

NOW WHAT IPS?

12/2021

BACKGROUND

On November 10, 2021, Indianapolis citizens gathered at the Central Library and via Zoom during the Spirit & Place Festival to participate in a community conversation concerning “Past to Klan: The Roots of Racism in IPS - and Beyond.” The 2021 theme for the Spirit & Place Festival was “Change.” Community members broke out in four separate groups to discuss the “WHAT”s about history of the topics below, the “SO WHAT”s of how that history applies to the history and current events of IPS and came up with the following “NOW WHAT”s as action items that are needed in the community of Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS).

- IPS and the mystery of the missing Indianapolis Recorder newspapers
- Principal George Buck and Shortridge HS: The legacy of the IPS caste system
- Myth vs. Fact: Crispus Attucks HS and the Ku Klux Klan
- What was the Citizens School Committee, the most powerful, longest-lasting IPS school board group no one's ever heard of?

Link to our video: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GiXhj7VJ5PXeOVRj5SUQ0sqVdhoXvBX4/view>

FACTS DISCUSSED RELATING TO “Past to Klan: The Roots of Racism in IPS - and Beyond”

- **IPS and the mystery of the missing *Indianapolis Recorder* newspapers**
 - 9 years of *Recorder* newspapers are missing: January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1925, some 468 editions! *Cui bono?* Who benefits from these missing editions?
 - During this same time period, IPS Crispus Attucks HS and Washington HS were created and Shortridge HS was moved north from downtown at Michigan and Pennsylvania.
 - The Indianapolis Black community's perspective of the local and national Jim Crow era school creations and movements is missing.
 - African American poet, writer and dramatist, Mari Evans, reminds us that we live in “Up south” Naptown: *“Indianapolis is truly dichotomous; a city in which contradictions is truly the norm. It is easy to be deluded here, especially when one prefers delusion to clarity.”*
- **Principal George S. Buck and Shortridge HS: The legacy of the IPS caste system**
 - At the 12:35 minute mark of the 2016 WFYI documentary, [Attucks: A school that opened a city](#), the narrator states, "The Chamber of Commerce joined the segregationist push as did parent-teacher organizations and the principal of Shortridge"
 - Principal George Buck was principal of Shortridge HS at that time. Mr. Buck attended the IPS board meeting on September 19, 1922 where he personally endorsed the creation of the segregated all- black Crispus Attucks HS.
 - Today, IPS George S Buck School #94 is located at 2701 Devon Avenue, 46219
 - Shortridge HS moved from Pennsylvania & Michigan to 34th & Meridian in 1928.
 - During this time, according to local activist Henry Richardson Jr., “...an overall deal [was made]: that if we are going to build a new Shortridge we might as well do a good job while we're at it: get the poor white people from the south-side and the Jews out of Shortridge, create Washington HS [to get the Southern Europeans out] , move Shortridge HS, and build Attucks HS [to get the Black students out]. That was all one deal.”
 - After September of 1928, IPS high schools were a part of a city-wide educational caste system that sorted/ranked students and schools not only by race, but by class, religion, neighborhood, ability, ethnicity, career/vocation, even gender:

- Manual HS building was expanded in 1924 for the city's Southside students;
 - Washington HS was created in 1927 for the city's Westside students, mainly students from Southern European immigrant families;
 - Cathedral HS was opened the same month as Attucks and Washington, September of 1927;
 - Moving out of its Irvington campus, Butler open in its new location at 46th and Sunset Ave. in Fairview Park in 1928. To help the move be less controversial in the 1920s Klan era, Butler established a quota of only 10 Black female students would be enrolled per year.
- In 1968, the United States Department of Justice filed a suit against IPS charging *de jure* segregation, and in 1971 IPS was found guilty of it.
 - Similarly, the IPS Lottery and Magnet system, specifically the location of these schools and the priority levels of the lottery, has created a school caste and educationally segregated school system within IPS today.
- We are talking about not only race discrimination, but also classism.
- **Myth vs. Fact: Crispus Attucks HS and the Ku Klux Klan**
 - Cathedral HS & Washington HS opened the same year and month as Attucks, September 1927.
 - "...it is significant for the purposes of this study that, while the 'Klan board' was accused of loose financial practices, politicizing the school system, and nepotism, they were neither charged with racism nor criticized for segregating schools. Not until many years later, after the state law that abolished school segregation was adopted in 1949 and "establishment" whites wanted to remove the stigma of racism represented by segregated schools, did the tradition developed that the Klan was responsible for Crispus Attucks HS." ~ Dr. Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the 20th Century*, p. 60
 - "The policy of segregation was instituted before Klan-supported candidates took office, continued while they were in position, and was maintained after they were ostensibly removed from the school board. The simple but unpopular explanation is that the majority of white voters wanted segregated schools." ~ Dr. Pierce, [Polite Protest](#), p. 31.
- **What was the Citizens School Committee (CSC), the most powerful, longest-lasting IPS school board group no one's ever heard of?**
 - The CSC was formed in Oct.1921. The group won the Nov. election and took control of IPS in Jan. 1, 1922.
 - Throughout 1922, the CSC influence board made the decision to build Attucks and Washington and to move Shortridge to 34th and Meridian
 - It was also during this 1922 era that Butler College decided to move from Irvington to Fairview Park area at 46th and Sunset Ave.
 - The CSC lost the Nov.1924 election to the Klan's United Protestant slate which ran IPS from Jan. 1, 1925 to Dec.31, 1929. From Jan.1, 1930 to approximately 1968, CSC ran IPS unopposed until it lost to the Non-Partisans for Better Schools.
 - Who were the original members of CSC?

NOW WHAT IPS?

The following are specific action steps from the citizen participants that IPS must take in addressing the inequities in education for all IPS students to start acknowledging, appreciating (good and bad) and not repeating the same or similar history. It is past time that the IPS Board and administration starts repairing past inequities and start making equitable decisions concerning disparate impacts on students of different races, abilities, genders, religions, ethnicities, castes/classes and zip codes/areas of Indianapolis.

KNOW AND LEARN FROM HISTORY:

- Do the research, reading and effort to learn about what really happened in history.
- Discover, recognize and uncover the realities of the myths we are facing today.
- Create an avenue for the actual truths vs. versions of the truth; create a place for truth telling.
- Create an avenue for individual stories related to the history of IPS.
- Systemic legacy of white privilege and power
- Get the names of the CSC members
- Create a third party and objective commission to tell the truth related to IPS history
- A clear purposeful division between races, abilities and classes (castes) was/is behind segregated schools IPS created in the 1920's and today's choice movement, including "innovative schools"
- IPS Board and administration must value, review, know and stop repeating its own inequitable history. IPS must immediately bring back the IPS history library/teacher's library and resources that was previously located in the administration building and employ a full-time librarian as a reference for the Board, administration, and community.
- Race, disability, poverty level. The caste system within IPS must be acknowledged/addressed.
- More research in local sources of info such as other Indy newspapers and historical collections
- Reach out to citizens of Indianapolis for info and Recorder collections including churches local civic organizations and researchers
- Acknowledge that the founding of IPS, and to a large degree urban school systems across the country, were created to enforce racist ideology and maintain systems of power and privilege.
- It is important to know our history, the shady parts of our history and acknowledge the shady parts of what is going on today.
- General: Don't avoid the truth.
- General: Indianapolis is Urban Up South...perpetuating urbanism and racism.
- Share the history of the missing *Recorders* and surrounding events
- General: What was the 1950s and 1960s history of Arsenal Tech HS that cause the students in 1962 to change the nickname of the school from Greenclads to the Titans?

VISION:

- Drive the message of "Co-operation/collaboration is needed, not competition in IPS/Indy schools." Competition creates guaranteed losers which is not equality or equity. (i.e. lottery system)
- Schools should not have a spreadsheet mentality applied to them, it creates radical inequality
- It is most important to have engaged and educated citizens, above all, versus "college and career ready" students.
- Important to concentrate more on the Merry-Go-Round (things that affect all) vs. the See-Saw (things that affect some).

EDUCATION

- Redefine "quality education"
- The problem is not how to teach children, the problem is what is being used in education for stratification.
- There are known ways, programs and activities to teach students in poverty that must be used

ENGAGEMENT

- Be willing to have open conversations, stay in the conversation. Sometimes it is messy, disagreements are ok, just stay in the conversation.
- As we learn about who they were, we need to put faces on those who had so much power
- Have more than one agenda item/more than one purpose to attend the event
- It is important that we have conversations like this and on what is happening right now
- How can we share this information and educate parents as well?
 - get parents in with food

- Do it in a way that you're actually offering other services needed in the community
 - have college campuses provide opportunities
 - bring in one or more entities to share this kind of information
- How do we get people to sponsor such events like this?

TRANSPARENCY

- Public conversation about the naming/renaming of IPS Schools, including presentation/gallery on the names of all IPS schools and who they are named for - the history of the names. Same information shared with schools. Or schools research their history of their school name. School/community based conversations for students/school communities to select potential new school names. Curriculum could also be developed for each IPS school to annually learn about the original name of their school, why it was changed and the history of the new name. (i.e. George Buck, IPS school #94, 2701 N. Devon Ave, 46219)
- More community conversations on the reality of how segregation persists within IPS, including more public transparency on data, and community action steps on how schools become places that truly care for and educate our Black and Brown and multilingual students so that student life outcomes can't be pre-determined by race or class.
- Have courageous conversations like this one - educate parents, provide food!, Host conversations on college campuses, while tying it in to other services people need
- LOTTERY: The lottery does not serve all students and it causes inequities in educational opportunities within IPS itself. End priority placements within IPS schools, and provide more equitable ways for information about schools to be available in the community. Replicate high quality schools, prioritizing the populations (zip codes) that need resources. If continuing lottery, IPS must review January lottery results and open schools for the demand of programs, analyzing the zip codes of the demand for the programs when considering location of schools (not only placing the high demand programs within "white neighborhoods" and/or convenient to upper class citizens working downtown).
- Demand a mandatory disparate impact studies before closing or moving schools.
- IPS must administer mandatory disparate impact studies before the board decides to close, re-constitute, open new or reconfigure (or any other similar change) that include the race, poverty level, disability, zip code and gender of students.

STATE AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIPS

- Speak up and write to federal and state legislatures about laws curtailing voting rights.
- End Tax abatement for the part that goes to schools cannot be abated. Tax abatement laws in Indiana must be changed to disallow corporations from abating from the portion of the property taxes set aside for local school districts.
- It is vital to know how the system of local/state/school board systems work to be able to know where to insert yourself into the system when needed and be able to spot the shady activities.

SUPPORT

- Active protest and resistance, i.e. teachers strike. Multiple organizations supporting and repeating the same true stories.
- Teachers must have resources to teach and must be honored for the work they do
- Teacher strikes are supported to demand change. Protests/strikes are effective towards needed changes around the inequities within IPS and were supported by the many within the group.

NEW FACTS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Who were the original members of the Citizens School Committee?: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/1921-Citizens-School-Committee-members.pdf>.

- What was the break-down on the Citizens School Committee members? See: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/1921-Breakdown-of-Citizens-School-Committee-membership.pdf>
- During the post-WW II Nuremberg Trials, Nazi doctors were asked about their eugenics and sterilization program. They said they followed “The Indiana Procedure.” See <https://newswithviews.com/NWO/newworld17.htm>.
- Butler’s quota started in 1928. Questions: Were the Black males on the Irvington campus allowed to finish their degrees on the Fairview campus? What year did the last Black male student/s graduate once the quota began? When did the quota end? What was the percent of Black males on the Butler Irvington campus during the Spring 1928 semester compared to the present one?
- The 1971 decision finding IPS guilty of *de jure* segregation showed it was almost 3 decades after Brown vs Board in 1954 that IPS respected the rights of Black children. The tragedy is this was also the start of White Flight. In 1971 IPS had 102,734 students (37.8% Black). See “IPS enrollment, 1950-2003,” *Indy Star*, (05.10.04). Currently, IPS has 22,928 students, of which only 21.6% are white. See: <https://inview.doe.in.gov/corporations/1053850000/population>.
- In the late 1950s, Grant Hawkins, part of the extended family of current IPS board president Evan Hawkins, was nominated by the Citizens School Committee. The CSC was under pressure to diversify. He won and was on the broad from 1956-1959. He later switched sides and endorsed the winning 1968 Non-Partisans for Better Schools slate: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/05.06.68-Pre-election-ad-for-Non-Partisans-for-Better-Schools-running-their-slate-for-1968-IPS-board-election.pdf>
 - I recorded 2 oral history interviews with Grant Hawkins.
 - FYI: Here list of IPS commissioners from 1900-2016: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/1900-2016-List-of-IPS-Board-Membership.pdf>
- We see that at the 12:35 minute mark of the 2016 WFYI documentary, [*Attucks: A school that opened a city*](#), the narrator states, "The Chamber of Commerce joined the segregationist push as did parent-teacher organizations and the principal of Shortridge." Question: Who and what were these parent-teacher organizations?
- Although most students from Jewish families lived on the Southside and attended Manual HS, some went to Shortridge. Question: What was the Shortridge Jewish population before and after the 1928 move to 34th and Meridian?

A closer look: The Mystery of the missing *Indianapolis Recorders*

During the *Missing Recorder* group dialogue, these areas of concern arose:

- Why and how are the 9 yrs of editions missing?
 - to control education of public to events of that day
 - to hold people down
 - business leaders did it... they may have done it for their
- Own reasons...used the Klan as patsy..
- It’s important, from the Black person's perspective, to have this history
- We are not ready to accept that all info has been lost
- Who benefits from these missing *Recorder*?

During the *Missing Recorder* discussions, three areas of “Now what?” action emerged

- Research
 - Find out who controlled *Recorder* office on Indiana Ave. when fires happened
 - What was kept there? Where and how were editions kept at Indiana Ave. *Recorder* office?
 - Contact former *Recorder* editor Eunice Trotter
 - Contact Mays family representative

- Check out IPS board minutes
- Subscribe to the *Recorder*
- Reach out to various sources for copies: reach out to other newspapers that were published at the same time; research archives
 - Contact local newspapers as well as search out papers publications of the Black cities to see what was said and written
 - Library of Congress <https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/searchBrowse>
 - Use Hoosier State Chronicles for digitized copies <https://newspapers.library.in.gov/>
 - *Indiana Freeman* newspaper
 - *Indiana World* newspaper
 - Contact regional and national publications for information regarding what was the news of the day or references to the *Recorder*:
 - *The LA Sentinel*, *The Michigan Chronicle*, *The Milwaukee Courier*, *The Baltimore Afro-American*
 - Associated Press (AP) 1840s
 - United Press International (UPI) 1907
 - National[Black]Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA)
 - [Indianapolis Association of Black Journalists-IABJ - Home | Facebook](#)
 - <https://www.facebook.com/nabjindy/>.
 - National Association of Black Journalists/Indiana University.
- Reach out to the community for oral histories, copies of old recorders in their personal/family possession
 - Oral histories: ask elderly or family members to check for copies in their homes, or personal possession
 - Donna Stokes Lucas: Walking Wednesdays: Indianapolis: African American History
 - Seek help from Black churches: Indianapolis Ministerial Alliance
 - Ask businesses to review their archives for any info
 - Did they do business with the recorder during that time and do their records show this?
 - Actively share this info regarding the missing *Recorders*

OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION DISCUSSED DURING THE EVENT

- ADVOCACY: Focus on the local and small important actions, partnering with other small groups.
- ADVOCACY: Story Telling Arts of Indiana has grants for story telling in an entertaining way.
- ADVOCACY: Community elders Guy Russell and Dr. Thomas Brown have a wealth of knowledge.
- ADVOCACY: We have to stop showing up, speaking up and saying that we are tired about the things that are being done to rob our future and the education of our students.
- ADVOCACY: General: Most people are a fair people. Others are constantly trying to fight a good education, proper education, because it is profitable to them for others to not be educated.
- ADVOCACY: General: the NOW WHAT is right now, your little river. We possess the NOW WHAT if we work together, cooperate, and can beat the competition.
 - 15-20 individuals being prepared to sacrifice.
 - Parents need to know their rights based on the laws, and need a separate entity outside of IPS to help them navigate the district's systems.
- KNOW HISTORY: Follow the money

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