

Early Common School Laws Preambles and Excerpts

A radical defect in our laws upon the subject of education, is that the public aid now given, and imperfectly given, is confined to the poor. Aware of this, your committee have taken care to exclude the word, poor, from the bill which will accompany this report, meaning to make the system general, that is to say, to form an educational association between the rich, the comparatively rich, and the destitute. Let them all fare alike in the primary schools, receive the same elementary instruction, imbibe the republican spirit, and be animated by a feeling of perfect equality. In after life, he who is diligent at schools will take his station accordingly, whether born to wealth or not. Common schools universally established will multiply the chances of success, perhaps of brilliant success, among those who may otherwise forever continue ignorant. It is the duty of the State to promote and foster such establishments. That done, the career of each youth will depend upon himself. The State will have given the first impulse; good conduct and suitable application must do the rest. Among the indigent, "Some flashing of a mounting genius" may be found; and among both rich and poor, in the course of nature, many no doubt will sink into mediocrity or beneath it. Yet let them all start with equal advantage, leaving no discrimination, then or thereafter, but such as nature and study shall produce.

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE
accompanying their draft of a bill which became the Act of 1834 establishing the
common school system in the state.

To enjoy our rights and liberties we must understand them: their security and protection ought to be the first object of a free people: and it is a well established fact that no nation has ever continued long in the enjoyment of civil and political freedom, which was not both virtuous and enlightened: and believing that the advancement of literature has always been, and ever will be the means of developing the rights of man, that the mind of every citizen of a republic is the common property of society, and constitutes the basis of its strength and happiness; it is therefore considered the peculiar duty of a free government, like ours, to extend the improvement and cultivation of the intellectual energies of the whole.

Preamble to the first legislation for schools approved by the General Assembly in the State of Illinois, January 15 1825.

The principles of a state system of education as laid out by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Illinois in the Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1860.

The just and moral claim of every child in the Commonwealth to an education commensurate with the importance and dignity of his obligations and duties as an upright and loyal citizen: The corresponding obligation of the State to make adequate provision for such an education for all: The inseparable relation of universal intelligence and probity to the strength and perpetuity of a republican government.

Excerpt from California School Law of 1860

Negroes, Mongolians and Indians, shall not be admitted into the Public Schools; and whenever satisfactory evidence is furnished to show that said prohibited parties are attending such schools, he may withhold from the district in which such schools are situated, all share of the State School Fund; and the Superintendent of Common Schools for the county in which such district is situated shall not draw his warrant in favor of such district for any expenses incurred, while the prohibited parties aforesaid were attending the Public Schools therein; provided that the Trustees of any district may establish a separate school for the education of Negroes, Mongolians, and Indians, and use the Public School Funds for the support of the same.