your experiences and perceptions of the CTU during that period?
16. How did black parents view the union at the time?
17. Did you participate in the wildcat strikes of 1968?

18. How, if at all, were black teacher organizations within and outside of the union influenced by other local and national black power rhetoric?
19. Did you ever participate in any meetings or gathering sponsored by African American teacher groups? If so when and what was the subject?
20. What was your view of the Chicago Teachers Union?
21. Did your view of the union change? If so, how and why?
22. What was your view of CTU leadership?
23. Did you feel that the union was acting in the best of interests of African-American students? Teachers? If so, in what ways?
24. Were you fully certified when you began teaching or were you an FTB?
25. What was your experience gaining full certification?
26. What was it like being an African-American teacher during the 1960s and 1970s?
27. How important was it for you to teach black children in black communities?
28. Describe the makeup of the faculties in the schools where you taught?
29. Did you or others that you knew experience overt racial hostility from other teachers or administrators?
30. What was your view of Jackie Vaughn?
31. Did you participate in the first CTU strike in 1969? Other strikes?
32. What were the goals of the black teacher wildcat strikes?
33. What lessons did you learn about CTU and its relationship to African-American teachers during the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s?
34. Were you involuntarily transferred under the school systems desegregation order? Were others that you knew transferred? How did you feel about the transfers?
35. What were the obstacles to greater participation in union activities by African-American teachers?
36. How if at all was your view CTU changed when Jackie Vaughn became the first black executive officer and later president?
37. As African-Americans became leaders in CTU how, if at all, did the union's relationship with black teachers change?
38. How did you experience the 1987 strike? What stands out in your memory of the strike?
39. How if at all did the union change during your time as a teacher?

40. How did other black teachers that you knew think of the union?

41. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you would like to add?

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Weiner, Lois. “Albert Shanker’s Legacy,” *Contemporary Education* (1998), 196 – 201.

Vita

Education

Ph.D. Candidate, Educational Policy Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago

Masters of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction; Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

Bachelor of Science, Secondary History Education, Minor: Black American Studies; Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Education / Teaching experience

Partnership for College Completion – Founding Executive Director (2016 – Present)

Office of Mayor Rahm Emanuel – Executive Director of Educational Policy (2015 – 2016)

Chicago Public Schools – Executive Director of Magnet, Gifted, and International Baccalaureate Programs (2011 – 2015)

University of Illinois Chicago – Teaching Assistant (Spring 2011, Fall 2012)

University of Chicago, Urban Education Institute – Director of Secondary School Supports (2008 – 2011)

Walter Payton College Preparatory High School – Teacher, Social Studies Department Chair, (2001 – 2008)

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Department of History – Teaching Assistant (2000 – 2001)

Lincoln Park High School – History Teacher (1995 – 2000)

Professional Development (lead)

John Hope Franklin History Learning Community University of Chicago

Teaching in the Block Period – ACE Technical High School

Relationships and Student Success: Power House High School

Summer Writer's Workshop – University of Chicago Urban Education Institute

Professional Development (participant)

Illinois Conference for Gifted Education Conference

Midwest Region Advanced Placement Conference

Newberry Library Teachers as Scholars Workshops

Newberry Library Teachers Consortium

National Endowment for Humanities Workshop on Exploration

Chicago History Project

Terra Museum Project on American History through Art

Awards

Project Higher Education Champion Award
 UIC Graduate Student Travel Fellowship
 Zucker Award for Outstanding Graduate Research Paper in History (Title: The Truth is Spoken Here: Modernity and Protest in Avante Garde Jazz)
 Southern Illinois University at Carbondale Graduate School PROMPT Fellowship
 Dean's List (3 Semesters)
 United States Achievement Academy All American Scholar
 University Honors
 John Lesser Memorial Scholarship
 Southern Illinois University Carbondale College of Education African-American Award
 Delete Morris Memorial Scholarship

Presentations / Media appearances

Numerous print, television, radio appearances.

"The Impact of the Community College on the Larger Community," Moraine Valley College, January 2018.

"Unequal Opportunity: A Look at Who Graduates and Why it Matters," Partnership for College Completion, September-October 2017.

"Unchaining Education: The Civil Rights Issue of Our Time," Chicago Urban League, November 2016.

"Public Universities Increasingly Of Reach for Illinois' Low-Income Students." Chicago Reporter – Op-ed, October 2017.

"Illinois Makes Paying for College Harder for Low-Income Students, But We Can Fix That," Education Post. Op-ed, October 2017.

"Higher Education: Collateral Damage in the Budget Battle," Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, January, February, April 2017.

"IB Program Implementation in Urban Contexts," International Baccalaureate Regional Council. September 2014

"Race and the Chicago Teachers Union." Paper presentation at the 2nd Annual International Research conference on Workers in Education, Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas, Rio de Janeiro, 2010.

Featured in Henry Louis Gates PBS documentary "Looking for Lincoln." 2008.

"What's a Union For Anyway? Black Teacher Activism in the Chicago Public Schools 1968 –

1969.” Conference Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting 2007.

“Onion for the Day: The Chicago Public Schools and the Jenner School Crisis of 1965.” Conference Paper Presented at the History of Education Society, 2007.

“The Chicago Teachers Union and Global Unionism.” Panel Presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual meeting 2006.

“African-American Perspectives on the Life and Legacy of Abraham Lincoln.” Panel presentation hosted by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission / CSPAN, 2006.

Featured in *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning*, Burnaford, et al. Mahwah NJ: Erlbaum and Associates, 2001.

“The New Black Art’s Renaissance.” Jesse White Symposium on African-American History Lecture, Lincoln Park High School, 1998.

Service

United States Commission on Civil Rights – Illinois Advisory Council (2019 -Present)

Advance Illinois “State We’re In” – Steering Committee (2019 – Present)

State Education Consortium - Steering Committee (2017 – Present)

Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community – Board of Directors (2015 – 2018)

Project Onward – Board of Directors (2016 – 2018)

International Baccalaureate Americas – Regional Council (2013 – 2016)

Becoming a Man – Advisory Council (2015)

Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaboration – Steering Committee (2015 – Present)

Lycée Francais – Education Committee (2012)

ACE Technical High School Board of Directors (2009-2011)

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Steering Committee – United States

Library of Congress (2007-2008)

Lincoln Leadership Series Steering Committee – Fetzer institute (2008)

Publications

Smylie, Mark., Miller, Chris., Westbrook, Kyle. “The Work of Teachers” In *21st Century Education: a Reference Handbook*, edited by Thomas L. Good, 3 - 11. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008.

Westbrook, Kyle. “Sodexo in the Schools: Neo-liberalism in the Chicago Public Schools.” In *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and Their Unions*, edited by Lois J. Weiner, New York: Palgrave, 2008.