

the actual attendance of these children at school. The expression "the public schools should be equally free to children of all religious persuasions," was omitted, for the reason that there might be children not belonging to any religious persuasion, who ought to be educated. The prohibition that "no book of religious doctrine or belief shall be permitted in any public school," was abandoned, as it excluded the Bible. Township libraries were afterwards changed to district libraries. The old feature of placing the care of the schools in the hands of Town Inspectors or Commissioners was converted into the election of Town Superintendents, and the five district officers became three, the Trustees being merged into one Director.

Immediately after the adoption of the Second Constitution, submitted to the people, so great was the demand for radical changes in the school law that the State Legislature, in 1848, enacted laws which carried out, in a certain form, the provisions of the article in the Constitution on education. At the same session of the Legislature, three Commissioners, Hon. M. Frank, Hon. Charles S. Jordan, and Hon. Charles M. Baker, were appointed to collate and revise the statutes, which are familiarly known as those of 1849. Their labors were divided; and among other portions assigned to Col. Frank, was the law relating to schools. This work was carefully done; but several features relating to public schools were in direct conflict with those adopted the previous session of the Legislature. The report of the Commissioners was accepted, and when the present school law went into operation, May 1, 1849, there were in vogue in the State three sets of school laws—as that of 1839 had not been laid aside in all portions, and time had not been given to supplant that of 1848. The year of 1849 was one of great confusion, as many provisions in all these laws were opposed to each other.

One of the most remarkable events in the history of our State, was the adoption of the free school system by the people, and the readiness with which, in most sections, it was put into operation. The principles involved in this system had been violently and persistently opposed in other States. Col.