

Guide to the **School Records Collection: Ithaca Public Schools** **General – Educational Innovation and Equity Issues**

The History Center in Tompkins County
110 North Tioga Street, Suite 204A
Tompkins Center for History and Culture
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-273-8284
www.thehistorycenter.net
archives@thehistorycenter.net

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See also: Ithaca City Schools Publications Collection (V-63-8-4)

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

This box contains documents that touch on several important events and ongoing debates within Ithaca's public schools surrounding equity and educational innovation, with special attention paid to the second half of the twentieth century. Key records in this collection include a 1969 study authored by several Cornell students discussing Black students' treatment within the public school district, and several documents about alternative public education from the 1970s. Alternative schools – distinguished by small class sizes, self-guided learning, and greater community engagement – got their start in Ithaca with the opening of the Markles Flats School (later the New Program for Junior High Students before the Lehman Alternative Community School opened) and the conversion of the East Hill school into a home for an alternative elementary program. The banner of alternative education is still carried today by the Lehman School, and the New Roots Charter School, which opened in 2009. Documents relating to alternative education in this collection include a study on Markles Flats students in the 1971-72 academic year, a booklet of essays and articles written by alternative education activists in 1976, and materials collected and distributed by the school district during the planning of a large district reorganization effort. The reorganization of Ithaca's schools in the mid-1970s brought many issues regarding racial disparities and alternative education to a head in the community.

CONTAINER LIST

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Folder</i>
Lectures on Education, 1850-1868	1
Miscellaneous Correspondence	2
Local Histories	3

Enlargement of the City School District, 1956	4
Information Booklet Concerning School Referendum, 1967	5
Report: Black People and the Ithaca City School District, 1969	6
BOCES, 1971	7
BOCES, Newspaper Clippings	8
A Follow-Up Study: The Return of Alternative School Students to a Traditional School Setting, 1973	9
Resource Material for the Reorganization Study, 1976	10
Your Schools and Reorganization, 1976	11
An Ithaca Schools Book: Toward Real Learning within the System without the System, 1976	12
Meningococcal Disease Notice, 1995	13

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