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A centralized administration of the Maryland public schools was attempted in 1865, but the General Assembly did not establish the State Board of Education until 1870 (Ch. 311, Acts of 1870). The Board, composed of seven members appointed by the Governor for staggered seven-year terms, makes policy for the public school system and passes the by-laws and regulations that govern it (Code 1957, 1969 Repl. Vol., Art. 77, secs. 2-22).

The State Board of Education appoints the State Superintendent of Schools for a four-year term. He directs the State Department of Education and executes the policy and enforces the regulations adopted by the Board (Code 1957, 1969 Repl. Vol., Art. 77, secs. 23-33). The State Department of Education consists of the State Superintendent of Schools and the professional staff employed by the Board to assist him. The Department has nine divisions (Code 1957, 1969 Repl. Vol., 1970 Supp., Art. 77, secs. 30, 32).

Division of Instruction

The Division of Instruction provides leadership in planning and supervising education for children and adults in the public schools of the State. Supervisory and instructional services are available in all subject matter areas, general curriculum, special education for the handicapped, and pupil services. The Division initiates and supports the development of curriculum guides and certain visual aids; it encourages good educational practices through workshops, consultant services, and demonstrations. It maintains a curriculum center to serve all schools in the State. The Division also assumes leadership in the development of programs under Federal funding for local units, and specifically administers programs under Title II-B of the Federal Adult Basic Education Program, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title V-B of the National Defense Education Act (Code 1957, 1969 Repl. Vol., Art. 77, secs. 8, 14-27), and the Civil Defense Adult Education Program.

Division of Administration and Finance

The services of the Division of Administration and Finance include in the offices of the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent those of legal services, departmental planning, and informational services; the office of administrative services composed of budgeting, legislative services, State aid, food service, school facilities planning, and safety and planning; the office of fiscal management and services including accounting, auditing, and scholarship determination and enforcement; and publications and personnel administration.

The office of Administrative Services prepares the annual State public school and departmental budgets. The office of Fiscal Management distributes the funds made available to the local school systems by the State and Federal governments and provides auditing and fiscal advice (Code 1957, 1969 Repl. Vol., 1970 Supp., Art. 77, secs. 17, 19, 92-94, 123-132).