United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name
Buffalo Public School # 92 (PS 92)

other names/site number

name of related multiple property listing

Location

street & number
340 Fougeron Street

not for publication

city or town
Buffalo

vicinity

state
New York  code NY  county Erie code 029  zip code 14211

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national  ___ statewide  X local

Signature of certifying official/Title  Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official  Date

Title  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register  ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register  ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  
Name of Property:  
Erie County, NY  
County and State:

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- EDUCATION/School (grammar school)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- EDUCATION/School (grammar school)

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- 20th Century American Movements/
- Midcentury Modern

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: concrete
- walls: Brick, concrete
- roof: membrane
- other: 

DRAFT
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92) is a two-story rectangular brick building constructed in a midcentury modern style. The building has a sprawling, horizontal emphasis with details such as cantilevered roofs, metal sash windows, and concrete piers conveying the midcentury modern style. The building was constructed in two stages (1961 and ca. 2001), but reads holistically as a single, interconnected school building. Inside, the rectangular east wing has a courtyard plan with classrooms wrapping around the center. A double-height gymnasium and auditorium are connected to the west through an extended one-story primary east-west corridor in the west wing. Overall, the building’s form, style, materials, and plan demonstrate the building’s function as a purpose-built school from 1961 that was occupied by the B.U.I.L.D Academy during the period of significance from 1977-1983.

Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92), also known as B.U.I.L.D Community School, is located at 340 Fougeron Street in Buffalo, New York. The parcel is bound by Fougeron Street to the south, Barthel Street to the west, Urban Street to the north, and adjacent dwellings to the east towards Moselle Street. The surrounding area includes a mix of modest frame dwellings and multiple industrial buildings, including the Continental Baking Company (NR listed 2020) and Milk Bone factory, located to the west of PS 92 along the nearby Belt Line railroad tracks. The site is located approximately three miles northeast of Buffalo’s central business district.

Planted grass lawns with minimal landscaping are present at the front and sides of the building, with an asphalt paved parking area to the rear along the north side of the school. The building is set back from the concrete sidewalk about twenty feet in the front from Fougeron Street and about thirty feet across the asphalt parking lot to the rear.

PS 92 is a two-story rectangular brick and concrete school building with flat roof constructed in 1961 in a midcentury modern style. The plan and materials of the east portion represent the original construction of the building as the Genesee-Humboldt Junior High School (PS 91) in 1961. The east wing has a horizontal emphasis with bays of triple metal sash windows delineated by concrete piers, with tan brickwork and concrete cantilevered roof over the primary entrance. Inside, the east wing features a systematized path of double-loaded corridors that traverse the building in a rectangular shape that wind around a central internal courtyard. The classrooms receive light from the exterior walls and from windows looking out onto the court space. The cafeteria is located in the east portion of the building, facing inward towards the court. The east wing is connected by an extension of the original north and south corridors to a west wing (Ca. 2001).

1 The school uses the address of 340 Fougeron Street, but the parcel is identified as 165 Barthel Street in official city and county records.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)

The west wing is primarily one story high, with a two-story portion towards the center accommodating the taller interior spaces. The west wing contains an auditorium, gym, and pool. While subtle, the two wings are visibly distinguished on the exterior by subtle changes in the brickwork, brick color, presence/absence of concrete piers, and height.

PS 92 retains its setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. The exterior and interior both convey the mid-to-late twentieth century period of construction and its function as a school. The building was in near constant use as a school building since it was constructed in 1961 and, inside and out, is in very good repair.

Exterior

Overall, the building presents two distinct construction phases. The east wing forms the original 1961 building, which also extends a few bays to the west of the primary entrance on Fougeron Street. The west wing (ca. 2001) is one-and-two stories high to accommodate large gathering spaces in its gymnasium, auditorium, and pool. While the wings are distinct from one another in material and height, they convey a unified, interconnected appearance on the exterior. The building’s exterior conveys its mid-to-late twentieth century construction, with one- and two-story portions under flat roofs. The massing and style have an asymmetrical, horizontal emphasis, sprawling east-west on the site with bands of three one-over-one aluminum sash windows in each bay. Two-story vertical concrete piers separate the windows and bays, balancing the horizontal effect of the building’s massing and brick. The concrete foundation is visible at grade.

The primary elevation faces Fougeron Street to the south, where both the east and west wings are visible. In the east wing, a cantilevered roof hangs over the one-story primary entrance, set back from the south elevation near the west end of the east wing. Entrance occurs through six doors, set in pairs divided by glass sidelights beneath a ten-light transom. To the west of the entrance, a one-story portion with the same fenestration and piers stretches six bays to meet the addition for another four bays, forming the corridor connecting the wings. To the east, in the east wing, the two-story portion stretches ten bays, with a set of three one-over-one aluminum sash windows in each bay divided by two-story concrete piers. These provide structural support and also mark the division between classrooms on the interior.

The two-story west wing addition is also visible from the south elevation, set back a bay from the rest of the building. While the west wing addition was designed to complement the original building, it is distinct in terms of brickwork, height, and ornamentation. The two periods of construction are visibly distinct on the exterior, with the original one-story band of windows continuing to the west of the primary entrance to connect to the one- and two-story addition at the west end of the building. The one-story portion rises slightly higher than the east portion. Windows are set in threes, as on the original east portion, but there are no concrete piers or mullions. The brickwork and mortar are subtly different in tone as well. A two-story portion of the addition is set back from the south elevation, accommodating the gymnasium, with multilight aluminum windows distinct from the otherwise one-over-one sash windows in the building.
The rear elevation faces Urban Street to the north, with a similar rhythm, fenestration, and materials. This is the service and faculty entrance, accessed from the asphalt parking lot. The west wing is visibly distinct from the east wing on this elevation as well, where differences in brickwork, height, and fenestration reflect the subtle distinction of the two building periods in the same way as on the south elevation.

The side elevation facing west, composed of the west wing, is unadorned. The west elevation is visible from Barthel Street, where the west wing has a solid brick wall at one- and two-story heights. Brick piers rise at regular intervals to the roofline on the two-story portion of the west wing, and service entrances are located at the one-story south and north ends. The east elevation, composed of the east wing, faces adjacent dwellings and is only partially visible. This two-story elevation, constructed 1961, features the same three-window bays and concrete piers as the east wing on the south elevation.

**Interior**

The organization of the plan illustrates a distinction between the original 1961 east wing construction and the ca. 2001 west wing addition, with classrooms in the east wing and large spaces such as the gymnasium and auditorium in the west wing. The original east wing features a systemized path of double-loaded corridors that traverse the building in a rectangle around a courtyard on both floors. Classrooms are located on both sides of the corridors on both floors, illuminated and ventilated by windows on the exterior or the internal courtyard. Exceptions occur on the first floor, where the library occupies the space of several connected classrooms facing the courtyard from the west and the cafeteria occupies a larger space on the opposite side of the courtyard to the east.

The west addition was designed to accommodate large gathering spaces and a few additional classrooms or offices, mostly one story in height aside from the second-floor space for the gymnasium. The addition connects internally to the east portion through a continuation of the south corridor, which accesses the gymnasium and auditorium to the north and additional classrooms, some used as offices, to the south. A north corridor in the addition connects to the west corridor of the east portion near its north end, accessing the rear end of the stage and locker rooms for the pool and gymnasium. A sunken classroom, accessed through descending steps inside the room, forms the music room at the north end of the addition. Three large steps form bleachers for students at the window end of the room to the north. Otherwise, the majority of the classrooms are located in the east portion of the building on both floors.

Throughout the building, corridors have terrazzo floors and baseboards along glazed tile-clad walls with painted concrete block at the top. In the older, eastern portion, brass strips on the floor indicate the former presence of metal gates, which formerly divided the corridors, in some locations. Lockers line the walls between doorways on both sides towards the north end of the east wing. Acoustic tile ceilings with exposed fluorescent lighting are present throughout, likely an original condition. Plain wood doors are set within simple metal frames to access the classrooms. The classrooms typically feature acoustical tile ceilings, painted concrete block walls, and laminate tile flooring. Windows are located either towards the exterior or towards the internal courtyard depending on their location in the building.
The auditorium is at the west end of the building, seating over two hundred in three sections with two aisles facing the stage on the north end. The stage has a wood floor and is accessed from the audience by six curved steps with wood treads to the west. There is no proscenium arch as it rises directly to the ceiling with inset lighting. The gymnasium is located to the east of the auditorium, accessed by two entrances from the corridor to the south. The gymnasium features treated hardwood appearing floors, basketball nets, and space for seating along the east end. The ceiling rises to the second story, where metal trusses are visible and fluorescent lighting is hung. Two sets of three one-over-one metal sash windows are located on the north and south ends of the gymnasium at the second-floor level, with four sets along the east end. The pool is separated from the gymnasium and main corridors by a series of dressing rooms, locker rooms, and restrooms. The pool has a tile floor and surround, set within glazed tile clad walls. A small clerestory rises above the acoustical tile ceiling over the pool itself, with five sets of glass-block windows to the east and west.

**Integrity**

PS 92 is a good example of a fully intact mid-to-late twentieth century school building. The building retains more than sufficient integrity of the original exterior and interior materials, form, and plan to convey its function as a school building during the period of significance. While the west wing was constructed after the period of significance, it has not disrupted an understanding of the original east wing and is efficiently connected through an extension of the original corridors with sensitivity to the original design. The classrooms in the east wing, although built originally as a junior high school, were large enough to provide a flexible arrangement of furniture, books, and activity spaces that were integral to the unique responsive learning environment of the B.U.I.L.D. Academy during the period of significance. The building continues to operate as the B.U.I.L.D. Community School today, further conveying its original function and significance.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property
Erie County, NY
County and State

First floor plan (N ^)
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property

Erie County, NY
County and State

(N^)
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)          Erie County, NY
Name of Property                          County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemoratory property.

X G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)

Areas of Significance

SOCIAL HISTORY/African American Civil Rights

Period of Significance

1977-1983

Significant Dates

1977, 1983

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1977, when the building was constructed for and occupied by B.U.I.L.D. Academy, which moved into the building from its previous location at 342 Clinton Street. The period of significance ends in 1983, when the B.U.I.L.D. organization was dissolved.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92) (former B.U.I.L.D. Community School) meets criteria consideration G as a rare surviving historic resource that represents the history of B.U.I.L.D., an influential organization that succeeded in fighting discrimination in employment, labor, job training, education, and criminal justice in Buffalo. B.U.I.L.D. existed only between 1966 and 1983, a period that included the most important and volatile years of the Civil Rights Movement and years of great turmoil in Buffalo. B.U.I.L.D. was a powerful advocate for Civil Rights for Buffalo’s Black citizens, and it played a crucial role in the mid-twentieth century Civil Rights struggle in the city; however, there are few surviving resources to represent its efforts. Among B.U.I.L.D.’s most important and successful programs was its educational component. The two B.U.I.L.D. Academies, Buffalo Public School #32 (PS32) and Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92), are exceptionally rare and significant examples that reflect B.U.I.L.D.’s ideology and influence on Buffalo’s mid-twentieth century Civil Rights history.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92) (former B.U.I.L.D. Community School) is significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History/African American Civil Rights for its affiliation with the educational program of B.U.I.L.D., an organization that used local strategies to dismantle racial discrimination in many aspects of urban life in Buffalo, Erie County. B.U.I.L.D. (Build Unity, Independence, Liberty, and Dignity) was established in 1966, at a time when nationwide efforts to end racial inequality coincided with an influx of African Americans to Buffalo. As residents continued to experience overwhelming inequality in all sectors of life, a group of the city’s Black community organizers formed B.U.I.L.D., uniting numerous local groups from Buffalo’s east side and drawing on the ideology of Black Power to develop a more assertive response to a wide variety of issues. As such, B.U.I.L.D. demanded rather than simply requested accommodation in such areas as job discrimination, police reform, and housing inequality. Among B.U.I.L.D.’s most important and successful programs was its effort to assist Buffalo’s disenfranchised public-school students by setting up its own school, B.U.I.L.D. Academy, in 1969 with a curriculum, learning methods, and a policy board specifically focused on the needs of Black students. From its establishment, the B.U.I.L.D Academy curriculum emphasized a Black-centric student experience, emphasizing a curriculum that prioritized Black cultures, experiences, and histories, established successful mechanisms for regular parent participation, and encouraged racial uplift through education. B.U.I.L.D. also pioneered many important educational features that were later incorporated into Buffalo’s magnet schools. B.U.I.L.D Academy was exceptionally significant in combatting the effects of segregation and substandard education for a generation of Buffalo’s Black students. B.U.I.L.D. Academy was originally located in a former public-school building at 342 Clinton Street but moved into the nominated school building in 1977. The period of significance begins with B.U.I.L.D.’s occupation of the building in 1977 and ends with the dissolution of the B.U.I.L.D. organization in 1983, when the education program at the school changed.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The building at 340 Fougeron Street was initially designed and constructed for the Genesee-Humboldt Junior High School in 1961. In 1977, B.U.I.L.D. Academy, the product of an educational system pioneered by the B.U.I.L.D. organization that emphasized a black-centric student experience, moved into the building from its original location at 342 Clinton Street. B.U.I.L.D. B.U.I.L.D. Academy (also known as PS 92) operated until 1977. The building is significant for its affiliation with the B.U.I.L.D. organization, a large Black Power influenced organization that addressed many issues facing Buffalo’s Black East Side residents during the 1960s and 1970s. B.U.I.L.D. Academy was perhaps the most successful initiative established by the B.U.I.L.D organization, creating a lasting impact on the history of civil rights, racial uplift, and educational practices in Buffalo during the late twentieth century.
Segregated Education in Buffalo and the B.U.I.L.D. organization

The B.U.I.L.D. Unity, Independence, Liberty, and Dignity (B.U.I.L.D.) organization was a Black community group organized in Buffalo in 1966, with an office at 588 Jefferson Avenue. Initially founded with the assistance of Saul Alinsky’s IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation), B.U.I.L.D. became a self-sufficient and independently run organization one year later. Affiliated with over 150 groups on Buffalo’s East Side, B.U.I.L.D. served as an umbrella organization that united and mobilized disparate, smaller volunteer groups and block clubs.

At its original establishment, B.U.I.L.D. had an exclusively Black and exclusively local membership. This was foundational to the organization’s mission to embrace national Black Power ideology and apply it specifically to Buffalo-based issues. B.U.I.L.D. was created strictly for Black Buffalonians, based on the assertion that an exclusively local approach was necessary to fix the immediate needs of the community. B.U.I.L.D. did not accept white members because their Black members “did not want a White outside organization which must answer to the White power structure to lead them.” B.U.I.L.D. viewed the Buffalo NAACP and Buffalo Urban League as inefficient or outdated because they collaborated with white institutions and accepted integrated membership. Embracing newer Black Power ideology than those older organizations, B.U.I.L.D. drew a thicker line in the sand for its membership. Class also played a role, although membership was not exclusively restricted based on class. While some of B.U.I.L.D.’s leaders were middle class, the membership and platforms were clearly “structured to represent and be represented by the poorest and least privileged African Americans from the city.”

Over its nearly twenty-year existence, B.U.I.L.D. focused on a variety of issues, including education, employment, job training, labor discrimination, condemned and vacant buildings, parks, policing, and racial uplift. Education was one of its areas of emphasis, where it initiated substantial changes to the existing system and impacted hundreds of students and families. The foundation and operation of B.U.I.L.D. Academy was one of its most successful initiatives, yet it was only one of dozens of substantial actions taken by B.U.I.L.D. Throughout all of B.U.I.L.D.’s efforts, the organization placed a central emphasis on community control and input to achieve positive change for Black communities on Buffalo’s East Side.

When B.U.I.L.D. was established in 1966, Buffalo’s Public School system was in dire need of reform. Compared to other northern cities, Buffalo was falling far behind in terms of desegregating its schools after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. Black students were substantially underserved by the public school system, with dramatically lower test scores and reading capabilities than white students. This resulted in lower rates of completion, reduced ability to obtain employment, and increased rates of poverty

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4 Corrallo, 101.
among Buffalo’s Black East Side residents. In the 1950s, the schools on the East Side were known to be crowded full of people of color, with few white students, and a smaller number of staff with greater turnover. School supplies, desks, and other equipment were in disrepair, and funding was more difficult to come by than in the white student dominated schools elsewhere in the city. Black students had a substantially lower chance of completing high school than white students, leading to poorer test rates and, subsequently, lower paying jobs and unemployment.

During the early 1960s, the Board of Education was composed of some members who were notoriously resistant to forced busing of public-school children. Busing, or race-integration busing, was the practice of assigning and transporting students to schools within or outside their local districts in an effort to diversify the racial composition of schools. In 1962, Alfreda Slominski was elected to the board for a five-year term on an anti-busing platform. In 1964, a biracial group named Citizens Council on Human Rights (CCHR) petitioned State Education Commissioner James Allen to address the issue of segregation in the Buffalo Public Schools. This action led Allen to order the desegregation of the schools, an order that was ignored by the Board of Education at the time.5

In 1966, Slominski spoke out against busing white students into Black neighborhoods. Slominski even urged a boycott of the schools in opposition to busing and led a picket line demonstration of these values. Even with three Black councilmen elected along with Mayor Sedita for his second term in office, these figures were unable to counteract the voice and press given to white anti-busing members of the Board of Education like Slominski.6 Slominski was elected to the Common Council on an anti-busing platform, leading the fight against any effort to bus white students into Black neighborhood schools. Using the term ‘integration’ as a code word for busing Black students into white schools, campaigns like Slominski’s also implicitly reinforced a narrative of Black inferiority.7

In 1967, Buffalo was identified as the fourth most segregated school system in the North by the US Civil Rights commission. It was not until that year that the Board of Education complied to implement a comprehensive plan for school integration. The Quality Integrated Education (QIE) program was launched in 1967.8 In its first iteration, the QIE program was inadequate in its desegregation policies and enforcement. It reflected the Board of Education’s resistance to busing white students into Black areas and focused primarily on the reverse. It also allowed white students to go to schools outside of their attendance zone when their home school was predominantly Black for spurious reasons, including ‘fear of Black children’.9 It is no surprise, then, that the

QIE program was ineffective at achieving a true desegregation of Buffalo’s public schools during the late 1960s.

B.U.I.L.D. began the radical process of setting up its own school, rather than trying to fix the system as it existed. B.U.I.L.D. decided to start its own B.U.I.L.D. Academy with a new curriculum, learning methods, policy board for an entirely Black student population. They based these models on the results of their research, published in Black Paper Number One.

_B.U.I.L.D. ’s Black Paper Number One_

William Gaiter, president of B.U.I.L.D., had denounced the slow pace of school desegregation in Buffalo in 1966. Following this, B.U.I.L.D. began a study of the Buffalo Public Schools, issuing the results the next year in a report titled “Black Paper Number One.” This document, part report and part manifesto, outlined many injustices embedded in the Buffalo Public School system and called for a series of changes to the very core of the way that Black students were educated in schools. Ultimately, it was this paper that catalyzed B.U.I.L.D. Academy, as it was with these findings that B.U.I.L.D. officials decided they wanted to open their own school. This was unheard of at the time in Buffalo, but it was in keeping with the alternative school movement that was in vogue at the time around the country.10

Between January and April 1967, B.U.I.L.D.’s Education Committee, led by Miriam Beale, visited thirty-five Buffalo Public Schools to conduct a study of their approach to Black students and parents. During these systematic visits, B.U.I.L.D. identified problems with faculty, administration, equipment, supplies, and curriculum content. The effects and results of school segregation were at the core of each of these problems. In Black schools, less than one-third of the teachers were Black. In the three white-dominated schools visited, there were two Black teachers and ninety-eight white teachers. There was only one Black administrator in the thirty-five schools visited. In the Black schools, students were exposed to substitute teachers for significantly longer, and the faculty turnover was extremely high.11

B.U.I.L.D. produced its report on this study in “Black Paper Number One,” providing tangible quantitative and qualitative evidence as well as a clear approach rooted in the Black Power movement. Even on the introductory page, this ideology is woven into the text. The report states it was written under the leadership of “B.U.I.L.D.’s Soul Sister #1, Mrs. Miriam Beale.”12 Alfonso suggests that the use of the term ‘Soul Sister’ by B.U.I.L.D. was an example of Black Power ideology in practice. “When Black Buffalonians used terms like ‘soul sister’ to refer to each other, they not only subscribed to Black Power ideology within the United States but affirmed their

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connection to the larger Black world, the global African diaspora.” The inclusion of terms like ‘soul sister’ displayed B.U.I.L.D.’s embrace of this ideology.

“Black Paper Number One” was specifically, unabashedly written to represent B.U.I.L.D.’s exclusively Black membership base. The paper states:

This is a Black paper. Historically, American officials have issued white papers when they want to justify an action, cover it with official whitewash. This paper does not cover up anything- it pulls the covers off and shows the Negro schools for what they are…This paper is the product of Black people, who in Buffalo, through B.U.I.L.D., are declaring that we will no longer tolerate this abomination of inequality imposed on us because of the color of our skin. We will no longer tolerate the murder of our children.

This strong language conveys the severity of the school segregation issue for B.U.I.L.D., its Education Committee, and its members. Viewing the failure of the education system as no less than the subsequent ‘murder’ of its children, the paper continues to support this premise. Acknowledging that Black children in Buffalo are at least two to five years behind their white peers in reading, they outline the eventual consequences of this fact. The paper states, “they are doomed to the worst jobs, which in turn are rapidly disappearing in a changing job market. Therefore, what the schools are really doing is dooming generations of children to unemployment, impossibly low income, family disintegration, and therefore desperation and the death of human creativity and spirit. That adds up to mass murder.” Linking education to overall success later in life, B.U.I.L.D. condemned the Buffalo Public Schools for their failure to properly prepare Black students to become effective, healthy contributors to society.

The report concluded that two major problems in the school system were the lack of parental involvement and the curriculum itself. It stated, “Schools must be seen as COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, without walls of alienation cutting off the community. Parents must be heavily involved in the basic decision-making processes of the schools.” Regarding the curriculum, and the way testing relates to it, B.U.I.L.D. suggested, “Dump the track system. Replace it with a greatly expanded program of compensatory education, with heavy emphasis on non-graded sections where students can work in small sections at their own pace. Add tutorial programs and challenging field trips and materials that use genuine community issues and NEGRO history. Use testing to diagnose students rather than classify them.” Both of these suggestions became major aspects of the educational system at B.U.I.L.D. Academy two years later.

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16 Black Paper Number 1, April 1967.
17 Black paper Number 1, April 1967.
A series of court-mandated changes were slowly made to Buffalo’s public school system in relation to an extensive lawsuit in the 1970s and early 1980s, directly impacting B.U.I.L.D. Academy. In 1972, the Buffalo NAACP, the Citizens’ Council on Human Relations (CCHR), and multiple Black and white parents in Buffalo joined together to file suit against the city and state for violations of the constitutional right of Black children to equal, thus, not segregated, education. Out of seventy-seven elementary schools, fifty-five were segregated, as in, they were over 80 percent minority or majority. B.U.I.L.D. agreed with the NAACP and CCHR’s premise and the foundation of the 1972 lawsuit; but, ultimately the lawsuit did not serve B.U.I.L.D.’s goals. Having given up on integration, B.U.I.L.D leaders hoped that these organizations would lose the suit so that B.U.I.L.D. Academy would not be forced to accept white students. An investigation was conducted over the next few years until a decision was reached by the Western District of New York.

In 1976, Judge John Curtin of the Western District of New York held that the city of Buffalo had created and maintained segregated schools in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution and ordered the desegregation of the school system. Judge Curtin found that whatever natural integration appeared to be developing within the school system, the board acted in ways to hamper that effect. The court ordered that full desegregation must occur by the fall of 1980. Rather than leave the Board of Education to its own, historically flawed tactics, the judge helped to install a multi-phase plan for desegregation with the board. Meeting with the Buffalo Public School System once a week for the next eight years, Judge Curtin advised the board along some similar lines as the B.U.I.L.D. Academy approach, although he did not directly reference it. Parent and community involvement was essential, Curtin advised, at every level of the student's education and administration in order to effectively desegregate.

Court-mandated desegregation in Buffalo schools occurred in three main phases. The first occurred in 1976, which included redrawing attendance zones, closing ten schools (five were majority black and five were majority white), and opening two magnet schools (PS 6 and City Honors School). The second phase continued in this vein, as Judge Curtin announced the creation of eight more magnet schools, including B.U.I.L.D. Academy. In 1979, the QIE program was scaled down, four new magnet schools were created, and ten schools were closed. In 1980, the third phase included opening six early childhood centers (providing preschool through second grade) at inner city sites. They each provided all day services for pre-k and kindergarten classes, as B.U.I.L.D. had already done for years. By that time, one out of every three Buffalo Public Schools was a magnet school, and the multiphase program was believed to be successful. The school district’s success in desegregation was credited to “the result of the collaboration and input of parents and teachers in the design of

18 Trent, 124.
19 Corrallo, 278.
21 Trent, 124.
It was not until 1981 that forced bussing began in the Buffalo Public School system. White students were sent to schools in Black neighborhoods, rather than solely the other way around. This, combined with Judge Curtin’s assistance and the changes made to the QIE program, began to desegregate the schools’ student populations. In 1988, only four schools out of seventy-seven still had more than 65 percent minority students. By that year, Buffalo ranked first out of reading and math test scores among the five largest cities in New York State. Twenty years prior in 1968, Buffalo had been the lowest of the five. While clear progress had been made, B.U.I.L.D., had done extensive research before it created a new school that addressed segregation in far more than just the student population and revealed issues at the root of the curriculum itself.


After releasing “Black Paper Number One,” B.U.I.L.D. began to put into motion a plan to open its own school. B.U.I.L.D. began applying for the necessary permits, looking for a location, and seeking faculty and assistants. The 1969 B.U.I.L.D. annual report identified this goal and revealed the steps already taken: “After extensive study by B.U.I.L.D.S [sic] Education Committee, it became very clear that if education was to become relevant and meaningful to core area children, steps would have to be taken to involve the community and the experiences of the children into the curriculum and philosophy of the schools. With this thought in mind, a plan was devised placing the major emphasis on parental and community decision making.”24 Parents and community activists were involved in the initial planning stages as well. Frustrated with the quality of education provided to their children, they supported B.U.I.L.D. in planning for their own school as the organization negotiated a deal with the Board of Education for money and control.

Although the plans for B.U.I.L.D. Academy were already well underway, a series of events in 1968 provided the necessary catalyst to finally bring the new school to fruition. This occurred at PS 48, which “Black Paper Number One” had identified as a failed school. B.U.I.L.D. identified the principal as a particular problem to the school, suggesting that leadership was insensitive to the needs of a school, disconnected from Black children, and inaccessible to parents. The organization started a campaign to remove the principal, passing out pamphlets, contacting parents, and discussing the situation with faculty and staff. While the campaign was ultimately unsuccessful, it raised significant awareness both within the school’s administration and in the community. A few weeks later, a Black third-grade teacher was transferred out of PS 48 with little notice. The teacher had been a supporter of B.U.I.L.D.’s campaign, so the community viewed this as retribution. A boycott ensued, and most students stopped attending third grade.25

B.U.I.L.D.’s response eventually led to the initial infrastructure for B.U.I.L.D. Academy. In support of the boycott, B.U.I.L.D. set up an alternative learning system with two certified teachers in the basement of St Andrew’s Methodist Church for those students. At the same time, the two-year negotiation process to open a new school had just finished. The PS 48 boycott had coincidentally occurred at just the right time. With recent B.U.I.L.D. approval, the St. Andrew’s group was identified as the pilot program for the new school, moved to PS 6, and taught by elementary supervisor Muriel Green in the spring. This effectively laid the groundwork for B.U.I.L.D. Academy, which officially opened the next fall.

Clinton Street School History

B.U.I.L.D. Academy opened in fall 1969 at 342 Clinton Street in Buffalo’s Bennett Park neighborhood. Formerly known as School 32, then later as Bennett Park Montessori, this building served as B.U.I.L.D. Academy from 1969 until 1975. Built in 1913, the school opened as B.U.I.L.D. Academy to 396 students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade in 1969. The school building’s previous classrooms, corridors, and gathering spaces were easily converted from PS 32 to B.U.I.L.D.’s purposes. There was a waiting list for enrollment by the second year, and the school expanded to 500 students and added the sixth grade.

Upon establishing B.U.I.L.D. Academy, the organization defined its objectives at a press conference as follows: “To fight for real quality education for Black students; to secure strong effective community participation in educational decision making; to develop high-quality education for ghetto schools; to develop more creative teachers…We will not be a party to another glorified experiment.” Even the language adopted for the school administration reflected a new approach. B.U.I.L.D. Academy was led by a chief officer, instead of principal, to reflect that leader’s different position in relation to the community as the source of authority. The chief officer was named to reflect that they had come through a process where the community had been involved in the selection process. The position, as Miriam Beale described, “had expectations of being recognized by and working within the community in that school.” The term reflected community involvement in that hiring decision, rather than the Board of Education’s typical appointment to principal. As Beale stated, “For the first time we had an institution that was of the people, by the people, and our intention was to be for the people.”

At its first permanent location on Clinton Street, B.U.I.L.D. Academy was successful in implementing many of the pioneering educational models that it soon became known for: a black-centric curriculum, a responsive learning environment, and a high degree of parent participation. By 1970, it was the first public school in the city to provide poor children with free breakfast and the first with full-day kindergarten. It was not for several more years that Buffalo public schools would uniformly offer these services. In many ways, the B.U.I.L.D.

Academy and its students thrived at the Clinton Street school, paving the way for many more years of success when the school moved to a new location at 340 Fougeron Street in 1975.

**Fougeron Street School History**

In 1977, B.U.I.L.D. Academy was officially designated as a magnet school and was accordingly moved to 340 Fougeron Street in order to accommodate a new integrated student population. At that time, the school added the seventh and eighth grade. As a magnet school, this more formal connection with the system led to changes in the administration, student population, curriculum, and learning environment. Despite changes and the demise of the B.U.I.L.D. organization in 1983, the school continues to function according to some of its original principles to this day.

The school building had been constructed in 1961 for the Genesee-Humboldt Junior High school (PS 91). Completed at a cost of $3.6 million, the school was dedicated and officially opened in December 1961. The building’s modern design, with horizontal emphasis, aluminum windows, and multiple exits for fire safety, also included a swimming pool. This school was the first junior high school in Buffalo, and it was intended to serve as the pilot program for all of the city’s future junior high schools. However, the court mandated that junior high schools were phased out by 1979, and all schools became either pre-kindergarten through eighth grade or high school, serving ninth through twelfth grade. As a result, the Genesee-Humboldt Junior High School was closed by 1977.

B.U.I.L.D. Academy’s move into the building at 340 Fougeron Street in late 1977 was catalyzed by its new designation as a magnet school. The new location at 340 Fougeron provided newer, larger facilities for B.U.I.L.D. Academy, given by the Buffalo Public Schools system with the implication that it would accommodate a larger population that accommodated white students as well.

Magnet schools, now common in the Buffalo Public Schools system, were established to address school desegregation in Buffalo the 1970s and 1980s. As part of a multi-phase court-mandated school desegregation plan, ten magnet schools were announced between 1976-1977. Each of these new magnet schools was located in a segregated black neighborhood. The first two magnet schools were the Academic Challenge Center (previously PS 6) and City Honors School, followed by eight more schools in 1977, including B.U.I.L.D. Academy. Even before the court order, B.U.I.L.D. had essentially already functioned as a magnet school since its original establishment. As one newspaper later reflected, “Before magnet schools, before charter schools, B.U.I.L.D. Academy was established in 1969 in a manner that bears a striking resemblance to what are now

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known as [magnet] schools.”31 It was essentially the city’s first magnet school, before magnet schools were officially recognized and designated as a desegregation tactic.32

While this magnet school designation recognized the success of B.U.I.L.D Academy’s experimental school system, it brought changes to the school as well. As a magnet school, B.U.I.L.D. could more reliably access funding from the public school system and the state. However, it was also subject to the court-mandated desegregation plan, which required B.U.I.L.D. to attract and accept more white students. While white students had always technically been welcome at B.U.I.L.D. Academy, the Black-centric educational programs did not attract many white students. The new designation as a magnet school suddenly required the school’s administration and teachers to recruit white students from neighborhoods across the city, including, as Principal Mayo put it, “places we did not feel welcome.”33 Another B.U.I.L.D. leader, Charley Fisher III, stated, “I applauded the move but was disappointed that integration was forced upon the school.”34 Regardless, within a year, B.U.I.L.D. Academy was able to racially integrate its prekindergarten class, achieving a 50/50 balance of black and white students. Other grades were still composed of mostly Black students, but it satisfied the mandate in the initial years as outreach continued. The magnet designation brought changes to the student population and funding structure, but B.U.I.L.D. Academy persisted in bringing along many of its pioneering educational programs from the previous location on Clinton Street.

There are at least four main components at the core of a B.U.I.L.D. Academy education as it existed at Fougeron Street: a curriculum that includes Black history and racial uplift, a responsive environment model, an emphasis on parental involvement, and the Academy Policy Board.35 Underlying all of these is the Black Power-informed approach to education that embraces a Black-centric education for an exclusively Black student population. Rather than trying to fit Black students into a white system, B.U.I.L.D. Academy sought to create a new educational environment based on Black experiences instead. To achieve this, B.U.I.L.D. actively created new learning environments, curriculum content, community centric programs, and administrative paths. Each of these aspects will be discussed in the following subsections.

Curriculum

B.U.I.L.D. Academy made a conscious effort to teach Black history to its students, in direct contrast to the primarily white-centric material taught in Buffalo’s Public Schools. B.U.I.L.D. stated, “There are no electives in the Buffalo System for the study of Negro history. Part of the alienation of the school from the community is because the school is terribly ignorant of the life and history of the community. One of the great quests of

32 Magnet schools differ from charter schools slightly, though the terms are often used interchangeably. Charter schools did not substantially appear in Buffalo until the 1990s. While they function much like magnet schools, they receive less funding from the public school system and instead fund their own facilities. Charter schools also have more flexibility with curriculum focus as well.
35 Siskar identifies three of these, the author added the curriculum as a key component as well.
students today is for identity, a place in history. That is one of the most basic education requirements.  

Embracing history as a means of fostering identity and pride, B.U.I.L.D. created a curriculum that included several aspects of Black history and Black experiences to counterbalance the white history taught in the public schools. History was viewed as an important, essential way to “give students an understanding of how their culture had positively contributed to the world in its present state.” This emphasis on Black history was one of Black Power’s most important tenets, the idea that Black people needed to define their own history and values.

Student testimonies reveal the incredible impact of this curricular approach. When questioned about what made the school so unique at the time, former student Pam Roach recalled, “Black history. We knew who we were, we knew we were valued as people, and there was an expectation that we were gonna make a contribution to society in some way shape or form, like those who came before us. So we carried that responsibility everywhere.” Learning Black history not only grounded students in a sense of Black identity and pride, but it also aimed to give them a sense of responsibility. In understanding those who came before, students were also encouraged to contribute to society as they grew. Black history at B.U.I.L.D. Academy was not just about connecting students with the past, but with their future as well.

Another former student, Kim Keenan, appreciated the school’s focus on not just Black history, but the Black experience. Remembering fondly the “new school with a decidedly Black focus,” Keenan stated,

Imagine a school with the first Black principal, numerous Black teachers, and a decidedly Afro-American flair (I have the afro-puff pictures to prove it). We studied Black history, we used Ebony magazine to explore creative writing, and we celebrated with Black Santas and Black Easter Bunnies. For Christmas, we received Temptations albums. My favorite recollection was studying Bach, Brahms, and Stevie Wonder in music class, with James Brown and the Jackson 5 serving as our incentives to listen and appreciate all music. At B.U.I.L.D. Academy, I learned to be proud of my history, proud of my people, and proud of myself. Unfortunately, the B.U.I.L.D. Academy experience ended at sixth grade, but the roots of my love for all culture, especially my culture, were planted by these pioneers who taught me that brilliance comes in all colors.

This type of educational experience was not available to so many Black children in the Buffalo Public School system at this time. B.U.I.L.D. offered an alternative approach to education and development, designed specifically to connect Black students with many aspects of their world. Learning about popular music by Black

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37 Siskar, 33.
39 Griffin, 59.
artists alongside Bach and Brahms not only provided a well-rounded education, but also implied that all of these artists are worthy of study at the same level. B.U.I.L.D. instilled a sense of worth and joyful celebration of Black cultures into its students at a young age, invaluable roots to plant in a new generation of Buffalo’s citizens.

**Responsive Environment Model**

B.U.I.L.D. Academy utilized a responsive environment model of education, which aimed to foster a learning model that was more conducive to learning for Black children. This included a combination of direct instruction and student-directed learning. The curriculum included direct instruction for subjects like history, math, and science, but also included these same subjects in student-directed learning approaches. As Siskar noted, “The curriculum was organized in a way that recognized that children learned at different rates and learned best when actively engaged in the learning process. Students were given time to choose activities that interested them, and each student was expected to explore his or her interests in a personal and non-structured way.”

The responsive environment model approached student learning as a multifaceted process, one where students could engage with different types of materials with supervision by teachers. They could discover and solve problems in a range of subject matter at the pace and method that suited them best. A typical classroom at B.U.I.L.D. Academy contained a book center, a writing resource center, a viewing center, a listening center, an art center, a game center, a science center, and a math center. Physical evidence of these centers does not remain in any obvious way in the building today, as they typically were created by a grouping of moveable chairs, books, toys, and other objects. Students could choose or be assigned to a center where they would personally explore discovered problems with minimal direction from teachers. This was intended to provide more opportunity for a student’s individual learning styles to be embraced and, given the self-directed element, to find greater relevance in the work they produced.

Former student Willie A. Price fondly remembered the advantages of this learning model, which he experienced from 1970 to 1974. Price stated, “the way the teachers taught, it wasn’t just teaching from a curriculum, it was like you experiencing a lot of the things that they taught…We had a teacher’s aid from Guyana, so we would taste food and see clothes and different videos and different things of that country. It really enlightened us to things and to people and to cultures that we would’ve never been aware of if we were at another school.”

Through a combination of direct instruction and student-directed exploration, B.U.I.L.D. Academy sought ways to bring the world into the classroom and encourage personal engagement with the material.

B.U.I.L.D. also trained the teachers in this learning model, emphasizing team building between teachers and community aides. Both teachers and aides were in the classrooms on a daily basis. This helped to encourage

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41 Siskar, 33.
42 Siskar, 33.
43 Griffin, 59.
different types of student engagement with adults and the material itself. B.U.I.L.D. founders embraced the concept of team building, a new approach to teaching that was considered both innovative and systematic. In the school’s first year, there were fourteen teachers and twenty-two community aides from a variety of backgrounds. Before beginning, they participated in a preservice training program that brought them together in the classroom.\textsuperscript{44} The co-teaching between teachers and aides decentralized the traditional single-teacher authority model and also gave a more interactive approach to student learning. Teacher's aides were typically community members, teachers in training, or often parents, and this provided a form of job training as well as ensuring community involvement at B.U.I.L.D. Academy.

\textbf{Parent Participation}

B.U.I.L.D. Academy placed a great emphasis on parent participation and community involvement. As “Black Paper Number One” asserted, B.U.I.L.D. strongly believed “schools must be seen as community schools.” The goal was not to have the school be a completely separate, alienated space but to have it be an extension of the community itself. To achieve this, B.U.I.L.D. asserted that parents were essential to the decision-making process at every step of their child’s education.

B.U.I.L.D. created a number of ways in which parent participation and community involvement could be encouraged, measured, and confirmed. One full-time staff person has the designation of parent organizer, whose job is to pursue and organize parent volunteers and teacher’s aides for the school. Additionally, parents were asked to sign a contract that said they would be actively involved in their children’s education. They were encouraged, if not also required, to be involved in the day-to-day classroom and out-of-school activities to improve education at school and at home. A parental participation study conducted at B.U.I.L.D. Academy in 1971 indicated that these efforts were successful: of 126 parents contacted, 90 had visited the school more than four times that year and only twelve had not yet met with the chief officer.\textsuperscript{45} This level of parental engagement was far above the typical level of parental participation in Buffalo’s Public Schools.

Parents also participated as teacher’s aides at B.U.I.L.D. Academy. Placing parents in this role had a number of benefits; they were actively involved in their children’s education, they were actively involved with B.U.I.L.D. Academy, they came to know the teachers well, and it provided professional opportunities. As scholar Dillaway has suggested, involving parents on a paraprofessional tier made them invested in the success of B.U.I.L.D. Academy.\textsuperscript{46} To prepare them for the role, Buffalo State College offered courses on site for them. This provided a way for Black parents to begin careers in the educational system through the Career Opportunity program. If inclined, they could eventually complete a degree as a teacher’s aide as well, enabling them to seek gainful employment in the future.\textsuperscript{47} This related directly to B.U.I.L.D.’s platform addressing unemployment, channeled through B.U.I.L.D. Academy, while also improving student education. This multifaceted approach to education

\textsuperscript{44} Dillaway, 150.
\textsuperscript{45} B.U.I.L.D. Papers, File 179, Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.
\textsuperscript{46} Dillaway, 150.
\textsuperscript{47} B.U.I.L.D. Papers, File 179, Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.
and employment was a particular success of B.U.I.L.D. and B.U.I.L.D. Academy, as they continually sought ways to improve the quality of life for Black residents of Buffalo’s East Side at multiple levels of engagement.

**Academy Policy Board**

To achieve these educational goals and maintain control of this alternative learning environment, B.U.I.L.D. needed to develop its own policy board. Its Academy Policy Board was a local governing board responsible for school decisions, which was crucial to give parents and community members a voice in the school. The Academy Policy Board was responsible for the decisions for the school, but there was no legal restructuring of the district to give B.U.I.L.D. full autonomy. Yet, it still had more autonomy than other schools in the system.

The Academy Policy Board went through many iterations, but consistently included members from three major branches of organizations. Originally it had five members from the Board of Education, five from Buffalo State College, and five from B.U.I.L.D. itself. Each entity provided expertise in its given area. Buffalo State College provided technical assistance, gave undergraduate courses for personnel, supplied guidance in testing, and assisted with grant applications. The Board of Education reviewed legal decisions, budget requests, and ensured that legal regulations were followed. B.U.I.L.D., in addition to establishing and running the school, organized citizen participation, involved parents in daily classrooms, and organized committees to assist in various academy functions. These branches continued to contribute and balance each other on the Academy Policy Board throughout the school’s tenure, but its composition changed over time.

In 1971, B.U.I.L.D. pushed for a realignment that included more representatives from the community and fewer from the two educational organizations. The Academy Policy Board was redesigned to emphasize this, with twelve B.U.I.L.D. community members, three from the Board of Education, and three from Buffalo State College. In subsequent years, the board eliminated Buffalo State College, giving over more spots to B.U.I.L.D. Throughout this time, the chief officer of the academy had to report to the Academy Policy Board, much like the superintendent did to the Board of Education.

The Academy Policy Board enabled a community-controlled decision-making process for B.U.I.L.D. Academy, which was often defined as a community-controlled school. This approach was remarkably different from the Board of Education’s regulation of the Buffalo Public Schools, necessarily so, given B.U.I.L.D. Academy’s unique learning environment and curriculum. Enabling the application of alternative methods and administrative approaches, the Academy Policy Board was essential to B.U.I.L.D. Academy’s ability to thrive.

The Academy Policy Board was most influential between 1969 and 1977, in the first six years of B.U.I.L.D. Academy’s existence. In 1977, when the school was designated as a magnet, changes were made to the board as the result of a policy shift in response to broader changes occurring in Buffalo’s educational system. At that time, B.U.I.L.D. Academy was subsumed into the Buffalo school system, as an official magnet school. While the Academy Policy Board remained in place, “the move toward a more formal connection with the Buffalo

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48 Siskar, 30.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  
Erie County, NY

Public Schools and the loss of identity to the community seemed to take some of the wind out of the sails of the policy board.\(^49\) The board remained in connection with B.U.I.L.D. Academy, but it was adopted into the broader structure of the Buffalo Public School system at that time. In so doing, its influence was weakened, and citywide regulations began to impact B.U.I.L.D. Academy more by the 1980s.

In 1983, the B.U.I.L.D. organization was dissolved. B.U.I.L.D. Academy was no longer directly affiliated with the organization after it ended in 1983, thus ending the period of significance. Other changes were occurring in the broader context of public school education at that time as well. In 1983, the third phase of Judge Curtin’s court-mandated segregation plan was announced as complete (Phase IIIx). In that announcement, the Federal Court of Appeals approved what it described as “a successful and creative plan built around school choice and strong magnet schools, much different from many of the mandatory student transfer plans of the 1970s.”\(^50\) On a broader level, U.S. President Reagan’s administration released the *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983, wherein essentially the focus on desegregation ended and the era of high stakes testing began. These broader shifts, coupled with the dissolution of the B.U.I.L.D. organization, end the period of significance for the building in 1983.

**After B.U.I.L.D.**

The lifespan of B.U.I.L.D. stretched from 1966 to 1983, during which time it made innumerable accomplishments with substantial impact on Buffalo’s East Side Black residents. While the organization was closed and “effectively dead” by 1983, its influence has continued to endure.\(^51\) B.U.I.L.D. Academy was one of the most impactful entities created by the organization, and B.U.I.L.D.’s ability to envision and sustain this kind of education is remarkable and was unprecedented for its time.

In the 1990s, success began to go downhill, when court supervision ended and Buffalo experienced severe fiscal problems. Reagan administration initiatives shifted the emphasis and funding away from desegregation and towards high stakes standardized testing. The magnet schools were scaled back, alienating middle-class families once again and facing segregation issues.\(^52\) Charter schools emerged in the 1990s as well, partially as an attempt to revive the success the magnet schools had in the 1980s. The terms for magnet and charter schools are often used interchangeably, but they do differ slightly in their funding, testing, and curriculum requirements. Both magnets and charters are affiliated with the Buffalo Public School system; charters are more financially independent and therefore have more flexibility in terms of curriculum. Today, Buffalo has several charter schools as well as magnet schools. B.U.I.L.D. Academy is still officially designated as a magnet school.

As the B.U.I.L.D. organization faded away and then closed in 1983, the academy became indistinguishable from other magnet schools. It continued to succeed, however, in its newer forms. In 1985, Mrs. Johnnie Mayo,  

\(^{49}\) Siskar, 33-34.  
\(^{50}\) Gary Olrfield, Jennifer Ayscue, and Nataska Amlani, “Better Choices for Buffalo’s Students,” produced by the Civil Rights Project: A Report to Buffalo Public Schools (2015).  
\(^{51}\) Corrallo, 289.  
\(^{52}\) “Racial Isolation in Public Schools” New York Times, January 9, 2015
B.U.I.L.D. pioneered a new type of education in Buffalo to better serve its Black students and East Side residents. B.U.I.L.D.’s work at the academy “laid the groundwork for the NAACP’s successful litigation on portable classrooms that led to school integration. It also left in its wake a model for Buffalo’s nationally renowned magnet school system with its experimental B.U.I.L.D. academy.”55 B.U.I.L.D. Academy demonstrated that a decentralized school system could be successful. Those who subsequently designed the desegregation plan in the late 1970s and early 1980s were, as Siskar has suggested, “either unable or unwilling to accept a radically different model.”56 Regardless, the ambition of B.U.I.L.D. Academy created a ripple effect in Buffalo’s educational system and community development. Mrs. Mayo described teaching fourth grade in the first year of B.U.I.L.D. Academy, before being promoted to chief officer: "We were young, and we were idealistic. We felt we really were going to change the world."57 Indeed, in many ways, B.U.I.L.D. Academy did. It left a lasting impact on its students, its community, and the history of the civil rights and Black Power movements in Buffalo for generations to come.

54 Griffin, 50.
55 Dillaway, 151.
56 Siskar, 34.
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Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


*Buffalo Civil Rights Era: Theresa J. White Papers*. Monroe Fordham Regional History Center, Buffalo State, State University of New York.


Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)                      Erie County, NY
Name of Property                      County and State


Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  Erie County, NY
Name of Property                   County and State

____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Name of repository: ____________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ____________________________
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundary corresponds to the parcel boundaries at 165 Barthel Street. This is the same parcel and building that the B.U.I.L.D. Academy occupied during the period of significance. It is also the same parcel that the school building was constructed on in 1961, first occupied as the Genesee-Humboldt Junior High School until B.U.I.L.D. Academy moved into the school in 1977.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title    Annie Schentag, Ph.D. and Kerry Traynor, M.S, M.Arch
organization  Kta preservation specialists
street & number  422 Parker Avenue
city or town  Buffalo
state  NY
zip code  14216
e-mail  aschentag@kta-preservation.com

date  2.21.2022
telephone  716.864.0628

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)                  Erie County, NY
Name of Property                     County and State

• Maps:  A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
    A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

• Continuation Sheets

• Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  
Erie County, NY

Historic Photographs

Exterior of Building in 1961
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property

Interior photograph on dedication day of building, 1961

G. H. Higgins  J. E. Murphy  Dr. Crewson  Dr. Manch
... looking over the homemaking room in new Junior High
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  
Name of Property  

Erie County, NY  
County and State  

New chairs in classroom, 1961  

The tables and chairs in the new junior high school are a far cry from anchored desks and attached seats of not so many years back. Mrs. Albert E. Barth, helping teacher in the new school, inspects the furniture in a homeroom at the new school, which opens this fall.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property: Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
City or Vicinity: Buffalo
County: Erie
State: NY
Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date Photographed: March 16, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
1 of ___.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0001
Looking northwest at center of primary elevation. Original 1961 building to the east, with west addition visible to the west.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0002
Looking northwest at primary elevation, east end.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0003
Looking northwest at southeast corner of building, with south and east elevations visible.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0004
Looking northeast along primary elevation from west end.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0005
Looking south at rear of building.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0006
Looking north inside gymnasium, west addition.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0007
Looking north inside pool on first floor.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0008
Looking north into auditorium towards stage, west addition.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0009
Looking into sunken music room, west addition. Atypical of other classrooms.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0010
Looking into typical corridor in east wing, original building.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0011
Looking into typical classroom in east wing, original building.

Name of Property: PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)  
Name of Property                   County and State

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0012  
Detail of stairwell landing on second floor of east wing.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0013  
Looking into courtyard on first floor, east wing.

NY_Erie County_PS 92 (B.U.I.L.D. Academy)_0014  
Looking into cafeteria. Windows face courtyard.
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property

Erie County, NY
County and State
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property

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County and State
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)
Name of Property  Erie County, NY
County and State
Buffalo Public School #92 (PS 92)                                                                 Erie County, NY
Name of Property                                                                                   County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.