

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

New Submission                       Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Philadelphia Public Schools, 1938 - 1980

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Evolution of the School District of Philadelphia 1938-1980  
Social and Political Trends that Impacted Philadelphia's Public Schools, 1938-1980  
Mid and Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philadelphia Public School Architecture and Pedagogy

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official                      Title                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper                      Date of Action

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Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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**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 250 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## **E: Statement of Historic Contexts**

### ***Public Schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1938-1980***

#### ***Introduction***

The history of Philadelphia's school buildings is a key part of the history of education reform in the city. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that history reflects social, political and economic changes that dramatically reshaped Philadelphia and its neighborhoods. The struggles of school administrators, community leaders and architects to address these changes can be read in the buildings themselves, and continue to inform current debates over schools, including their closing and reuse.

This context statement focuses on public schools at the elementary, middle and high school level, built in the city of Philadelphia between 1938 and 1980. During these years the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) engaged in a sustained building program to address dramatic shifts in the city's population. The SDP constructed over 100 schools during this period, after which a continued loss of population within Philadelphia's city limits, and attendant economic problems, led to a pause in school construction.

The intent of this Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) is to facilitate the eligibility evaluation and listing of current or former, mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century Philadelphia public schools in the National Register of Historic Places. Properties will need to be individually nominated, but this MPDF will ease preparation of future nominations.

An effort was undertaken in the 1980s to list 64 Philadelphia schools as part of a Thematic Resources nomination process. This effort was limited to schools built prior to 1938, and discounted many school buildings that had additions built after that year. By adding to our understanding of the city's educational and architectural history, this MPDF examines and provides context for understanding and appreciating the important and often overlooked later school buildings, many of which continue to shape the lives of young Philadelphians, their families and communities.

Recent budget crises have left many Philadelphia school buildings vacant and/or at risk. At the time of this MPDF's preparation 21 schools built between 1938-1980 stand vacant with others being considered for closing. It is anticipated that some of these schools will be sold to non-public entities. Nomination to the National Register may encourage their rehabilitation and reuse. As part of this MPDF project, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) undertook a companion survey of most public schools built in Philadelphia between 1938 and 1980. The survey also revisited schools previously inventoried or listed during the 1980s Thematic Resources nomination effort. The results of this survey are listed in Appendix A.

This MPDF covers elementary, middle and high schools currently or formerly owned by the SDP. Private, religious and trade schools are not addressed in this MPDF, except where their history intersects with the history of the city's public schools. Administration-only buildings, district-wide maintenance facilities and other non-school buildings owned by the SDP are not included in this study, unless they are part of a larger campus. This MPDF does not address the history of kindergarten and pre-school or higher education. A 2007 statewide context for public schools--presented in the *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania, 1682-1969* Multiple Property Documentation Form--can be used to address the eligibility and/or listing of Philadelphia schools built prior to 1938. Chapter IV, "From Depression to District Reorganization, 1930-1969," covers statewide themes that may be especially relevant. The statewide MPDF can be used independently, or to supplement this MPDF as needed. Educational properties that do not meet registration requirements presented

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below or are not covered by this or the statewide MPDF, may still be found to be eligible for National Register listing, and listed independently within an individual context.

While this MPDF will in most cases be used for schools built entirely after 1938, it may also be used for schools that pre-date 1938 and have later additions. Properties acquired by the district and adapted for school use between 1938 and 1980 may also qualify for nomination. Schools that have been closed or are no longer operating as schools, or properties that are no longer owned by the SDP may also qualify, assuming they meet the Registration Requirements in this MPDF, in the statewide MPDF or can otherwise be shown to be eligible for independent reasons not covered by an MPDF context.

The Statement of Historic Contexts below is divided into three chapters. The first covers the evolution of the School District of Philadelphia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, focusing on administrative history between 1938 and 1980. The second chapter examines historical changes that took place in Philadelphia during these years and the major social issues affecting the school district: suburbanization, segregation and the urban crisis. The third chapter reviews the major architectural styles and influences of this period, and explains how schools were designed to complement national or regional experiments in pedagogy, or to meet specific trends or challenges experienced in Philadelphia during this time.

#### *Property Types*

The properties associated with this MPDF are elementary, middle and high schools classified in two types. The first property type identified is a school facility with a single main classroom building. This ***single building, multi-room type*** may include small secondary buildings, structures, objects, sites or landscape features on the property, such as playground elements, equipment storage sheds, etc. Some of these single multi-room buildings will include later classroom wings or additions for specific uses such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, cafeterias and vocational educational training. Classroom wings and specialty areas are considered additions when they were built after the construction of the original school building, but are integrated into the floor plan, and not detached. This type may also include temporary modular classrooms and substantial, detached secondary buildings that were added after the original period of planning and construction.

Multiple detached buildings that are of substantial size, were designed together and sited purposefully, usually on a large parcel, are considered to be of a “campus” type. ***Campus-type*** properties generally have a cohesive, unified layout and style and were usually the work of a single architectural firm. There may be examples of campus plans that were implemented over a period of years, and not all at once. In these cases, the original design may be followed, but involve multiple architects and building firms during the realization of the plan. In some cases, later buildings may not completely reflect the design intent of the original concept and earlier-completed buildings. Such buildings may have been altered based on logistics, or influenced by different styles and the preferences of later contractors or architects. Additionally, schools that pre-date 1938 were sometimes incorporated into campus-type plans designed at a later date. A cohesive layout that considers the placement of multiple buildings and their relation to one another is the most important element in a campus-type plan. Many schools of this type might include older buildings or buildings of various architectural styles.

This MPDF will be primarily used for schools where the main classroom building or buildings were built post-1938. However, some schools constructed *prior* to 1938 may qualify for nomination under this MPDF because of later additions to the original building, or the site’s evolution into a campus type property.

Administration buildings, stadiums, and similar non-classroom school facilities are not covered by this MPDF, unless they are considered to be part of a campus or, more infrequently, a secondary resource on a single-building type.

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### *National Register Criteria*

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be considered significant, must be old enough to be considered historic (generally 50 years old, or less if sufficient time has passed to be able to clearly understand a property's significance) and must retain physical integrity sufficient to convey significance. Philadelphia school properties can be significant for their:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possessing high artistic values, or
- D. Ability to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The most common National Register themes or areas of significance relevant for the schools evaluated or nominated under this MPDF will be Education (Criterion A), Social History (Criterion A), and/or Design/Engineering (Criterion C). Schools may also be evaluated for eligibility or nominated for association with a significant person (Criterion B). In those instances additional context may be required to fully understand the significance of the person and establish association with a specific property. For information related to evaluating or nominating properties for their ability to yield important information (Criterion D) refer to the statewide *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania* MPDF's guidance in Section F, pages 5-8.

Properties younger than 50 years old may be eligible for National Register listing if it is clearly established that the property is significant for association with a person or events associated with Social History, Education, or similar themes, or if there is sufficient understanding of the architectural importance of the property to assess it as significant without further passage of time.

### *General User Guidance*

This MPDF is intended to facilitate the eligibility evaluation and nomination of Philadelphia's later 20<sup>th</sup> century schools for the National Register. It summarizes the history of the city's educational system and sets forth registration requirements for specific property types. To be nominated under this cover documentation, a property must meet the registration requirements detailed below. Properties that do not conform to the trends or patterns examined in this MPDF may still be eligible for listing under the cover of the statewide MPDF, *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania*, or if appropriate, may be nominated independently, with an individual context. Prior to beginning a nomination, request an eligibility evaluation and consult with the PA SHPO to identify and confirm appropriate areas and periods of significance for the specific property.

The historical events and architectural styles that shaped Philadelphia's public school buildings between 1938 and 1980 are discussed in the following pages. Many of these events and trends unfolded over successive decades, and in some cases, continue to inform decisions by the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). While exact dates have been provided for each of the major historic and stylistic themes, these are only guidelines. Buildings constructed before or after these dates may reflect styles or events that preceded their completion, or relate to later periods of significance. Additionally, many of these events and styles overlapped, and while some schools will be characterized by a single style or historic event, others may relate to multiple areas of significance. In order to determine where a specific school fits, it is suggested that preparers review each section presented below.

The principal goal of preparers of National Register nominations for Philadelphia school buildings significant in the areas of Education or Social History (criteria A) should be to articulate how those resources (the school

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properties) reflect important developments in the philosophy, administration, and practice of education in Philadelphia. For those buildings that are nominated for their architectural merit (criteria C), the nomination's author should describe how a school building or campus is an important example of a physical school plan, type, or style, and identify the character-defining features of the style or type. It is possible for a school to be nominated under both criteria. Nominations should also assess a building's physical integrity per the relevant period(s) of significance.

For future nominations, this MPDF should serve as a starting point for more individual treatment of a building. The history of Philadelphia's educational system does not need to be repeated in an individual nomination, but should be referenced where appropriate in explaining the history of the individual property, and its place within the history of Philadelphia's educational system.

An inventory update of Philadelphia's public schools was undertaken in conjunction with this MPDF and is provided in Appendix A. This inventory was based on available SDP data shared with the PA SHPO and is not comprehensive. Schools that do not appear in the inventory may be eligible for listing. The inventory provides a useful tool for assessing trends, providing comparisons, etc. but is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list of schools that are eligible for listing. The eligibility status of some schools may change over time.

To be nominated, an individual property must first be evaluated for eligibility and then a successful nomination must be prepared and submitted for review to the PA SHPO, State Historic Preservation Board, and ultimately the National Park Service's Keeper of the National Register, who makes the decision to list a property in the National Register. To pursue an eligibility evaluation or begin the nomination process, please contact the PA SHPO for guidance.

***Background History: Philadelphia Public Schools, 1818-1938***

A summary of the pre-1938 history of Philadelphia's schools is presented here for reference. Some of the properties nominated under this MPDF may include buildings or other resources that date from this earlier period in Philadelphia's school history.

**Foundation: Pauper Schools to Public Schools, 1776-1867**

Philadelphia's public school system was founded in 1818, when the Pennsylvania General Assembly established the First School District of Pennsylvania in the state's largest city. The new school district originally operated as a type of publicly funded charitable organization, opening purpose-built pauper schools where poor children were educated free of cost. Many middle and upper class children were educated privately, by tutors, at private subscription schools or through religious organizations. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the central Quaker Meeting established a multi-tiered system of Quaker schools in and around Philadelphia. These schools served non-Quakers, including girls and the children of free blacks. But the reach of such privately run schools was limited. In 1787, the Continental Congress had mandated schooling as a means of fostering a united national culture out of the thirteen colonies, whose populations each had very different ethnic and religious compositions. The Pennsylvania state constitutions of 1776 and 1790 provided for pauper education, stipulating, "The Legislature shall, as soon as conveniently may be, provide for the establishment of schools throughout the State, in such a manner that the poor may be taught gratis."<sup>1</sup>

Between 1776-1818 the Commonwealth made use of parochial and private schools, paying the tuition of a limited number of poor children in attendance. The legislature also chartered academies across the state. These private ventures were granted between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and received 500 to 5,000 acres of public land—generally with the stipulation that the schools instruct between 4 and 10 poor children for free. Virtually all of

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of 1790, quoted in J.P. Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania* (New York: Arno, 1969), 259.

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the urban centers in the state, including Philadelphia, developed academies that drew boarding students from surrounding communities. Their student bodies consisted largely of sons of merchants, lawyers, judges and other affluent citizens seeking a classical education in Latin, English and mathematics that prepared them for careers much like those of their fathers.

For the lower rungs of Pennsylvania society, the legislature also chartered such institutions as the German Lutheran and Reformed Charity Schools in Philadelphia (1789). An increasing number of these types of charity schools addressed the dangers of rising urban poverty. Teaching the rudiments of literacy and arithmetic, these schools targeted the children of new immigrants and low-paid workers, attempting to fill an educational vacuum among the working classes, as wage labor increasingly replaced the apprenticeships and indentures that previously trained – and fed, clothed, and often housed – young men and women in their teenage years. In the 1790s, Quakers expanded their century-old efforts to educate the poor through such promotional organizations as the Sunday School Society of Philadelphia and Anne Parrish’s Society for the Free Instruction of Female Children.

The state-run school systems that dominate American education today ultimately grew out of the efforts of these social reformers. From Buffalo to Baltimore, local philanthropic societies organized the first large-scale schools open to the public at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Philadelphia Quakers, led by Thomas Scattergood, were at the forefront of this movement, founding the Society for the Establishment and Support of Charity Schools in 1801 and the Association of Friends for the Instruction of Poor Children (also known as the Adelphi Society) in 1808. The last institution started separate schools for boys and girls and instructed some 3,000 children over the next decade, and its Adelphi School would become the model for the city’s early common school system. Like contemporary schools in New York and Boston, it employed the “monitorial” (or Lancasterian) system of British Quaker Joseph Lancaster, wherein a master teacher trained older pupils, who in turn taught the other students. This allowed for comparative evaluation of the students and educational mobility for those who made the most progress. It also proved a cost-efficient way to provide the non-Quaker poor with basic literacy and moral teaching based on the scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

But the challenges of urban poverty were more than the philanthropic societies could address on their own. In a letter to fellow Quaker, Governor George Wolf, Adelphi School manager, Roberts Vaux, called Philadelphia a “sore on the body politic, causing the problems of illiteracy, crime, poverty and rioting.”<sup>3</sup> Indigent children, Vaux wrote elsewhere, were allowed to “wander about the streets and wharves, becoming adepts in the arts of begging, skillful in petty thefts and familiar with obscene and profane language.”<sup>4</sup> In 1817, in the midst of a painfully cold winter that left many poor families without enough fuel and food to survive, he and fellow Quakers founded the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy. As a complement to its temperance, anti-prostitution, and prison reform campaigns, the Society advocated free education for all Philadelphians as a means to combat poverty and vice. A well-managed system of public schools, they believed, should instill in its pupils both healthy habits of personal discipline and the basic skills of literacy and arithmetic necessary for employment in respectable occupations.

Vaux’s Committee on Public Schools felt “reluctantly and sorrowfully compelled to declare, that from its first establishment to the present time,” the state system of pauper schools had “been not only injurious to the

<sup>2</sup> *A Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the Adelphi School in Northern Liberties* (Philadelphia: Meyer and Jones, 1810); William Kashatus, *A Virtuous Education: Penn’s Vision for Philadelphia Schools* (Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Roberts Vaux to Governor George Wolf (October 9, 1832), Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Wolf Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts Vaux, *Fifth Annual Report of the Controller of the First School District of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Board of Controllers, 1823), 8.

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character of the rising generation, but a benevolent fraud upon the public bounty.”<sup>5</sup> In 1818, Vaux and his colleagues pushed through a state act to create the school district to Philadelphia, mandating the erection of schoolhouses, hiring of teachers and the formation of a Board of Controllers.

This initiated the rise of the common school system in Pennsylvania. In 1827, Roberts Vaux, now serving as the School District of Philadelphia’s first president, formed the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, which advocated free public schools for all children. The Pennsylvania legislature passed the Free School Act in 1834, which officially established a public school system throughout the state. Resistance to the idea of public schools, particularly among religious communities with established educational systems, was so vocal that a bill to overturn the 1834 law passed in the State Senate the following year. But under pressure from activists including Vaux, Samuel Breck, and Thaddeus Stevens, the repeal was defeated. The passage of the Consolidation Act in 1836 is largely regarded as the cornerstone of the state’s public school system.<sup>6</sup>

For proponents of these “common” schools, free, publicly funded education represented a necessary aspect of a democratic society, promising to create a literate and informed electorate. New manufacturing work often required basic literacy and arithmetic, and, in the absences of apprenticeships, common schools fulfilled this need. For social reformers, schools were equally important for keeping young people off the streets of growing towns and cities, and for “Americanizing” the Irish and German immigrants arriving during this period.

The School District of Philadelphia opened its public schools to all children in 1836, and the district’s Board of Controllers immediately approved construction of new buildings to meet increased enrollment numbers. All public schools were originally single sex and divided into elementary and secondary schools, according to age. The state’s first high school, Philadelphia’s Boy’s Central High, was opened in 1837. The Girl’s Normal School, opened in 1848, and was the state’s first secondary school for women. Public schools were further divided by race, a practice that was upheld by law after 1854, when a state law passed requiring Pennsylvania school districts to establish separate schools for African American children, whenever twenty or more could be educated together.

As education became increasingly separate from the home, school buildings themselves began to move away from the domestic models that predominated earlier periods. New buildings began to resemble other social institutions, like post offices, courthouses and town halls. In this new, industrial age, some schools began to closely resemble the factories where their students might one day work.

In 1855, Pennsylvania commissioned a publication on school architecture from the Philadelphia firm of Sloan and Stewart, architects of the Boy’s Central High and Girl’s Normal School.<sup>7</sup> After surveying schools throughout the state and studying models used by other US cities, Sloan developed a series of plans to improve lighting, heating, ventilation and utilization of space in school structures. Distributed to every district in the state, Sloan’s publication became the manual—or pattern book—for common school design for the next generation. The suggested school layout came to be known as “The Philadelphia Plan,” and called for a large room on each floor that could be converted to as many as four classrooms by the use of moveable partitions. Stairways and entrances, located on the sides of the building, were separated from the classrooms by small corridors, in order to limit possible distractions. Sloan also introduced classroom closets into his designs, to

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Committee on Public Schools to the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy* (Philadelphia: Meritt, 1817), 5.

<sup>6</sup> John Trevor Curtis, *The Public Schools of Philadelphia: Historical, Biographical, and Statistical* (Philadelphia: Burk & McFetridge Co., 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Harold Cooledge, Jr., *Samuel Sloan: Architect of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

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manage clutter and store clothes. Following the prevailing trends in public architecture, Sloan suggested facades in the Italianate and Greek Revival styles, with brackets and quoins to visually signal a school's role as a public institution.

In Philadelphia, existing examples of schools from this period include the Fayette School (built in 1855, now the Politz Hebrew Academy) and the Watson School (built in 1851, now a private residence), both of which were designed by Samuel Sloan. Original photos and plans show the Fayette School was built with Italianate exterior details and a "Type 12" layout. Sloan, the first professional architect retained by the School District, began a practice of assigning a type number to each plan. The "Type 12" consisted of three classrooms on each of the building's two floors, a corridor with stairs, two entrances to one side of the building and another entry and stair hall in one corner. This system of type numeration was continued throughout the early twentieth century, and remains in place today. For a more detailed history and description of public schools and their architecture between 1818 and 1867, refer to the statewide *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania* MPDF, Section II and the 1986 and 1988 Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources National Register Nomination.

*The Progressive Era: Reorganization, Reform and the Great Depression 1867-1938*

The period between the end of the Civil War and the Great Depression witnessed the systematic reorganization of the American economy, society and public institutions. These efforts were led by a variety of reformers, generally called Progressives, who urged the public and charitable sectors to respond to broad social problems. These reformers profoundly impacted education, inspiring schools to take a stronger role in the social lives of students and their communities through programs in public health, home economics, physical education and Americanization for the great waves of immigrants arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe. Rapid urbanization made this the most active period of school construction in American history. Following more general trends in public architecture, new schools were commonly built in American and European historical revival styles. Curriculums expanded in the face of corporate reorganization of the economy, the rise of professional office work and the "Second Industrial Revolution" of steel, oil, electricity, automobiles and applied science, which together remade the economy and built environment of North America.

It was in this period that education became a social science. "As all science is progressive, none is more so than that of education," proclaimed the Committee on Revision of Studies for the Philadelphia district in 1868. "Those cardinal principles – precision, gradation and uniformity – which lie at the foundation of an extended and progressive educational scheme, have been disregarded, and the duty of a vigilant oversight neglected."<sup>8</sup> This, in varying forms, would be the clarion call of school reformers for the next six decades, as they worked to create social and economic order in the face of the chaotic forces of a fast-changing society.

In Philadelphia, reformers struggled to affect change amidst a complicated system in which the School District of Philadelphia was divided along neighborhood lines. Within the SDP seven administrative sections were responsible for oversight of schools in the city and county. Within each of these sections, much of the control over individual schools was placed in the hands of local boards of directors. Each of Philadelphia's wards was designated a separate school section with separate boards of directors and one representative on the central Board of Controllers. As the city grew, the number of wards, and thus the number of ward boards, grew as well. It would eventually total forty-two. Boards, elected within each ward, were comprised of politicians, businessmen and civic leaders. Each ward board determined the siting, size, staffing and curriculum for all public schools within their boundaries. Since schools only served their immediate neighborhood, most were kept small. Many boards were rife with corruption. Under the

<sup>8</sup> *Report on the Committee on Revision of Studies, with the Graded Course of Instruction* (Philadelphia: Markley, 1868), 3-4.

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influence of local political bosses, some undermined the SDP and ignored district-wide directives. Only two other major cities in the United States (Pittsburgh and Boston) had similar decentralized school systems until the early twentieth century. Education activists would spend over 40 years attempting to abolish the ward system, which was finally dismantled by the state in 1905.

Despite the Philadelphia School District's diffuse model of governance, a more centralized form of power began to take hold in the school system through state legislation. In 1874, all public school districts were incorporated into the state system. A new state constitution stipulated "at least one million dollars be appropriated annually for the support of public education," ratcheting up the state's financial commitment to public schools.<sup>9</sup> In 1893 the legislature passed the first compulsory law for free textbooks, and two years later it added the state's first compulsory school attendance law which also required high schools be developed in all districts. In 1903 and 1907, in response to demands of the State Teachers' Association, the legislature added minimum salary laws to staff new schools. With its 1912 Course of Study for Elementary Schools, the Pennsylvania Department of Instruction increased efforts to standardize curriculum across the state.<sup>10</sup>

While the legislature set statewide policy, progressive reformers at the local level invested their energies in individual districts. In the 1870s and 1880s school districts across the Commonwealth, adopted increasingly systematic standards for curriculum, promotion and graduation, including regular examinations and minimum attendance requirements. In Philadelphia, the Public Education Association supported a movement toward professionalization of both school district administrators and students. Like similar associations in other large cities, its members influenced the hiring of superintendents, the introduction of sewing into the curriculum for some 25,000 girls and cooking for those in the Normal School, the foundation of a Manual Training School and establishment of a Chair of Pedagogy at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>11</sup> The addition of subjects such as bookkeeping, shorthand note taking, accounting, and commercial law addressed the rise of white-collar sectors as well as new opportunities for women in the workforce. Technical and vocational schools were founded throughout the state, enhancing the school's role in the labor market. The state added home economics, hygiene and physiology classes, addressing public health concerns related to industrial labor, mass immigration, and urban sanitation. Taken as a whole, this new curriculum was designed to introduce children to a system of American values that reformers worried they might not be exposed to at home.

Progressive public school reformers aimed at systematic reorganization of teaching, learning and society. As cities and towns accommodated a flood of new immigrants and unprecedented industrialization, national educational leaders such as John Dewey and Theodore Sizer devised institutional responses to the increasing scale and complexity of metropolitan society. Addressing psychologists' concerns about the distinct phases of youth, nursery schools and kindergartens extended schooling to younger children, while junior high schools confronted the problems of adolescence. Public school curriculums engaged community issues identified by social scientists, including health, home economics, and –especially in immigrant neighborhoods – Americanization.

The SDP's superintendent of buildings oversaw the design of most schools built during this period. The position was created in 1867, the same year Pennsylvania gave school districts the power of eminent domain in the selection of schoolhouse sites. This initiated an era of unprecedented school construction, which lasted through

<sup>9</sup> Francis Haas, "Public Education in Pennsylvania – Past, Present, and Future," in *The Superintendent Speaks: 6 Addresses by Francis B. Haas, Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Harrisburg: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1954), 45.

<sup>10</sup> Public Education and Child Labor Association of Pennsylvania, *A Generation of Progress in our Public Schools, 1881-1912* (Philadelphia: 1914).

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Harley, *A History of the Public Education Association of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Public Education Association, 1896); Edmund James, *The Great Educational Need of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1889).

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the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Samuel Sloan's 1855 publication provided the basis for most new school design. It offered recommendations on everything from preferred building styles (Italianate or Greek Revival) to site selection, detailed floor plans and even furniture. Lewis H. Esler, who served as the first superintendent of buildings between 1867 and 1883, incorporated Sloan's directives, designing Italianate buildings of stone construction, with multiple large rooms, moveable partitions and separate stairways and entrances. Five of Esler's executions of the Sloan plan still exist: Robert Ralston (1869), David Farragut (1873), Alfred Crease (1874-1875), Germantown Grammar (1874-1875) and C.W. Schaeffer

Under Esler's term, an outside architect, Addison Hutton, introduced the first significant alterations to the Sloan plan. In his designs for several schools, including William Adamson, built in 1880, Hutton introduced single-loaded corridors running the length of each floor. Classrooms now opened directly onto a long hallway, rather than small exterior corridors and stairwells. Esler's successor as superintendent of buildings, Joseph W. Anschutz, made this single-loaded corridor variation a standard design. The inclusion of a single-loaded corridor made it easy for Anschutz to increase the number of classrooms per floor. More classrooms allowed for the division of students according to grade, a practice that was widely adopted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Anschutz departed from Sloan and Esler's preference for stone construction, and built mainly in brick and brownstone. By using materials more common to Philadelphia's domestic architecture, and new styles like Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, Anschutz hoped to make schools more harmonious with their surroundings.<sup>12</sup>

In 1905, the state legislature abolished the ward board system and a new Board of Education took control of school construction throughout the district. The board immediately embarked upon a program to reorganize and redesign schools, so they would meet the needs of the city at large, not just those of individual neighborhoods. In their efforts to reshape Philadelphia's public schools, the SDP was greatly influenced by the ideas of William Wirt, superintendent of schools in Gary, Indiana. Wirt promoted the construction of large facilities that could serve more students. In Philadelphia, enrollment size for new schools was increased, necessitating larger lots for bigger buildings. Wirt believed that schools should reflect the world around them, and provide students with the opportunity to participate in a diverse number of activities throughout the day. These new activities required specialized spaces like auditoriums for dramatic performances, large gymnasiums and pools for sports activities, home economics rooms and shops.

Henry deCoursey Richards, SDP's chief architect from 1905-1918, adopted many of Wirt's ideas, which were sometimes referred to as the "Gary Plan." Specialized interior spaces like auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias and recreational areas became standard in Philadelphia high schools built during this period. West Philadelphia High, built in 1911, and listed on the National Register, is a representative example. By 1915 specialized rooms were also made standard in elementary schools. Mitchell Elementary and John L. Kinsey School were both designed to include dedicated classrooms for home economics and manual training, and included a gymnasium and auditorium.

In 1918, Irwin T. Catharine replaced Richards as the SDP's chief architect. Catharine continued to implement Wirt's ideas about specialized interior spaces, while making a concerted effort to upgrade and expand public school facilities throughout the city. During his tenure, Catharine oversaw the completion of 104 new school buildings, the addition of twenty-six new wings to existing schools and the improvement or alteration of at least fifty others. Catharine also presided over the construction of nine technical and vocational schools and the city's first public junior highs.<sup>13</sup> By the time he retired in 1937, Catharine had effectively developed a single

<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources Statement Revision, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, (Washington: National Park Service, 1988) VIII.5.

<sup>13</sup> Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources Statement Revision, VIII.6.

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identifiable design for school architecture throughout the city. Many of these schools are still extant. Twenty-six were listed on the national register in 1986 and an additional sixty added in 1987. The Lydia Darrah School (1926-1927), Thaddeus Stevens School (1926-1928) and Olney High School (1929-1930) are good examples of the standard Catharine-style school. Based on Richards' interpretation of Wirt's Gary plan, school buildings were between three and five stories, with rectangular footprints, double-loaded corridors and mirrored construction throughout. Most featured arched windows and ornate granite entrances.<sup>14</sup> Like Richards, Catharine initially favored the Gothic Revival style, though later schools adopted Art Deco and Art Moderne elements.

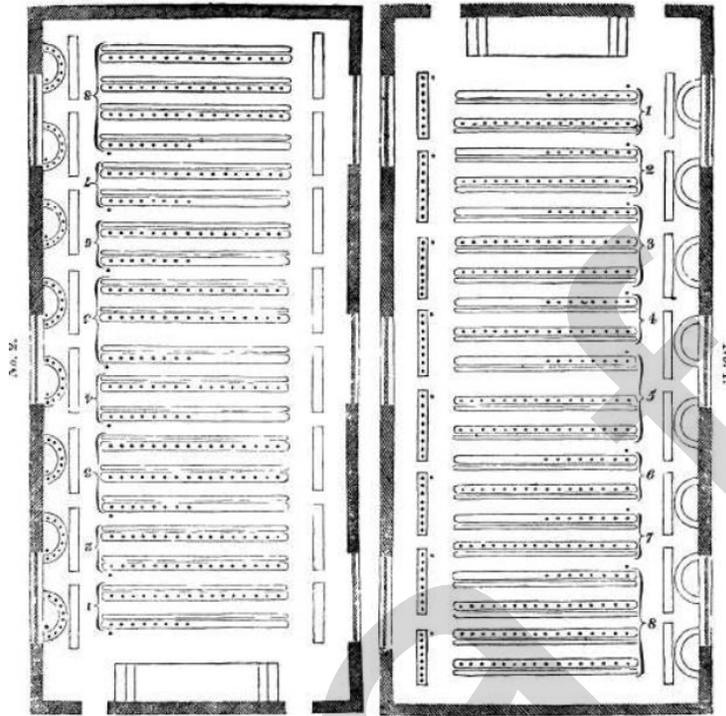
Cost cutting measures enacted at the state and city level made it possible for all of Philadelphia's public schools to remain open during the Great Depression. A tight operational budget even allowed for the construction of approximately thirty-five new schools, nearly all designed by Irwin T. Catharine. More detailed information regarding this period can be found in section III of the statewide *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania* MPDF and the 1986 and 1988 Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources National Register Nomination.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Clapper, "The Constructed World of Postwar Philadelphia Area Schools: Site Selection, Architecture, and the Landscape of Inequality" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008), 12-14.

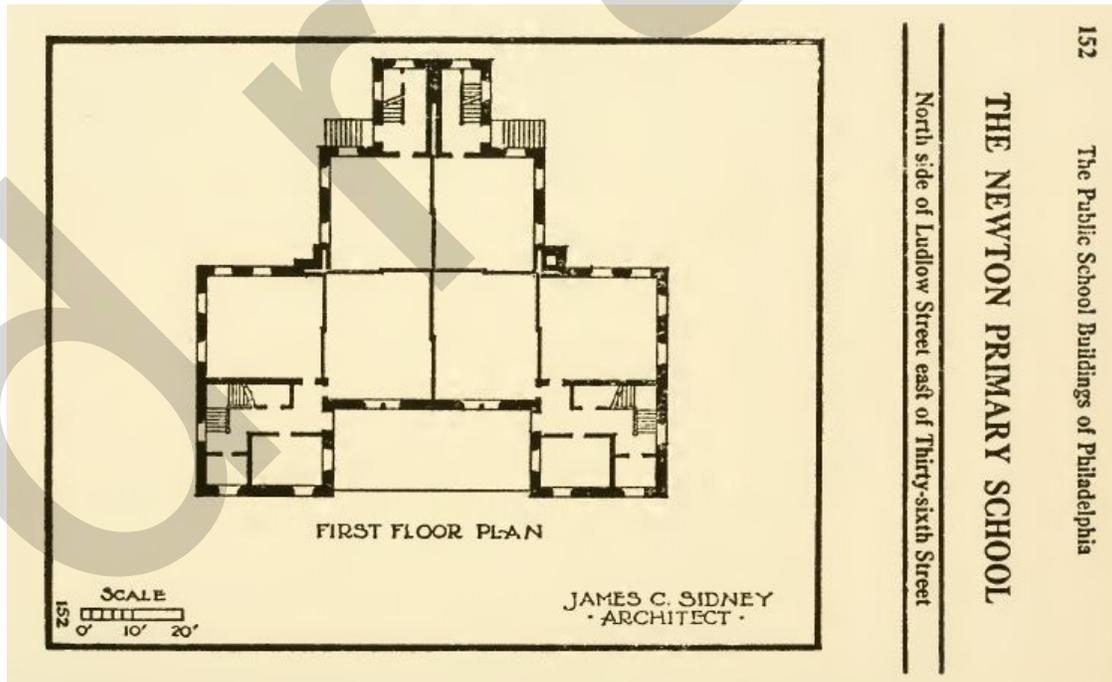
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The Lancasterian Plan, as drawn in Joseph Lancaster's 1810 book, *The British System of Education*. London: The Royal Free School, 1810.



The Newton Primary School, built in 1866-1867 by James Sidney used Samuel Sloan's 'Philadelphia Plan' from Franklin Davenport Edmunds' *Public School Buildings of the City of Philadelphia from 1853 to 1867*, Philadelphia: F.D. Edmunds, 1917.

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Samuel Sloan's Fayette School, built in 1855. Image from [www.hiddencityphila.org](http://www.hiddencityphila.org).

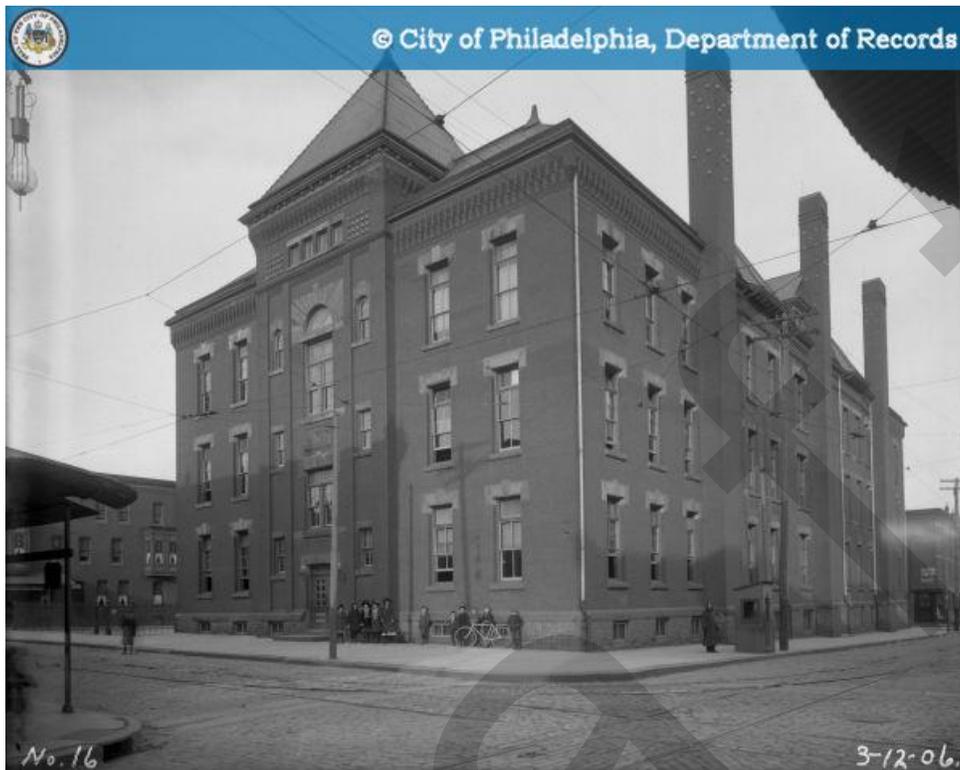


The Robert Ralston School, built in the Queen Village neighborhood in 1869, by SDP architect Lewis H. Esler. It was later converted into a factory. Philadelphia Department of Records photo, 1959.

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The original M. Hall Stanton School, built in North Philadelphia by SDP architect, Joseph W. Anschutz, in 1891. Philadelphia Department of Records photo, 1906.



Construction of West Philadelphia High School, designed by Henry deCoursey Richards and completed in 1912. Philadelphia Department of Record photo, 1912.

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Thaddeus Stevens School 1926-1928. Located at 13<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden, the school is a good example of the type designed by Irwin Catharine and built throughout the city between 1918-1938. Philadelphia Department of Records, 1927.

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## *Chapter I. Evolution of the School District of Philadelphia 1938-1980*

This section of the MPDF offers an overview of the major administrative and social issues affecting the School District of Philadelphia's approach to school construction in the post-war era. The mid-twentieth century was a period of dynamic social and political change. Shifting demographic patterns, the struggle for Civil Rights and a decades-long economic malaise affected cities throughout the country. These events are important to understand as part of the larger context in which new Philadelphia schools were built. In some cases, like the adoption of "suburban-style" building types, the influence of wider socio-historic events is clear. In others, like the failure of the SDP to integrate schools, an understanding of school siting within the context of specific neighborhoods is required. Budget shortfalls and the complications of building within a diverse, but divided district, took their toll on school buildings, along with the students and teachers who used them. But the buildings themselves should not be considered failures or poorly designed just because they were imperfect, misunderstood or ill received. Rather they are a testament to a period when the idealistic visions formulated by early Modern architects butted up against the difficult, and sometimes-harsh realities of American life.

### *Depression and War Years, 1938-1948*

No new schools were built in Philadelphia between 1938 and 1948. Wartime limits on consumption coupled with sharp inflation and housing shortages limited school district budgets throughout the state. By the time funds were finally available for new construction, the social and neighborhood context of school building in urban America had fundamentally changed. Though no major new construction was completed during this time, researchers may find some older schools with additions or interior remodeling that dates to this period. No specific examples of this were identified during the PA SHPO school buildings survey, conducted in 2013-2014.

### *Postwar Boom, 1948-1965*

Cities across the United States experienced dramatic shifts in demographics and development patterns after WWII. Population growth, the result of a postwar baby boom and the Second Great Migration of African Americans from the southern US, left the School District of Philadelphia scrambling to catch up with demand for new facilities. The need for new schools was greatest in the increasingly African American neighborhoods of North and West Philadelphia and the newly developing white neighborhoods in the Northeast.

Different parts of the city had distinct experiences of school design and use in the post-war years. This was a change from the preceding period, when school district architects Richardson and Catharine standardized school designs throughout the city. After 1948, experimentation with new school types occurred alongside reliance on older models. Though new schools shared a common architectural style—most were Modern, International Style buildings—differences in available lot sizes limited the opportunity for landscaping and recreational facilities in some parts of the city. Where to locate new schools presented problems in densely developed areas. So did the inequality of resources available in different neighborhoods. These issues reflected broader challenges of integration, neighborhood change and urban redevelopment shared by most American cities in the postwar era.

To meet the immediate needs of a rapidly growing population, the SDP instituted a controversial double shift system at some schools, wherein students attended half-day sessions in the morning or afternoon. In other schools, temporary trailers were installed to address overflow. Ultimately, new school buildings replaced the need for these measures, though the SDP would install temporary classrooms again in later years. A national school-building campaign from the late 1940s through the 1960s attempted to remedy public school shortcomings across the country. Lacking adequate facilities in the city's fastest growing neighborhoods, the SDP focused its efforts on building new schools, as quickly as possible.

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Changes in public finance, mainly at the state level, enabled the school building boom locally and nationally. Just as new federal housing agencies underwrote the surge in suburban homebuilding, in 1947 the Pennsylvania legislature established the State Tax Equalization Board to assume greater responsibility for public school finance. Two years later the legislature chartered the Public School Building Authority to coordinate school construction financing, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court allowed the creation of municipal school construction authorities with the power to issue school revenue bonds. State subsidies for public education grew from \$30 million around 1940 to \$143 million in 1952 and \$174 million in 1954. In the 1950s, the Public School Building Authority accounted for some 85% of all public school construction in the Commonwealth, with local districts picking up the remaining 15%. To finance new construction in Philadelphia, the SDP sold one hundred million dollars' worth of bonds.<sup>15</sup>

Some parts of Philadelphia, especially the far Northeast<sup>16</sup> but also parts of the Northwest (Cedarbrook) and Southwest (Eastwick), developed much like postwar suburbs just across the city line. In these undeveloped neighborhoods, there were few, if any, schools to serve the white residents who were moving in. Consolidated as part of the city of Philadelphia in 1854, the Northeast was mostly farmland through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the postwar years its residential and commercial development closely matched the new suburban communities just outside the city, as did its schools' "campus-style designs." Eleven new schools were constructed in the Northeast between 1948 and 1959. The student population in this neighborhood grew so rapidly that in 1954 the school board created a new district, District Eight, to administer the area.<sup>17</sup> The effect of suburbanization on Philadelphia's school buildings is addressed in Chapter II of this MPDF.

A largely separate and unequal district emerged in black areas of the city. As white Philadelphians moved to Northeast neighborhoods and the suburbs, African Americans migrating from southern states continued to settle in densely-developed parts of the city, seeking industrial jobs that would soon disappear. Philadelphia's black population doubled between 1940 and 1960, from 13 to 26 percent.<sup>18</sup> New arrivals congregated in North and West Philadelphia, and between 1948-1959 the SDP built twelve new schools to serve these neighborhoods.<sup>19</sup> Though the Supreme Court's 1954 decision, *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, effectively outlawed segregation in schools, the practice was entrenched. The School District of Philadelphia officially stopped segregating schools in the late 1930s, but opposition from white parents and school administrators persisted. The SDP's building campaign prioritized the need to relieve overcrowding, avoiding more controversial actions—like redrawing catchment areas or bussing students—that would have desegregated schools. Though an equal number of schools were built in North and West Philadelphia as in Northeast, because older facilities already existed in black neighborhoods, these areas waited longer for new schools. The majority of postwar schools in North and West Philadelphia were built after 1960. Though schools serving black students closely resembled those whose student population was mostly white, they were criticized for relying on older, more

<sup>15</sup> Francis Haas, "Public Education in Pennsylvania—Past, Present, and Future," in *The Superintendent Speaks: 6 Addresses by Francis B. Haas, Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Harrisburg: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1954), 3; Committee of Fifteen, *Education in Pennsylvania: Today and Tomorrow* (Harrisburg: PSEA, 1958).

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this MPDF, the Northeast is defined as the following neighborhoods, which correspond to the PA SHPO survey in Appendix A: Fox Chase, Oxford, Northeast Philadelphia, Bustleton, Somerton, Bridesburg, Tacony, Mayfair, Rhawnhurst and Byberry.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Clapper, "School Design, Site Selection, and the Political Geography of Race in Postwar Philadelphia," *Journal of Planning History*, v.5, no.3, (August 2006). 245-246.

<sup>18</sup> Clapper, *Journal of Planning History*, 246.

<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of this MPDF, North Philadelphia is defined as the following neighborhoods, which correspond to the PA SHPO survey in Appendix A: Brewerytown, Spring Garden, North Philadelphia West, North Philadelphia East, Ludlow, Poplar, Allegheny West, Strawberry Mansion, Nicetown-Tioga, Fairhill and Hunting Park. West Philadelphia is defined as: Mantua, Powelton Village, University City, Walnut Hill, Mill Creek, Dunlap, Haddington and Kingsessing.

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traditional models. The small footprints, rectangular plans and concrete play areas of elementary schools like M.Hall Stanton (1957) and Daniel Boone (1962) in North Philadelphia looked very different than the sprawling T-shaped Fox Chase (1949) or the V-shaped Thomas Holme (1950). Both of these Northeast elementary schools were set far back from their lot lines and surrounded by extensive, landscaped lawns. Each shares a border with a large playground with sports fields and other recreational facilities. SDP decisions regarding segregation and school design are discussed further in Chapter II.

During this period, the district's building program was overseen by the SDP business manager, rather than a staff architect. This was a dramatic change in approach to school building, which had been under the control of SDP's Department of Buildings (DOB) since 1867. After Irwin Catharine's retirement in 1937, the SDP dissolved both the DOB and the position of chief architect. Rather than rely on internal staff to design and plan new schools, the school board and SDP financial managers instead hired outside architectural firms. This act was part of a larger shift toward increased influence of business management in all aspects of public school planning and administration. As part of a national movement that advocated corporate models as a way to increase efficiency, decisions previously within the purview of different individual departments were now turned over to financial managers.

Since the abolition of the ward boards in 1905, a small central school board, made up of fifteen appointees, oversaw all SDP policy decisions. The Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, which determined the members of the school board, normally appointed representatives of the city's politically connected business community to serve on the board. The result was a school board with little educational experience but a keen interest in maintaining a strict budget. Years of board pressure to reduce expenditures led to the emergence of the SDP business manager as "the most powerful person within the school system."<sup>20</sup> Add B. Anderson held this position from 1936 until his death in 1962. During the postwar period he maintained control of all aspects of the SDP budget, no matter how small. Anderson signed off on school supplies and janitorial staffing, as well as all architects for new school projects. So important was Anderson to the PSD that a new elementary school in Kingsessing was named in his honor in 1962.<sup>21</sup>

Over fifty new schools were constructed between 1948-1962. Most of the architects hired by Anderson worked for locally based firms, who specialized in large institutional and civic projects. These architects trained in the late 1920s and 30s, a period when the International Style was influential. Many schools designed in the postwar period reflect school building trends and styles popular throughout the U.S. They feature hallmarks of the International Style, including large rectangular volumes marked by regular registers of windows and little to no decorative elements or references to historic architectural forms. Where space allowed, multi-building, campus like developments were popular. Large landscaped grounds and sprawling campuses of low, two and three-story structures made schools like George Washington High (1960), in the Northeast neighborhood of Somerton, almost indistinguishable from new automobile-oriented office parks and shopping plazas. In more urban neighborhoods, where land was scarce, designers sometimes recycled traditional, early 20<sup>th</sup> century layouts. Though Benjamin Franklin High (1957), on North Broad Street, is a classic International Style building by noted Philadelphia firm, Thalheimer & Weitz, its rectangular, five-story plan of classrooms has more in common with earlier, Catharine-era models. For more information on the International Style and this period in Philadelphia school architecture, refer to Chapter III of this MPDF.

Though Anderson kept board members happy by maintaining a low operating budget, the closed process of school board decision-making met with increased resistance. So quickly was demand for new schools growing

<sup>20</sup> John Birger, "Race, Reaction and Reform: The Three Rs of Philadelphia School Politics, 1965-1971," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, v.120, no. 3 (July 1996), 163-216.

<sup>21</sup> John Birger, 183-184.

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that, despite the wave of construction, schools in North, West and Northeast Philadelphia were frequently over-enrolled by the time they opened. Parent groups and civil rights activists, feeling underserved and discriminated against, advocated for more involvement in the SDP process. Traditionally, SDP decisions had been closed to the public. New schools were announced after decisions had been made and contracts were signed. This system mirrored other large city school districts that had adopted a top-down model for school management in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The growing call for more transparency led school board president J. Harry LaBrum to seek outside opinions on the state of the Philadelphia public school system. The board hired Stanford University education professor, Harry Saunders, to conduct an exhaustive evaluation of all of Philadelphia's public schools. The findings, released in 1965 showed a system in crisis. Eighty-eight percent of the city's school children received an inadequate education; the dropout rate was twenty-seven percent. Sixty-six of the school district's buildings were identified as inadequate because they were over fifty years old and failed to meet current fire-codes.<sup>22</sup>

### *Reform, 1965-1971*

The Saunders report ushered in an era of reform at the SDP. Two months after its release, a voter-approved referendum reduced the number of school board members from fifteen to nine. The new school board was made up entirely of mayoral appointees. Advocates for this system were hopeful that by allowing the mayor to control appointments, the board would be held accountable for the success and failure of the school district. In 1965, Mayor James Tate appointed former mayor Richardson Dilworth as head of the newly organized school board. Dilworth immediately began a fundraising campaign for the schools.

Meanwhile, SDP Superintendent Taylor Whittier made moves to address issues of segregation and overcrowding. In the white ethnic enclaves of South Philadelphia and Kensington, enrollment in public schools was down. In these Catholic neighborhoods, parochial schools offered an affordable alternative to public education. Families chose Catholic schools for a variety of reasons, most often a preference for religious instruction, but sometimes as a means of self-segregation. As Philadelphia's African American population was overwhelmingly Protestant, very few black children were enrolled in Catholic schools during this period. In an attempt to fill under enrolled schools, Whittier adopted a new policy that allowed children access to any public school within the city, regardless of catchment areas. A limited bussing program was introduced, but remained controversial. Conflicts over bussing threatened to turn violent. In 1968, a black teenager stabbed a white student outside Bok Technical High (1936). Though the aggressor was not a student at Bok, the incident set off a week of protests outside the school. Bok, located in the Italian section of South Philadelphia, had a student population that was eighty-five percent black. Sixty percent of these students were bused in from North and West Philadelphia. In the days following the stabbing, students required police escorts to and from school. White South Philadelphia residents gathered around school busses, harassing students and shouting "Burn Bok."<sup>23</sup>

Intent on further rehabilitating the SDP, in 1967, the school board voted to hire a young graduate of the Harvard School of Education, Mark Shedd, as superintendent. The Shedd years can be characterized by their focus on progressive reform, including in the planning process for new schools. During this time, the school board began publicly announcing building plans for schools, and actively seeking community input. Shedd introduced a general program of decentralization, calling for principals to be granted greater powers to hire teachers and develop their own budgets. Shedd encouraged teachers and administrators to work with students to develop

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<sup>22</sup> Birger, 186.

<sup>23</sup> Birger, 197.

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more meaningful curriculum and courses of study.<sup>24</sup> He invited open discussion of the difficult issues faced by the SDP, including issues related to race.<sup>25</sup>

Frustrated students and community activists, motivated by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, took Shedd at his word. On November 17, 1967, 3,500 students and activists staged a protest outside SDP headquarters to demand the hiring of more black teachers and principals, the inclusion of courses in African culture and African-American history in the SDP curriculum, and permission to wear African clothes and form African American student groups. The protest erupted in violence when some members of the crowd clashed with police. Under the orders of police commissioner, Frank Rizzo, the police responded forcefully, knocking protesters, mostly young black teenagers, to the ground. Fifty-seven people were arrested and twenty treated for minor injuries. Shedd and Dilworth accused the police of inciting the riot, though most white Philadelphians sided with the police.<sup>26</sup>

In response to the 1965 school facilities report, Shedd and Dillworth oversaw a \$500 million building program, financed through voter-approved bond measures. Between 1966 and 1971, the SDP built approximately three high schools, four middle schools, twenty-five elementary schools. Like Anderson before him, Shedd hired outside architects to design new schools, and favored local firms. Unlike Anderson, who prioritized cost cutting measures and standardized building types, Shedd encouraged the SDP to hire the city's most significant architects and firms with national profiles. Architects like Vincent Kling (Albert M. Greenfield Elementary, 1968), Mitchell/Giurgola Associates (William Penn High School, 1973), H2L2 (University High School (1971) and Caudill Rowlett Scott (George Wharton Pepper Middle School, 1976). These architects worked in the new, Brutalist style and experimented with unorthodox plans. Open, modular spaces allowed students and teachers freedom to design their own learning environments. Simultaneously, purpose built, state of the art laboratories emphasized a greater national focus on science, technology and new media.<sup>27</sup>

Buildings like the circular Dr. Ethel Allen (1969), the gear-shaped Austin Meehan (1970) and the barbell-like C.C.A. Baldi (1971) are representative of the kind of unique floor plans explored during this period. Baldi, designed by an unknown architect, featured a plan organized around two diamond-shaped clusters, each located on either end of a core that contained the gym and auditorium. The clusters, or nodes, housed conference rooms, teachers' lounges, and reading rooms, with classrooms arranged along the perimeter. The concept was designed to encourage students to engage with one another and with their teachers outside the classroom, in the central spaces provided for research and group work.<sup>28</sup>

Experimental plans like C.C.A Baldi's were inspired by national pedagogical trends promoting independent learning, team teaching and college prep. Shedd was on the cutting edge of many of these innovations, including computer science education and foreign language instruction for elementary school students. Among Shedd's more radical ideas was The Parkway Project, also called "the school without walls," which conducted all of its classes at Philadelphia institutions like the Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Sciences and The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Another experiment, the Pennsylvania Advancement School, converted an abandoned warehouse at 5th and Luzerne Streets into an informal space where teachers explored new methods

<sup>24</sup> By 1966, Philadelphia's public students were 58% non-white, though teachers and administration were overwhelmingly white. See Anne Phillips, 52 and Corde Corporation, *Report on the Educational Park*; see also, David Crane, North Philadelphia School Facilities Study (Philadelphia, 1968).

<sup>25</sup> Birger 170.

<sup>26</sup> Birger, 163-168.

<sup>27</sup> Birger, 189; Phillips, 66; Clapper, 50; George E. Thomas, "Architecture as Metaphor in Philadelphia Schools," *Journal of Planning History*, v.5, no.3, (August 2006) 232.

<sup>28</sup> Clapper 291.

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of engagement with seventh and eighth grade students struggling at school. More detail regarding the influence of experimental pedagogy during this period can be found in Chapter III of this MPDF.

*Decline, 1971-1980*

In 1971, former police commissioner Frank Rizzo won the election for mayor. During his campaign Rizzo openly criticized the SDP for its failure to maintain control of activist teachers and students. Despite modestly rising student test scores and some success in experimental pilot programs, many educators and parents also questioned the SDP's ability to adequately address large-scale problems affecting the district. Shedd and Dilworth resigned from their positions shortly after Rizzo's election. Shedd was succeeded by a series of superintendents who struggled to keep public schools operational in the face of budget difficulties and labor disputes. Like many US cities in the 1970s, Philadelphia faced a dire economic outlook. Loss of industry coupled with the postwar exodus of white, middle class families, to the suburbs, left cities across the country without an adequate tax base. The population of Philadelphia declined dramatically, and the SDP budget declined along with it.<sup>29</sup>

Historically, Philadelphia's public school teachers bore much of the financial burden during periods of contracting school budgets. Their salaries remained stagnant throughout the 1940s and 50s when their counterparts in the suburbs made significantly more.<sup>30</sup> PSD teachers organized under a single union, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) in 1941, but they did not win collective bargaining rights until 1965, and were not legally allowed to strike until 1970. During the 1970-1971 school year they exercised this right twice and won a salary increase from \$7,200 a year in 1965 to \$12,500 in 1971.<sup>31</sup>

Having just won a raise from the Shedd administration, the PFT was prepared to fight renewed pressure to cut salaries in the face of the city's declining economy. The SDP's decision to raise class sizes and furlough teachers led to a labor showdown that would last a decade and have a disastrous effect on the reputation of Philadelphia's public schools. Budget issues and labor negotiations delayed the opening of schools or led to shortened academic calendars. Teacher strikes closed schools for a total of 12 weeks during the 1972-1973 school year.<sup>32</sup> By the end of the 1970s the bitter battles between the school board and the PFT had taken a toll on an already fragile system. Ill will between administrators and teachers would last decades, while parents and students blamed teachers for abandoning them. By the 1980s the school was running a \$230 million deficit and Philadelphians were calling for a complete overhaul of the system.<sup>33</sup>

While budget concerns kept the SDP from engaging in any major construction projects, approximately nineteen schools, all approved during 1960s, were completed in the early 1970s. Many of these schools can be characterized as Brutalist in style. They feature large concrete or brick massing and are monumental in scale. With their small, high windows and limited points of entry, some of these buildings also reflect increased district-wide safety concerns. Rising crime rates made student and teacher security an SDP priority. Design features like panopticon-style hallways, arranged around central internal courtyards, allowed for constant observation of student activity. SDP policies called for the fencing off of playgrounds and addition of bars to all windows. New security measures, when combined with the muscular, Brutalist style of building, resulted in imposing looking schools that were criticized for their resemblance to prisons. More information on Brutalist architecture and school construction in the 1970s can be found in Chapter III of this MPDF.

<sup>29</sup> Birger, 169.

<sup>30</sup> Clapper, 163-236.

<sup>31</sup> Camika Royal, *Policies, Politics, and Protests: Black Educators and the Shifting Landscape of Philadelphia's School Reforms, 1967-2007*, (PhD diss., Temple University, 2012) 100; Birger, 188-190.

<sup>32</sup> Royal, *Policies, Politics, and Protests*, 99-101.

<sup>33</sup> Royal, 109.

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### *1980-Present*

In 1982 the school board hired Constance Clayton as superintendent. She was the first African American, and first woman to serve in the position. Between 1982 and 1993 Clayton and the school board were able to resolve labor disputes and avoid further strikes, but budget constraints continued to hinder the school district.<sup>34</sup> The economic crisis that characterized American cities in the 1970s reverberated through the 80s and 90s, Former industrial centers like Philadelphia continued to lose population and school administrators and teachers struggled to serve a student body that was increasingly poor and a majority black.

In the 1990s the federal government began to take on an increasing role in public education, mandating testing and performance standards tied to federal funding. National debates over the privatization of public education played out in Pennsylvania's adoption of charter schools. In Philadelphia, the first charter schools were opened in 1997, following the passage of The Pennsylvania Charter School Law, or Act 22, which allowed charters to receive public funds, but operate free of many state and local requirements that apply to traditional public schools.

A state takeover of the city's schools, authorized in 2000, initiated one of the nation's largest experiments in outsourcing the management of public schools to private and nonprofit operators. The Education Empowerment Act of 2000 authorized the takeover of "underperforming" districts, including the Philadelphia School District. The act replaced the school board with the School Reform Commission (SRC), a committee of five political appointees, three chosen by the governor, two chosen by the mayor. The SRC contracted with private educational management companies to manage some Philadelphia schools, and hired Paul Vallas as superintendent. Vallas convinced the SRC to float bonds to finance a \$1.7 billion school construction campaign that consisted of breaking up large city high schools, closing underperforming middle schools and converting elementary schools to serve K-8. Some older schools like Mayfair's Abraham Lincoln High (1949) were completely replaced while other buildings received much-needed rehab and/or expansion. High profile projects, like the School of the Future, partnered the SDP with Microsoft to design a high tech high school that might serve as a replicable template for other school districts throughout the country.<sup>35</sup>

Since Vallas's 2007 departure, few new public schools have been built in Philadelphia, and a significant number have been closed. The Kensington High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (2010) is one of few new district school buildings, though its LEED-Platinum design signals a wider trend in the greening of Philadelphia schools. The city's Water Department and nonprofits like the Philadelphia Orchard Project and Community Design Collaborative have helped transform dozens of schoolyards, replacing asphalt with fruit and vegetable gardens and storm water management plantings and swales. Larger investments in school building have stalled. Recent political disputes between the city and state have resulted in a reduction of state aid, which dropped by \$274 million between 2010 and 2013. Declining public school enrollment, part of a national trend driven partly by charter school expansion, forced the closure of 30 public schools in 2013.<sup>36</sup> Some of these schools have been bought for use by charters, while some are being developed for non-educational purposes like residential condominiums. The future remains uncertain for the majority of these schools, including 107 built between 1938-1980.

<sup>34</sup> Dale Mezzacappa, "Clayton Announces Retirement..." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 17, 1993.

<sup>35</sup> "Realities Have Redefined Construction Goals," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 5, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Motoko Rich, "Enrollment Off in Big Districts, Forcing Layoffs," *New York Times*, July 23, 2012; Trip Gabriel, "Budget Cuts Reach Bone for Philadelphia School," *New York Times*, June 16, 2013.

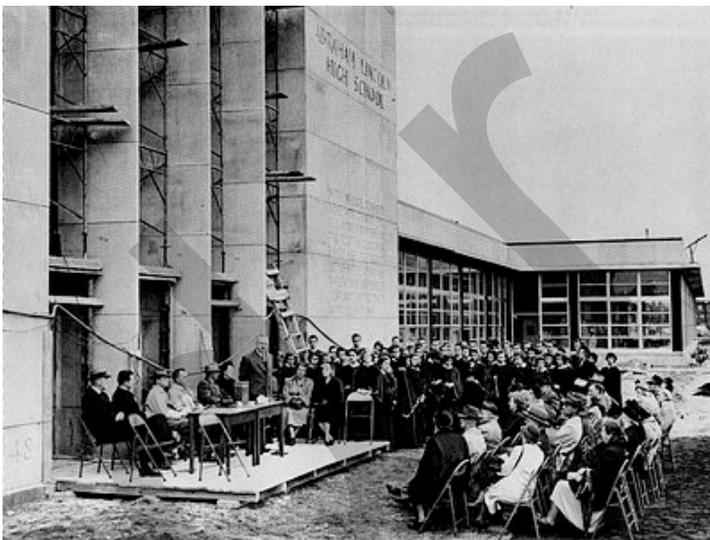
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Bok Technical High School, in South Philadelphia, was completed in 1936. It is typical Irwin Catharine-style high school: six-stories high with a rectangular plan and a footprint that covers an entire block. This type of school was built throughout Philadelphia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bok was also the site of a neighborhood protest over the bussing of students from North Philadelphia in the 1960s. Philadelphia Department of Records photo, 1937.



Superintendent of Schools, Edwin Adams, speaks outside Lincoln High School (now demolished) in October, 1949. The school, built in the modern, suburban-style, was located on over 80-acres of land and made up of multiple buildings. It was the first public high school built for Northeast Philadelphia. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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1961 plans for Strawberry Mansion Elementary and Junior High (completed in 1964, now Strawberry Mansion High School). The separation of buildings and spare International Style are typical of new “campus style” schools. But the small lot—only 4.75 acres—lack of setbacks and landscaping, and five-story stacks of classrooms, reveal the difficulties of adapting new school models, many developed in the suburbs, to dense urban neighborhoods. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



South Philadelphia residents protest the bussing in of public school students from North Philadelphia, 1965. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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African American students protest outside the Board of Education Building, 1967. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



The Pennsylvania Advancement School, an example of one of the experimental programs developed under Superintendent Mark Shedd, was located in a former warehouse. Photo, 1967. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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The barbell-shaped C.C.A. Baldi School (1971) is representative of the unique kinds of floor plans and Brutalist style adopted during the Shedd Administration. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



A group of striking teachers attempt to block entrance of William Penn High School in 1981. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

***Chapter II. Social and Political Trends that Impacted Philadelphia's Public Schools, 1938-1980***

The Great Depression sparked a reorganization of American institutions, which over ensuing decades transformed the landscapes of cities, suburbs, and rural regions across the nation. The New Deal included no major legislation for public education, but the public works, federal housing and federal highway acts of the 1930s through 1950s radically transformed the context and practices of building schools. The Works Projects Administration paid for a flurry of public school buildings in the 1930s, including Bok Technical High School (1936) in South Philadelphia. World War II stalled all school construction between 1938 and 1948. When school building picked up again in the late 1940s, the mortgage insurance policies of the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration directed investment and development to the suburbs. Beginning in the 1950s, the Federal Highway Administration supported this investment with the construction of new highways and infrastructure in suburban areas. White middle class families moved out of the nation's deindustrializing cities to new suburban enclaves. Communities like Levittown, located a short distance from Philadelphia, offered middle class Americans access to the ideal of homeownership. Stylish new suburban housing provided growing families with ample space, especially compared to Philadelphia's old row-house stock. But like Levittown, many of these new communities were closed to African American homeowners. As black families continued to migrate from the South they settled in neighborhoods that were increasingly plagued by discrimination, crumbling infrastructure and lack of opportunity—in schools, as well as the housing and labor markets.

In Philadelphia this demographic shift spurred three basic trends in public school design and development, which will be discussed in detail below:

1. As new suburban-style neighborhoods developed in still-rural parts of the city, **new suburban models of school building** were influential and widely promoted by the SDP, especially in the Northeast section of Philadelphia.
2. Simultaneously, the Second Great Migration of African Americans from the South (c.1940-1970) dramatically reshaped the population and social politics of older areas of West, South, and North Philadelphia. As the SDP rushed to meet demand for schools in these neighborhoods, the resistance of white Philadelphians to truly integrated schools resulted in the creation of a **segregated school district**, despite federal legislation that demanded an end to the practice after 1954. Though schools serving black students sometimes resembled those whose student population was mostly white, lack of available land in densely developed neighborhoods often forced architects to rely on older, more traditional models.
3. Ultimately, the continued loss of middle class white residents and manufacturing jobs led to a period of underemployment, rising crime and racial tensions that came to define the "**urban crisis**" in Philadelphia and other cities of the American Rustbelt. During this period, the SDP prioritized student and teacher safety and building security. Schools constructed during the 1960s and 70s have been compared to fortresses, and criticized for their resemblance to prisons.

Many of the issues that affected public schools in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not unique to Philadelphia. National trends such as massive population growth and movement, capital flight from cities to suburbs, and the struggle for civil rights, affected all American cities. These changes and challenges influenced the design and use of a variety of school buildings in different urban and suburban neighborhoods. An examination of the local response to these events, by architects and administrators, politicians and parents and students themselves, reveals a more specific story, one that informs the current struggles to reform Philadelphia's school system and reactivate its closed school buildings.

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### *Suburbanization 1948-1980*

Despite Philadelphia's rapid growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the land in the city's Northeast and Southwest neighborhoods was still used for agricultural purposes or remained totally undeveloped at the close of World War II. Large portions of Northeast and Southwest Philadelphia therefore developed simultaneously with the city's new suburbs. In the Northeast especially, the population boomed post-1942. And the availability of cheap, open land resulted in urban neighborhoods that resembled the new, automobile oriented communities characteristic of postwar American suburbs.

The rapid postwar development of these neighborhoods was unexpected. Prior to the war SDP planners had predicted continued growth in the traditional immigrant neighborhoods of South Philadelphia and Kensington. Accordingly, 1920s and 30s school construction was focused on these areas.<sup>37</sup> School district architect Irwin T. Catherine applied a standard design to nearly all schools during this period. Neo Gothic, Art Deco and other popular revival ornamentation was applied to a rectangular U- or O-shaped plan, in which a central light court was surrounded with five to six stories of double-loaded corridors, with classrooms on both sides. Schools were constructed of brick, with limestone detail, and occupied entire city blocks. They were usually built up to the lot lines of the principal streets on which they faced, with very little open space or landscaping. Recreational facilities like basketball courts were oftentimes located on the roof.<sup>38</sup> Eliza Butler Kirkbride Elementary (1925), Charles E. Bartlett Middle School (1930) and William M. Meredith Elementary (1930), are all classic examples of this model.

World War II brought school building, along with most non-war related construction, to a halt. School populations fell as older teens enlisted or dropped out to work in factories revived for war production. With the return of troops and the lifting of wartime limits on consumption in 1945, the United States experienced sharp inflation and a severe housing shortage that limited most school districts' ability to afford new construction. By the time the SDP resumed construction, in 1948, the environmental context of school building in America had fundamentally changed. A postwar baby boom and shifting urban demographics left school districts across the country scrambling. Half-day sessions were instituted in some Philadelphia neighborhoods to relieve overcrowding while the SDP built new schools to accommodate the growing student population. Postwar population growth in Philadelphia was centered in three main neighborhoods, Northeast, North and West Philadelphia. The SDP focused its building campaign accordingly, building approximately 75 schools in these areas out of an approximate total of 110 built within the city between 1948 and 1979. Nationally, the public sector spent over \$1 billion on public school and university building campaigns from the late 1940s through the 1960s. In the early 1960s, one-fifth of all public construction in America was for schools – only federal highways received more government funding. At the time, nearly half of the nation's children attended a school built in the previous fifteen years.<sup>39</sup>

Many of these schools were of a totally new type. Beginning in the 1930s, publications like *Architectural Forum* featured school architecture that challenged traditional models. In 1935 the magazine published California-based architect Richard Neutra's design for schools without hallways, where classrooms with sliding glass walls opened directly onto surrounding lawns. Featured in the same issue, William Lescaze's design for a school in Connecticut pulled the auditorium and gymnasium away from the classroom block to better articulate the spaces and their separate functions. In 1945 the three major architectural publications, *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture*, devoted entire issues to school construction. The Museum of Modern Art curated an exhibit, "Modern Art for the Modern School," that traveled around the country

<sup>37</sup> Clapper, 16.

<sup>38</sup> Philadelphia Public Schools Thematic Resources Statement Revision, 1988. VII.4-5.

<sup>39</sup> Clapper, 22.

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between 1942 and 1946. The buildings and the curriculum highlighted in these articles and exhibits were all forward-looking. Architects emphasized the importance of increased access to light and the outdoors. They experimented with new materials and arrangements of space, creating specially designed schools on large plots of land where students might engage with the surrounding community and explore new technologies.<sup>40</sup>

Suburban communities quickly adopted these sprawling, low-slung school plans, but in urban areas, where plots were smaller, land more expensive, and neighborhoods already developed, these new designs were harder to implement. Industry publications, like the *Journal of the Association of Secondary School Principals*, recommended new high schools be sited on at least twenty acres, and fifteen acres allotted for junior highs.<sup>41</sup> In Northeast and Southwest Philadelphia the SDP was able to follow such professional recommendations. But in the older, densely built neighborhoods like North and West Philadelphia, where existing schools were in disrepair and too small to serve the growing African American student populations, the SDP struggled to find space that could accommodate the new “campus-style” designs.

Between 1945 and 1955 the SDP built seven elementary schools, one junior high and two high schools in the Northeast. Most of these schools were constructed on land that was previously undeveloped. Large lot sizes allowed architects to explore new school designs promoted by architectural publications and educational advocates. Rather than stacks of classrooms laid out in compact O- and U-shaped plans, they favored spread-out L-, V- and T-shaped plans, which allowed increased access to light and the possibility of additional landscaping. Buildings were one-to-three stories as opposed to five or six. Long driveways and ample parking lots accommodated a growing dependence on automobiles. Landscaped lawns with trees provided a barrier between children and traffic.

Fox Chase Elementary, designed by Horace W. Castor and built in 1949, is a good early example of this kind of building. Though its Art Deco style references an earlier period of school construction, its siting and plan are thoroughly modern. Located on a large seven-acre plot, the T-shaped school is delineated into four clearly defined sections: a central building, two stories high, two single-story wings located on either side and a rear section comprised of a large auditorium/gymnasium. The school is set far back from the street, and surrounded on three sides by an extensive, landscaped lawn. A semi-circular drive allows automobile access to the front entrance and a parking lot—over two times the size as the school’s footprint—is located behind the main building. Like many elementary schools in the Northeast, Fox Chase was developed alongside a recreation center (Fox Chase Recreation Center) so students would have access to ballfields, tennis courts and a swimming pool.

Thomas Holme Elementary, completed in 1950, also shares a plot with a city park. Designed by Borie and Smith, the school’s V-shaped plan echoes the shape of the lot’s southern corner and allows for ample light to reach classrooms on both sides of the building. Holme is located on a six-acre plot, average for elementary schools in the Northeast.<sup>42</sup> Like Fox Chase, the school is set back from the street, with a landscaped lawn providing a wide buffer between the school and surrounding traffic. Half the site is devoted to a concrete parking lot, behind which the ball fields and tennis courts of Holme Playground are easily accessible.

By 1954 the Northeast student population had grown so large that the SDP created a new district, District Eight, to administer the area. School construction in the Northeast continued throughout the next decade. Between 1955 and 1965 five more elementary schools, one junior high and one high school were completed. Most of

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, 233; Weisser, 204-208.

<sup>41</sup> Clapper, 21-22.

<sup>42</sup> Clapper, 269.

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these reflected the new suburban model, featuring large landscaped lawns and recreational areas. High schools like Northeast High (1955) and George Washington (1960), were particularly striking for their complex of sports facilities. George Washington boasted five tennis courts, soccer, softball, field hockey and baseball fields as well as a 4,000-seat football stadium. The school itself was comprised of four buildings connected by interior walkways and surrounded by extensive landscaping.<sup>43</sup> Some land tracts in the Northeast were large enough to accommodate multiple schools, allowing them to share sports fields and other facilities, as was the case with Abraham Lincoln High (1949, demolished and rebuilt in 2010), and Austin Meehan Middle School (1970). Their openness was designed to encourage community engagement. Schools were rarely gated and neighbors could access non-classroom facilities for meetings or recreational activities on weekends or after school hours.

The racial make-up of the Northeast neighborhoods generally matched its suburban counterparts in its lack of diversity as well as its design. Racist real estate practices prevented African Americans from buying or renting in much of suburban Philadelphia and the Northeast. In Philadelphia, and throughout the United States, intimidation, vandalism and violence were commonly employed to discourage black families from moving freely in the housing market. Thus the student population in the Northeast was overwhelmingly white. Only 1% of students in Philadelphia's Northeast schools were African American in 1958. In 1975, when over 60% of SDP students were black, African Americans still made up less than 5% of the student body in Northeast schools.

*Segregation and Integration, 1948-1980*

As white Philadelphians began to move from urban areas to the Northeast and out to the suburbs, the Second Great Migration of African Americans from southern states dramatically reshaped the population and social politics of older areas of the city. African Americans continued to settle in Philadelphia through the 1960s, seeking industrial jobs that would soon disappear. The city's black population doubled between 1940 and 1960, from 13 to 26 percent.<sup>44</sup> The majority of new arrivals congregated in North and West neighborhoods, replacing Irish, German and Ukrainian residents moving out. These were established working class areas with building stock dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A history of overcrowding, neglect and illegal subdivision had left much of the housing stock in disrepair. As late as 1950, many homes in these parts of the city still lacked indoor bathrooms.<sup>45</sup>

As with the growth of the Northeast, the SDP was unprepared for the population boom in North and West Philadelphia. Prior to World War II, SDP staff had predicted continued growth in the traditional immigrant neighborhoods of South Philadelphia and Kensington and had focused their building efforts in these areas. Many of the preexisting schools in the North and West were located in aging buildings, too small to adequately serve the burgeoning student population. As soon as funding became available in the late 1940s the SDP began plans to replace these schools. Yet, despite the desperate need for larger facilities, SDP officials struggled to find land in established, urban neighborhoods. Large tracts that could accommodate the sprawling suburban-type schools being built in the Northeast were hard to come by and the price of land in black neighborhoods was high. Eminent domain, one available option, was controversial as well as costly in densely built areas, and used sparingly by the SDP.

As a result, the SDP often replaced older schools by rebuilding on the same site. These lots were smaller than desired and occasionally required architects to rely on older, more traditional building plans. Though urban

<sup>43</sup> Clapper, 250, 282.

<sup>44</sup> Clapper, 246.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph S. Clark, Jr., and Dennis J. Clark, "Rally and Relapse 1946-1969," *Philadelphia: a 300 Year History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 669.

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schools built during this period may resemble suburban schools in their aesthetics—most feature the straightforward expressions of form and lack of decorative elements favored by Modern architects—the smaller sites led designers to make numerous compromises in their attempts to accommodate more pupils. Schools buildings were built up to lot lines, much as they had been in the 1920s and 30s. Many featured rectangular four-, five- and six-story plans reminiscent of Catharine-era schools. And in an attempt to accommodate an increasing need for teacher and staff parking, the SDP was forced to sacrifice much-needed landscaped recreation area in favor of asphalt playgrounds that doubled as parking lots.

Though desperate for new schools, parents and community activists were increasingly aware of the stark differences between the new schools being built in black, inner city neighborhoods and those that were built in the white Northeast. Of the fifty schools built in North and West neighborhoods during this period, the average lot size was three acres. Most elementary schools lacked dedicated play areas or outdoor recreational facilities. There was additional concern that by rebuilding schools on the same site, or locating new schools in the heart of already segregated neighborhoods, the SDP ensured that the racial composition of these schools, and their perception within the community as schools that served a single race, remained the same. Black activists, starting with Floyd Logan and the Educational Equality League, began to document the rising number of schools that, while officially open to all children, in reality served only black students.<sup>46</sup>

Though the Supreme Court's 1954 decision, *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, effectively outlawed segregation in schools, the decision only affected explicit segregationist practices. The SDP had officially stopped segregating Philadelphia public schools in the late 1930s, in response to local Civil Rights activists who demanded an end to segregation of both students and faculty. Though officially "race blind" after 1937, the SDP's commitment to building "neighborhood schools" worked against integration. The neighborhood school idea was based on the popular premise that children were best educated within their immediate communities. In an era when realtors and white neighbors staunchly enforced the color line, the "neighborhood school" policy failed to take into account that minority families had little choice when it came to where they lived. By the 1950s, racial geography was hardening in cities throughout the country. SDP schools were increasingly located in areas that were already dominated by one race. In 1950, 85 percent of black elementary students were enrolled in majority black schools. Out of this number, 63 percent attended schools that were 90 to 100 percent black.<sup>47</sup> By 1960, Philadelphia housing was almost completely segregated, leaving SDP planners, still devoted to the neighborhood school concept, with few options for integrating schools.

Even in areas where integrated schools might have been possible, opposition from white parents and school administrators persisted. In many instances, catchment lines were drawn to create black and white schools within a single neighborhood. Floyd Logan's Educational Equality League documented some of the "skillful zoning maneuvers" employed to ensure the Mayer Sulzberger Junior High (1923), located on 48<sup>th</sup> at Fairmount Avenue in West Philadelphia, enrolled 99 percent black students, while "the white section of the area sent its children to the [Dimmer] Beeber School, (1931)," located two miles away, at 59<sup>th</sup> and Malvern.<sup>48</sup> In Germantown, Anna Blakiston Day Elementary (1952) and Eleanor Cope Emlen Elementary (1925), served white and black students respectively, despite the fact that they were located less than a mile from one another, in a neighborhood where a single, large school might have served both, or each could have accepted an integrated student body. Instead, Day's catchment area was manipulated so that it served less than one percent

<sup>46</sup> Clapper, 28-29; Floyd Logan founded the Educational Equality League in 1932 "to obtain and safeguard educational opportunities for all peoples regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin." Logan served as president of the organization until his retirement in 1977. The League worked to desegregate schools (public and private), promoted the hiring of black teachers and protested for the removal of racist curriculum.

<sup>47</sup> Franklin, 168.

<sup>48</sup> Franklin, 190-191.

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African American children. The SDP allowed individual principals to determine catchment areas, and did not keep copies of these catchment boundaries on file. This system allowed local administrators to enforce catchment areas as they saw fit and the SDP to deny accountability when catchments suddenly excluded areas where demographics were shifting from white to black.<sup>49</sup>

M. Hall Stanton elementary school in North Philadelphia is a good example of many of the struggles the SDP faced when replacing older schools in African American neighborhoods. Named after a 19<sup>th</sup> century school board president, M.H. Stanton was built in 1957 on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and West Cumberland. It replaced an 1891 school of the same name, which was located on the same site. The neighborhood around Stanton was developed during the 1880s, and the school was surrounded by 19<sup>th</sup> century row houses. As early as 1955, parents and school activists complained about the school's proximity to a number of bars and stores where patrons loitered throughout the day.

A local group, the Citizens Committee for Stanton School, suggested a number of alternative sites to the school's existing location. Whether the SDP seriously considered any of these is unknown. By the time plans for a new M.H. Stanton were officially underway the SDP's general approach to the replacement of older urban schools was to rebuild them on the same site. SDP planners purchased additional property behind the existing school in order to build a larger facility on the same site. Twenty-eight two- and three-story row houses along N 16<sup>th</sup>, Mole and Sydenham Streets were demolished in 1957 to make way for the new school. Firth Street, a small alley running parallel to Cumberland, between N. 15<sup>th</sup> and N. 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, was closed between N. 16<sup>th</sup> and Sydenham. The expanded site totaled 1.3 acres, and bordered narrow alleys along Mole and Sydenham.

The spare design and lack of ornamentation at M. Hall Stanton is reflective of the Modern movement, and in keeping with the style used throughout Philadelphia at this time. The use of an L-shaped plan was also standard for both urban and suburban elementary schools, and allows for some separation of space, with the auditorium and gymnasium located along the tiny Mole Street and the main bank of classrooms along the alley-sized North Sydenham. Despite this nod to suburban design, the size of the lot did not permit a clear delineation of these spaces, which are all part of a single building. Two stories of classrooms are located on top of the auditorium and gym, and the building itself is built right up to the lot lines, except where a setback allows for a small asphalt playground. There was no room for a separate cafeteria, so the gymnasium doubled as a space for breakfast and lunch. There was no landscaping or buffer zone to separate the school from the street. The main entrance emptied directly onto the sidewalk and traffic along 16<sup>th</sup> street.

Even when new land for building could be found, lots were still too small to accommodate the extensive landscaping and setbacks typical of schools in the Northeast. George Washington Carver (1949), Edward Gideon (1952), Anna Pratt (1954) and William Dick (1954), all elementary schools located in North Philadelphia, were built on new land acquired by the SDP. All feature single buildings, with little or no landscaping. Schools are built up to lot lines, rather than set back, and recreational areas are asphalt lots that would also be used for parking. Edward Gideon bordered a forty-foot drop-off to a railroad line. Carver, Pratt and Dick were all built on, or adjacent to, former cemeteries.<sup>50</sup> When architects attempted to adapt new design principals to these restricted sites the result was often a series of compromises. Benjamin Franklin High, built in 1957 at North Broad and Brandywine, was designed by Thalheimer and Weitz, and is one of the finest International Style schools in Philadelphia. The firm separated the recreational and assembly spaces from the classrooms, locating them in a low-rise brick building south of the main classroom block. This distinct treatment of space recalls the "campus-style" plans common in the Northeast, but the 1.7-acre site required that

<sup>49</sup> Clapper, 34-36.

<sup>50</sup> Clapper, 264.

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these buildings are located virtually on top of one another. For the classroom block a modern façade was applied to a six-story rectangular plan more typical of the early 20th century. The high school spanned an entire city block with no setbacks and no landscaping.<sup>51</sup>

The SDP faced similar siting issues when building in other older neighborhoods throughout the city. In white ethnic areas of South Philadelphia and Kensington new schools more closely resembled those being built in black urban areas, than white Northeast neighborhoods. But as the inner city public school population grew increasingly African American, while public school students in the Northeast remained overwhelmingly white, the growing perception among many Philadelphians was that two, separate school districts were being built in the postwar decades, one for black children and one for white.<sup>52</sup>

Siting constraints in the older parts of the city exacerbated problems of over-enrollment. Most of the schools built in North and West Philadelphia between 1948 and 1975 were overenrolled before they even opened. Because new schools were too small to accommodate the student population, older schools were left intact for years after their replacements had been completed. In the case of M.H. Stanton, the original 1891 school remained on site through the early sixties, housing overflow from Stanton as well as students from other elementary schools. In other cases the SDP brought in trailers to serve as extra classrooms. In one instance, the Lehigh School, which opened in North Philadelphia in 1956, was constructed entirely of trailers intended for temporary use.<sup>53</sup> Trailers were used to alleviate overcrowding in suburban-style schools in the Northeast as well, where over-enrollment was also a problem. Indeed, many of these trailers were made permanent, and can still be seen at schools like Anne Frank (1961) in the Bustleton neighborhood.

The SDP also attempted to more permanently relieve overcrowding by adding additions to older school buildings.<sup>54</sup> Between 1945 and 1975, approximately 45 additions were added to pre-1945 buildings. Unlike trailers, which were used in the Northeast as well as the North and West, additions were primarily used in dense African American neighborhoods. As the Northeast lacked existing school infrastructure, it was more likely that a new school would be built to address issues of overcrowding, rather than adding a new wing to a recently built school. As with the SDP's practice of reusing sites in North and West Philadelphia, the use of additions during the postwar period further perpetuated the problem of segregation by relying on neighborhood school catchment boundaries that had already been defined on the basis of race.<sup>55</sup>

The 1960s ushered in an era of reform at the SDP, though the structure of inequality that was put in place in the postwar years proved difficult to change. Under continued pressure from community activists like Floyd Logan and the Education Equality League, and George Hutt and Helen Oakes of the West Philadelphia Schools Committee, SDP Superintendents Taylor Whittier and Mark Shedd, exhibited a new willingness to address issues related to segregation, Yet the SDP had “no working relationship” with the City Planning Commission, whose decisions regarding housing and redevelopment directly affected school populations.<sup>56</sup> Local school administrators still retained a large amount of control over their individual schools. In 1971, the failure to integrate schools prompted the State Human Rights Committee (HRC) to order the SDP, along with four other Pennsylvania school districts, to formulate plans to balance the racial composition of their schools. The SDP

<sup>51</sup> Clapper, 284.

<sup>52</sup> Only 1% of students in Philadelphia's Northeast schools were African American in 1958. In 1975, when over 60% of SDP students were black, African Americans still made up less than 5% of the student body in Northeast schools.

<sup>53</sup> Clapper, 75.

<sup>54</sup> Due to these additions, some pre-1938 schools were not considered for listing on the national register under the 1986 and 1988 Thematic Statements. They can now be considered under this MPDF.

<sup>55</sup> Clapper, 77.

<sup>56</sup> Clapper, 39.

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school board actively resisted the order, initiating a thirty-one year legal battle in which the HRC's authority to force integration was questioned. With a public school population that was nearly 70% percent African American, it is unclear what might have been done to foster integration at such a late stage.

*The Urban Crisis and Philadelphia's Schools, 1968-1980*

As the city began losing population in the late 1960s, SDP focus shifted away from accommodating growth to new problems of urban decline and violence. Long simmering racial tensions began to boil over as riots occurred in cities throughout the country in the 1960s. A major riot erupted in North Philadelphia in 1964 when a confrontation between police and an African American couple escalated into several nights of looting and violence along Columbia Ave. Schools became sites of conflict between students, teachers and parents. As tensions in American cities increased, these conflicts led to new approaches in school design that emphasized safety and security.

The period between 1968 and 1980 was an era of decline in cities across the country. The continued loss of middle class residents and manufacturing jobs resulted in urban communities contained in crumbling neighborhoods that were cut off from resources and opportunities. Nationwide, cities experienced what historians call the Urban Crisis, a period defined by underemployment, rising crime and racial tension, all compounded by fiscal crises resulting from diminished tax bases. In this context, urban school districts' diverse constituencies of students and families, teachers, and administrators became increasingly polarized.

School construction was directly impacted by the Urban Crisis, as were older school buildings and the students, teachers, and staff who inhabited them. During the 1970s, Philadelphia would lose 13 percent of its population and over 100,000 manufacturing jobs. This exacerbated the previous two decades of population decline and factory closures.<sup>57</sup> The areas most affected, North and West Philadelphia, Kensington and South Philadelphia, already suffered from insufficient housing and services. The city as a whole experienced decreasing real estate values, which weakened municipal credit ratings and directly affected the SDP's ability to issue bonds. As people and industry abandoned the city, the attendant loss of tax base left little to no funding for building new schools. Ambitious new schools planned in the late 1960s were completed in the first half of the 1970s, but continued funding for maintenance and educational programs was not guaranteed. Many schools built during this period were left incomplete. Amenities promised during the initial design stages were never installed, and existing infrastructure fell into disrepair.

Increasingly schools became sites of protest and activism, often related to school construction. Local Civil Rights leader Cecil B. Moore and the NAACP rallied outside Strawberry Mansion School in 1963 to protest the all-white labor hired to construct the new junior high. By staging the protest at a school, Moore was attempting to link two of the black community's major concerns: school segregation and discriminatory hiring practices. One local resident quoted in the Philadelphia Tribune declared "this is a false democracy when qualified colored people can't get a job building schools for their own kids."<sup>58</sup>

On May 24, 1963, approximately 300 NAACP members joined local students to picket outside the Strawberry Mansion construction site. Every day for the following week protestors and students attempted to block entrance to the school. Scuffles broke out between construction workers and protestors and police were called in to ensure workers access to the site. On the morning of May 29, forty protestors attempted to block roughly 200

<sup>57</sup> Stephanie Wolf, "The Bicentennial City, 1968-1982," in *Philadelphia: A 300 Year History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 708.

<sup>58</sup> Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 139.

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police officers from escorting workers into the building. Police charged, and were met with bricks and bottles, thrown by black spectators. Twelve protestors and nine police officers were hospitalized. The violence prompted school board and construction industry representatives to agree to the NAACP's demand for an oversight committee to monitor hiring practices related to school construction. The final agreement also provided for the hiring of five black craftsman at the Strawberry Mansion site. Bloody confrontations like the Strawberry Mansion protests prompted President John F. Kennedy to issue an executive order cutting off federal funds to employers whose hiring practices were discriminatory.<sup>59</sup>

Students and teachers increasingly found themselves engaged in direct confrontation, as student activists staged sit-ins to protest racist curriculum and staffing, or demonstrated for the right to form African American student organizations. School District leaders became regular targets of community discontent. A violent confrontation between protestors and police occurred outside SDP headquarters in 1967 and is addressed in Chapter I of this MPDF. Despite a period of attempted reform in the late 1960s, black leaders criticized the unorthodox methods used by school superintendent Mark Shedd. Many believed Shedd's focus on small-scale experimental projects came at the expense of larger, more pressing district-wide concerns.

Growing tensions surrounding school construction dovetailed with an ambitious SDP building campaign, under which some of the city's most important architects were hired to design new schools. In response to the 1965 Sauders report, discussed in Chapter I of this MPDF, Shedd approved the construction of approximately 30 new buildings between 1967-1971. These were among the most expensive schools the district had ever built, and many employed aspects of the more open plans that had previously been built only in the Northeast. Firms like Vincent Kling and Associates (Albert M. Greenfield, 1968), Mitchell/Giurgola (William Penn High School, 1973), H2L2 (West Philadelphia University High, 1971) and Caudill Rowlett Scott (George Wharton Pepper, 1976) designed monumental buildings that were local expressions of a new, Brutalist style.

Architects and administrators praised these buildings as celebrations of their communities. As public schools might be a neighborhood's only major civic institution, advocates of the new building program promoted the importance of their increased visibility.<sup>60</sup> As opposed to the standard low-slung brick architecture preferred by SDP business manager Add Anderson, the Brutalist schools stood out from the repetition of rectangular volumes that made up the modern urban grid, especially in rowhouse environments like most of Philadelphia.

Most SDP schools built after 1967 can be defined by their heavy materials and massing. Architects explored complicated geometric forms and strong directional statements, both horizontal and vertical. New spatial organizations were designed alongside pedagogical shifts discussed further in chapter III. But emerging concerns related to school violence and crime often interfered with the intentions of architects. Defensive design elements not included in original plans were added to these schools to comply with district-wide mandates and address administrators concerns for student and teacher safety. In the case of William Penn High School, designed by Mitchell/Giurgola and located at North Broad and Master Streets, the open campus, which featured four separate buildings and a multitude of entry points, was fenced in and closed off from the surrounding community immediately after it opened in 1973 (this school is discussed in more detail in Section III).

Rather than "celebrations," neighborhood residents often interpreted these Brutalist buildings as imposing and unwelcoming. This was true of schools, as well as other civic structures like libraries and courthouses, built in the Brutalist style. The public face of these buildings, often stark and windowless, was considered imposing, intimidating and even hostile. The disconnect between architectural intention and public perception has plagued

<sup>59</sup> Countryman, *Up South*, 135-144.

<sup>60</sup> Wiley, 77.

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Brutalist buildings from the beginning. The SDP's addition of fencing and bars only served to further these schools' fortress-like appearance. Even Louis Kahn, a groundbreaking member of the "Philadelphia School" of modern architects, commented on the increasing resemblance of public schools to prisons.<sup>61</sup> As a member of the Philadelphia Art Commission, Kahn particularly criticized the lack of light afforded by many of the new public school designs.<sup>62</sup>

While concerns about student health and access to light and air were the main design preoccupations of the 1930s through 1950s, school design in the late 1960s and 70s became increasingly focused on the safety of students and teachers. Concerns about urban crime and potential for violence in and around school buildings resulted in the incorporation of "defensive" design elements which foregrounded security features, like smaller windows and higher walls, fewer doors and more fencing. New schools appeared to close themselves off from the surrounding community. The designs of schools like Potter-Thomas Elementary (1969), which had no second story windows visible from the street, and University City High, which employed a panopticon-like plan, were internally focused and prioritized controlled movement and easy observation of students groups rather than community access or visual connections between the interior and exterior. In the 1960s the SDP required grates be installed on all first-story windows. After 1970 many schools like Alain Locke (1965) in West Philadelphia incorporated windows that could not be opened or moved.<sup>63</sup>

The planning of Clarence Pickett Middle School, built in 1968, embodied practically all of the tensions between different constituencies of the SDP. Located at Wayne and West Cheltenham Avenues, in the Germantown neighborhood, the school's development represented an attempt to foster a more decentralized system of school control. The SDP promised that a committee made up of local community leaders and parents would play a decisive role in the design and curriculum of the neighborhood's new junior high. After objections from the principals' union and the PFT, SDP officials revoked the committee's decision-making power, reducing the committee to an advisory role only. Protests and attempts to regain some form of active control ensued. Meanwhile, Pickett's principal publicly criticized the school board's continued hiring of majority white teachers to staff schools like Pickett, where the student body was nearly 100 percent black. In a letter to the SDP, he described potential teachers as "poorly prepared, young 'hippie' draft dodging marijuana smoking white hustlers coming into our black schools and communities, corrupting and further destroying the minds of our young people."<sup>64</sup>

The resulting building for Pickett, which opened in 1972, featured many of the architectural elements that have come to define schools built during this period. The school was designed by Geddes, Brecher, Qualls, Cunningham. Robert Geddes, a teacher at the University of Pennsylvania's architecture school, formed the firm in 1960 with three fellow Harvard alumni. Along with Louis Kahn, Romaldo Giurgola, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Geddes was a key figure in the "Philadelphia School." His firm's design for Pickett is a notable attempt to project stability, with its thick concrete walls and muscular massing. This emphasis on solidity was meant to reflect the substantial education students would receive at Pickett and the stabilizing force the school would be for the surrounding neighborhood. Unfortunately, the final building appears fortress-like and foreboding. In this way, Clarence Pickett School is representative of an important chapter in the history of architecture in the US. Architects were asked to balance rigorous requirements for security and durability with new architectural ideas about the organization and treatment of space. Their new models for educational buildings struggled to win public support, as they upended the idea of what a traditional school should look like.

<sup>61</sup> For more information on the Philadelphia School, refer to Thematic Context Statement. Modernism: 1945 to 1980, available on the PHMC website.

<sup>62</sup> Wiley, 118.

<sup>63</sup> Clapper, 286-287.

<sup>64</sup> Clapper, 292-294.

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Brutalist architecture and defensive design elements were employed throughout the district after 1968, in the suburban-style neighborhoods of the Northeast as well as the inner city. Examples of Brutalist buildings in Northeast neighborhoods can be seen at Austin Meehan Middle School (1970) on Ryan Avenue and C.C.A. Baldi (1971) on Verree Road.

There was virtually no capital investment in Philadelphia's public schools between 1978 and 1986, and even the newest buildings began to rapidly deteriorate. Spaces designed for state of the art facilities like television studios and media labs were left incomplete after budget shortfalls prevented the purchase of required equipment. Budget issues and deferred maintenance contributed to Brutalist-style schools reputation within the community as failed experiments. But when evaluating these buildings it is important to take into account their original designs and understand the intentions of architects working in the Brutalist style, discussed in Chapter III.<sup>65</sup> While a lack of funding prevented the implementation of many of the programs designed for schools built during the Urban Crisis, they should not be discounted as bad design. As with many institutional buildings from this era, their failures, both perceived and actual, were often the result of ill-conceived policies that financed new construction but provided no allowance for planned programming and continued maintenance.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> School District of Philadelphia website, Capital Improvement Program, accessed April 30, 2016.

<http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/c/capitalprojects/programs--services/capital-improvement-program-cip>

<sup>66</sup> For more on the relationship between Modern architecture and public policy, and how maintenance and funding issues have affected the reputation of certain public buildings, see Katharine Bristol's "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," in *The Journal of Architectural Education*, v.44 no.3, 1991.

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Aerial image of Fox Chase Elementary (1949), designed by Horace W. Castor. Though the school's Art Deco style references an earlier era of school construction, its spread out plan, setback entrance and easy access to recreational facilities are all good examples of the type of suburban-style school built in Northeast neighborhoods after WWII. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission photo, 1959.



Architectural drawing of Stephen Decatur Elementary School (1965), in Byberry, built by Thalheimer & Weitz. Low rise buildings set amidst landscaped lawns are hallmarks of the suburban-style school. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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Single story classrooms with floor to ceiling windows at Abraham Lincoln High (1949), in Mayfair. This school (now demolished) was located on 80-acres of land in Northeast Philadelphia. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



Benjamin Franklin High (1957), on North Broad Street, is a classic International Style building by noted Philadelphia firm, Thalheimer & Weitz. Though its façade is thoroughly modern, it's rectangular, five-story plan has more in common with earlier, traditional models of school construction. . George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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A comparison of the densely developed area around Edward Gideon Elementary School (1952), located on 2.5 acres in North Philadelphia (left) and the more suburban development surrounding Thomas Holme Elementary (1950), located on 6 acres in the Northeast. Edward Gideon borders a forty-foot drop-off to a railroad track. Thomas Holme shares a lot with the nearly 10-acre Holme playground. Images via Google Earth, 2016.



The entrance of Edward Gideon Elementary (1952, left), in North Philadelphia, empties directly onto the street, while the entrance to Samuel Gompers School (1949, right), in the Northwest neighborhood of Wynnfield, is set back behind a large lawn. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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The Lehigh School, located at 31<sup>st</sup> and Lehigh, was constructed entirely of portable classrooms. Photo, 1958. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



Workers at Strawberry Mansion school construction site scale fence after their entrance to the school was blocked by NAACP protesters. Photo, 1963. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

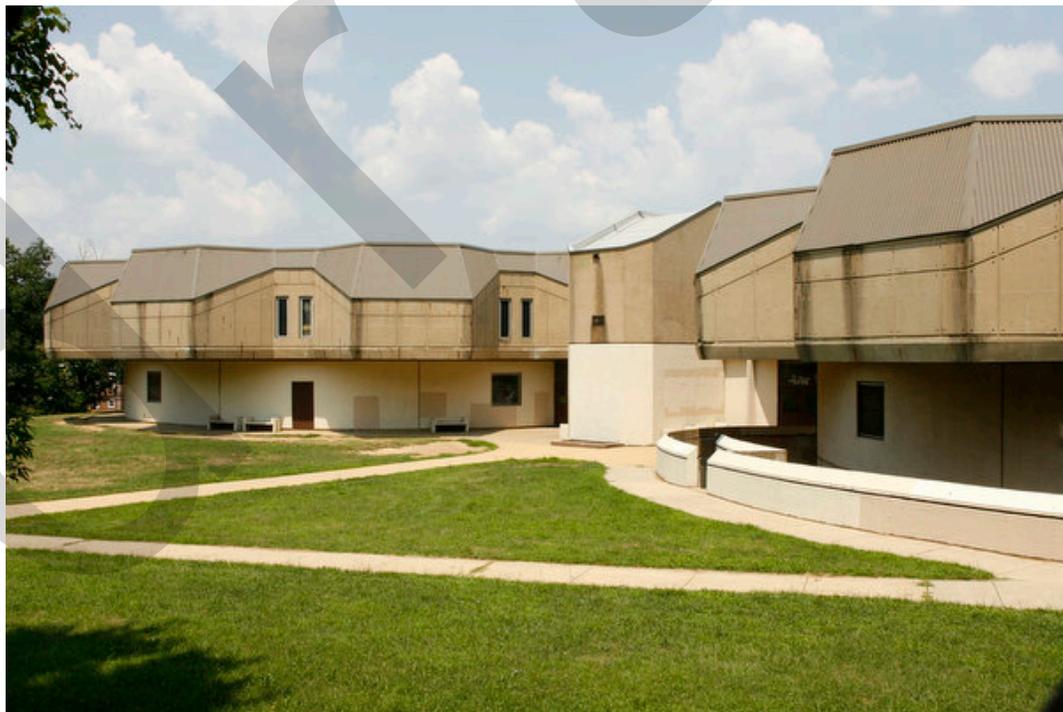
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Potter-Thomas Elementary (1969), in North Philadelphia, is an example of the way urban crisis-era concern for security was reflected in inward facing school design. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



Lack of windows and small entrances at Austin Meehan Middle School (1970), in Northeast Philadelphia, are examples of defensive design elements adopted during the 1970s. Often these design features accompanied schools built in the Brutalist style. Photo by Betsy Manning, Preservation Alliance.

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### *Chapter III. Mid and Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Philadelphia Public School Architecture and Pedagogy*

To understand where Philadelphia's public schools fit within the historic context described in the preceding section (Chapter II), it is also important to understand the prevailing architectural styles and educational theories that informed their design. Within the context of social, neighborhood, and administrative transformations described above, the School District of Philadelphia's approach to school construction in the post-war era took diverse forms. In new schools' design and use, the idealistic visions formulated by early Modern architects butted up against the difficult, and sometimes harsh realities of American life. Plans and styles shifted throughout the postwar period, as pedagogy and the architectural practice evolved. Some Philadelphia schools are rich examples of prevailing architectural movements. Some express the educational philosophies of leading school reformers. Taken as a whole, they all represent a complicated and sometimes controversial period in the evolution of the Philadelphia public school system.

#### *New Plans for New Pedagogies, 1948-1980*

Experimental pedagogy, a heightened focus on college preparatory courses, and training in new technologies all profoundly impacted the design and use of public schools in the postwar decades. The increasingly high tech nature of defense and other industries, coupled with the space race and the arms race, inspired a sustained effort on the part of the country's public educators to ramp up their science and technology curriculum. In primary and secondary schools, astronomy, chemistry, physics, and math became ever-more important subjects. The GI Bill, together with later federal grant and loan programs, afforded the middle and working classes unprecedented access to higher learning. This gave public schools a widespread college preparatory function that previously existed almost exclusively in elite private academies. As courses of study based on college preparation replaced the vocational training emphasized in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, primary and secondary schools began to physically resemble college campuses. They offered amenities like sports fields, stadiums, television studios and state-of-the-art science labs that were nonexistent in early 20<sup>th</sup> century school designs.

In the 1930s, architects and planners began to reject the standard multi-story school model that featured a central entrance and symmetrical plans of classrooms arranged along a double-loaded corridor. As discussed in Chapter II, in 1935 *Architectural Forum* featured schools designed by the California-based, Austria-trained, Richard Neutra and by Swiss architect William Lescaze. Neutra's Corona Avenue School in Bell, California, featured classrooms with windows on two sides. Doors opened directly onto outdoor workspaces and modular furniture allowed teachers and students to rearrange classrooms according to activities. Lescaze's design for a school in Asonia, Connecticut, featured an L-shaped plan, with classrooms located along the longest length, and the gymnasium making up the shortest. The auditorium and gymnasium were separated from the main classroom blocks in a design that would prove influential throughout the postwar period.<sup>67</sup> Lescaze's Philadelphia-based firm, Howe and Lescaze, had previously designed two well-publicized single-story elementary schools, Oak Lane Country Day (1929) and Hessian Hills (1932-36), located in the Philadelphia suburb of Blue Bell, PA, and Croton-on-Hudson, NY. In these designs, architects rejected the nailed-down furniture and dark corners of classrooms past in favor of schools flooded with natural light and furnished with colorful tables and chairs that were easy to rearrange.<sup>68</sup>

These early experiments in educational architecture, though widely disseminated among architects, were not reflective of most schools built in the 1930s. The School District of Philadelphia's approach to school design during this period remained firmly rooted in the standardized symmetrical type best embodied by the work of

<sup>67</sup> Weisser 204-206.

<sup>68</sup> Ogata, 563-567.

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Irwin T. Catharine. Catharine served as SDP staff architect from 1918-1937, during which time he effectively developed an identifiable design for school architecture throughout the city. Catharine's school buildings were large – between three and six stories, with footprints that filled entire city blocks. Rectangular, U- and O-shaped plans, featured symmetrical double-loaded corridors and mirrored construction throughout. Popular architectural styles were applied to each school's exterior. Ornate doors and windows featured Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Art Deco or Art Moderne elements.<sup>69</sup>

In designing these schools, Catharine, and his immediate predecessor, Henry deCourcy Richards, were influenced by the ideas of William Wirt, superintendent of schools in Gary Indiana. Wirt believed that schools should reflect the world outside their walls and engage students with a variety of activities throughout the day. This required specialty rooms like auditoriums for dramatic performances, gymnasiums and pools for sports activities, home economics and shop spaces.

In the postwar period, educators expanded many of the ideas first explored by Wirt, and his contemporaries, like John Dewey of Columbia Teachers College. Theories about specialized spaces were physically expressed in the separation of shared areas—like auditoriums and cafeterias—from classroom blocks. In accordance with the Modern architectural principle of “form follows function,” designers like local Philadelphia firm Davis, Dunlop and Carter, drew the gym and auditorium away from the main L-shaped bank of classrooms at Samuel Gompers Elementary (1949), located in the Northwest neighborhood of Wynnfield. The variety of school-sponsored activities, growing since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, is clearly legible in SDP buildings like Gompers. An expanding curriculum is also reflected in the expansion of school footprints during this period. The adoption of “campus-type” suburban models, with multiple buildings and landscaped lawns, reflected continued concerns for increasing access to fresh air and natural light. Long, one- to three-story buildings allowed for continuous banks of plate glass windows along classroom walls. The low-scale and dropped ceilings emphasized connection to the school's surroundings and the outside community. Auditoriums, cafeterias, gymnasiums and libraries were designed so they might be accessed separately from classrooms, for use after school hours and on weekends. Sports facilities, stadiums and recreational centers, all rarely included in school designs prior to 1948, became essential design elements that defined the suburban, or campus plan school.<sup>70</sup>

In Philadelphia, these campus type schools were built throughout the Northeast, Southwest and Northwest, in neighborhoods that closely resembled surrounding suburban areas in design and development. Examples of campus-like plans that allowed for flexible and economical use among schools and the community-at-large, include Fox Chase Elementary (Horace W. Castor, 1949) and Thomas Holme Elementary (Borie and Smith, 1950), both designed to share space with city recreational facilities. Northeast High, (Ballinger Company and Louis deMoll, 1955) and George Washington High School (Martin, Stewert, Noble, Class, 1960) are each made up of multiple one-and two-story buildings surrounded by landscaped lawns and an assortment of sports fields. For more information on the suburban style of school, refer to Section II of this MPDF.

Within dense urban neighborhoods, where small lots could not accommodate expansive campus-style plans, many of the prevailing architectural concerns about access to light and air and connection to the landscape were necessarily limited, but still expressed through the strong horizontality of schools like Franklin Spencer Edmonds Elementary (1948), in Cedarbrook. Designed by Howell Lewis Shay, a former consulting architect for the Philadelphia Board of Education, the Franklin Spencer Edmonds school features two low-slung wings, arranged in an L-shape, with gym, auditorium and main entrance all located at the corner of the L. This arrangement allowed for a clear delineation of space, despite the compact nature of the design. The two-story,

<sup>69</sup> Clapper, 12-14.

<sup>70</sup> Clapper, 261, 272.

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double-loaded corridors of classrooms fan out from the larger shared spaces, where more centralized administrative and recreational functions occur.

Franklin Spencer Edmonds (1948) is the earliest example of an SDP-type that was replicated throughout the city during the district's immediate postwar construction campaign. These deceptively simple-looking schools combined educators' desire for large, adaptable spaces, with Modern architectural dictates regarding the straightforward expression of function, and the school district's concerns related to quick construction and budget. Local architecture firms designed simple rectangular, L- or V-shaped layouts, which proved flexible to a variety of sites. The availability and promotion of inexpensive building materials, many of which were developed or perfected during the war, was a major factor in America's mid-century building boom. New technology allowed for the design of larger spaces and fewer load bearing partitions, zoned ventilation and heating, and lightweight furniture. The SDP's low-rise rectangular schools were similar to those built by districts across the country. Their design was economical, easy to expand and adaptable to a variety of lot shapes and sizes, while still remaining sensitive to the needs of modern school children.<sup>71</sup>

The SDP favored the L-, V and low-rise rectangular school types through the 1950 and mid-1960s, but schools with more elaborate and experimental plans were also built during this period. Solomon Solis-Cohen Elementary (1948), completed the same year as Franklin Spencer Edmonds, is a good example of a type that was never widely adopted by the SDP. Designed by Edward Simon, Solomon Solis-Cohen is a rare Philadelphia example a finger-plan school. Adapting ideas first explored in projects like Neutra's Corona Avenue School (1935, Bell, CA) and Perkins and Will's Crow Island School (1939-1940, Winnetka, Illinois), Simon's plan features five long rows of single-story classroom blocks, or "fingers," extending from a central, two-story core. Many classrooms have direct access to the outdoors and windows on two sides.

In the 1960s and 70s, increased emphasis on students as unique members of society led planners and architects to experiment with distinctive designs that offered a variety of spaces teachers and students might adapt to their individual needs. Reform-minded superintendent, Mark Shedd (whose administration is further addressed in Chapters I and II), promoted pedagogical theories that prized the nurturing of students as individuals with a variety of needs and different styles of learning. This shifting approach to education is mirrored in a shifting approach to school construction. In the mid-1960s the SDP begin to move away from its reliance on standardized school types. The Shedd administration encouraged architects to experiment with creatively arranged schools. Bold treatment of space reflected unique pedagogical programs. Collections of pods, or clusters, were frequently employed in a variety of arrangements. This made for specialized plans that were difficult to define and not intended for reproduction on a large scale.

Examples of unique plans are found in schools built throughout the district during the late 1960s and 1970s. One good example is the C.C.A. Baldi Middle School, which opened in the Northeast in 1974. The school was designed around two large, diamond-shaped clusters, each located on either end of a core that contained the gym and auditorium. The two-story clusters, or nodes, contained conference rooms, teachers' lounges, and reading rooms, with classrooms arranged along the perimeter. The concept was designed to encourage students to engage with one another and with their teachers outside the classroom, in central spaces with built-in furniture provided for research and group work.<sup>72</sup>

West Philadelphia's University City High (1971), designed by H2L2, reflected multiple trends in architecture, pedagogy, and American society. Its plan resembles one of Baldi's centralized nodes at a much larger scale, and

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<sup>71</sup> Ogata, #.

<sup>72</sup> Clapper 291.

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supported experiments with flexible scheduling programs in the 1970s. These programs, which were adopted in schools across the country, offered students freedom in choosing when and what classes to take. In some cases, no grades were awarded. New technologies, like television, were incorporated into lesson plans.<sup>73</sup> The incorporation of technological training was another defining feature of postwar school buildings. Cold War anxieties about the quality of American education, and an economy that valued white collar work and service industry jobs, required architects to incorporate new spaces for state of the art science and media labs. Indeed, University City High was not typical of West Philadelphia schools in this era, built as part of the larger University City Science Center, an urban renewal project led by the University of Pennsylvania that aimed to boost the city's science and technology industries by linking secondary and higher education with private research laboratories and manufacturing. Even though the high school became disconnected from other parts of the Science Center and the SDP ran out of funds to properly equip this and other facilities with advanced technologies, they were still considered essential components in both urban and suburban schools.

*School Architecture in Philadelphia: International Style Modernism, 1948-1967*

Like most large cities in the United States, architecture in the period following World War II is defined by the spread of International Style Modernism and its later variations. The International Style developed in Europe in the 1920s and 30s. Influenced by industrial design, architects like Mies Van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Le Corbusier experimented with a straightforward treatment of space and expression of function. Their designs stripped buildings of many decorative elements considered unnecessary. This departure from historic architectural forms signaled a widely held belief in the architectural profession that radically different built environments were needed to reflect the dramatically new technological, scientific, and economic basis of twentieth century society.

In Philadelphia, influential early examples of the International Style include the PSFS Building (1929-1932) by George Howe and William Lescaze and the Carl Mackley Houses (1933-1934) by Oscar Stonorov and Alferd Kastner. In both projects the local preference for brick construction is combined with the International Style's simple expression of form. Like these early practitioners, postwar, architects working in the style adopted idioms like rectangular massing, flat rooflines and lack of ornamentation, with some regional variations. In Philadelphia these included: an emphasis on horizontal massing, asymmetrical organization, metal-frame windows installed in strips across a building's façade and the use of red brick with exposed concrete trim. Many, if not all, of these characteristics are apparent in the typical SDP school building, constructed between 1948-1967.<sup>74</sup>

Benjamin Franklin High School (1957) designed by Philadelphia firm Thalheimer & Weiss, is one of the best examples of an International Style school built by the SDP. Two distinct, rectangular volumes run the length of an entire city block on Broad Street. The main classroom building, rising six-stories high along the lot's northern edge, is a rare SDP example of stone construction in the postwar period. Austere marble panels cover the entire east and west facades above the first floor. Along the length of the north and south facades, rows of metal frame windows emphasize the building's horizontality. Strips of polished granite panels further define each floor. Slender marble piers, repeated at regular registers, define the building's bays. The uniform treatment of exterior space reflects the simplicity of the classroom block's plan. Rows of double loaded corridors opening on to regular-sized classrooms are stacked one on top of the other. Recreational facilities, an auditorium and cafeteria are located in the shorter brick structure to the south. The combination of different colors and textures: dark grey granite, bright, shiny steel, cool marble and buff brick, call to mind that first example of Philadelphia

<sup>73</sup> Wiley, 64-66.

<sup>74</sup> More information about the International Style and the Philadelphia School of Modern architecture, can be found in the 2009 Thematic Context Statement. Modernism: 1945 to 1980, available on the PHMC website.

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International Style, the PSFS Building. Indeed, the giant slab of classrooms at Benjamin Franklin High resembles nothing so much as a short-ish business tower. International Style architects' approach to school construction was not markedly different from their treatment of other public buildings during this period. Within the sprawling campuses of Northeast Philadelphia, new schools like Northeast (1955) and George Washington (1960) High Schools resembled the one-story factories, laboratories, and office parks that employed an increasing proportion of Americans.<sup>75</sup>

A more modest example of the International Style is the Samuel Powell Public School, in Powelton Village. Designed by David Conner and completed in 1960, the two-story, rectangular elementary school is typical of the type built throughout Philadelphia between 1948-1968. Like Samuel Powell, most of these public schools were built in brick. A preference for the material is a hallmark of Philadelphia Modernism, dating back to the PSFS. In that building, Howe and Lescaze added some Art Deco and Expressionist flourishes to the building's main International Style brick tower. These additions, particularly the curved granite base, were described as "awkward" by Philip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock, in their genre-defining 1931 publication, *The International Style*. But for Howe and Lescaze, the dramatic black base gave context to the tower. It references nearby department store architecture, contextualizing the building within the bustling commercial corridor of Market Street.

The cheery red brick used in International Style schools like Samuel Powell, is another example of the Philadelphia architect's sensitivity to surroundings, and awareness of historic precedents, first expressed with the PSFS. The small brick school, with its concrete trim, references the city's building traditions (with concrete aping the traditional limestone) as well as the historic ideal of the little red (brick) schoolhouse. Its simple, streamlined design, identical rows of metal frame windows and horizontal massing are excellent examples of the International Style as it was practiced throughout Philadelphia in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

The International Style was also employed in the expansion of many older-era schools during this time. Approximately forty additions were built by the SDP between 1948-1968. Most of these additions were built to alleviate overcrowding, and look similar to the multi-story banks of classrooms described in the stand alone examples above. In many cases, an International Style classroom block, with regular rows of metal windows, was applied to the back or side of an older building. Martha Washington Elementary (Irwin Catharine, 1929), in Powelton Village is a good example of this. The use of a light colored brick for the addition provides some consistency with the original Catharine building (built in darker shades of brown and grey brick), while allowing observers to clearly understand where the original building ends and the addition begins. This approach was fairly standard throughout the district, where little attempt was made to mimic earlier styles, with the possible exception of consistency of building materials.

*School Architecture in Philadelphia, Brutalism: 1968-1980*

Beginning in the 1950s, architects like Louis Kahn, began to explore more sculptural treatments of form and heavier materiality in their work. Kahn, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture, had recently returned to Philadelphia to serve as a faculty member at his alma mater. The University of Pennsylvania has always played an important role in the city's architectural heritage, but the postwar years saw a powerhouse of ambitious architects recruited to teach in the school's architecture department. Designers like Kahn, Romaldo Giurgola, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Robert Geddes left their mark on the rapidly changing city, with buildings like the Margaret Esherick (Louis Kahn, 1959-1961) and Vanna Venturi (Venturi,

<sup>75</sup> The Ortleib Bottling factory National Register nomination further explores the similarities between International Style industrial and institutional buildings. A copy of the nomination is available at: <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000475.pdf>.

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1962-1064) houses, the Police Administration Building (Geddes, 1963), the Mitchell/Giurgola designed extension of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology (1968-1971) and the Richards Medical Laboratories (Louis Kahn, 1959-1965).

Kahn's breakthrough project, The Richard Medical Laboratories, designed for the University of Pennsylvania, was completed between 1959-1965. The building quickly became an iconic example of an alternative Modern architecture. A break from the International Style. Kahn's heavy articulation of space, in brick and concrete, departed from the popular, light-as-air Modernism of glass and steel, epitomized by New York City's Lever House (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1951-1952). For Richards, Kahn studied the specific habits of the scientist who would use the lab and designed interior spaces that were specific to their needs. He expressed the specific needs of the building, itself, by separating the structure into distinct volumes, articulating "servant" spaces that housed mechanical systems, from "served" spaces, inhabited by the building's users.

The concerns expressed by Kahn in his design for Richards Medical Laboratories, had much in common with a new style emerging in the UK, called Brutalism. Architecture critic, Reyner Banham, coined the term in 1955, to describe British architects Alison and Peter Smithson. With projects like the Hunstanton School (1949-54), the Smithson's articulated a preference for rough finishes that celebrated material in its raw form. Concrete was left with textured grain marks of the wood used to set it. Like Louis Kahn, advocates of the new Brutalist style designed bolder, heavier buildings with grand exterior gestures and more sculptural articulations of interior function. The architectural community promoted the style's new monumentality as a return to more traditional modes of building, in which architecture was designed to reflect the importance of individual buildings and their service to the larger society.

The Brutalist style was widely adopted in educational settings, especially on college campuses across the US. In Philadelphia, its first use for public school architecture closely tracks the rise of progressive SDP administrators, particularly Mark Shedd (discussed in Chapter I). In addition to adopting new pedagogical approaches, Shedd encouraged the school board to spend more on unique new buildings, designed by prominent local firms, many of whom built in a Brutalist style. Between 1968-1976, the SDP hired firms like Vincent Kling & Associates (Albert M. Greenfield, 1968), Geddes, Brecher, Quells, Cunningham (Clarence Pickett Middle School, 1968, discussed in Chapter II) Carroll, Grisdale, Van Allen (Richard R. Wright, 1969), H2L2 (West Philadelphia University High, 1971, discussed in Chapter III, above), Mitchell/Giurgola Associates (William Penn High School, 1973) and Texas-based Caudill Rowlett Scott (George Wharton Pepper, 1976).<sup>76</sup>

George Wharton Pepper (1976), located in the Eastwick neighborhood of Southwest Philadelphia, is among the best examples of Brutalism in the entire city. Planned in 1968, as part of a large, suburban style development that was never completed, the towering Pepper stands in the middle of a verdant landscape of softly rolling hills and recreational fields—a landscape that is unfortunately prone to flooding. The school was designed by Claudill Rowlett Scott (CRS), a Texas-based firm with a national reputation for school design. CRS's original plan for Pepper won praise from the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects and *Progressive Architecture* magazine. The top heavy-building features a hulking concrete slab, cantilevered over a small hill. Lower floors are recessed in a step-like manner resulting in a negative space along the buildings northwest facade. Slim concrete pillars emphasize the weight of the building's upper floors, while creating a courtyard area below the structure. This emphasis on building weight is a sophisticated example of a Brutalist idiom that can be observed in many public schools built during this period.

<sup>76</sup> More information about many of these architects, and their significance within the Philadelphia School of Modern architecture, can be found in the 2009 Thematic Context Statement. Modernism: 1945 to 1980, available on the PHMC website.

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A more complicated example of an early Brutalist school is Geddes, Brecher, Quells, Cunningham's design for Clarence Pickett Middle School (1968), discussed in detail in Chapter II of this MPDF. In this instance, thick concrete walls with little or no windows prioritized durability and security features. The result was a fortress like structure that is still notable, though not altogether successful.

Robert Geddes's colleague at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, Romaldo Giurgola, encountered similar difficulties when designing William Penn High School. Giurgola's firm, Mitchell/Giurgola, had recently completed the United Fund Building (1969) on Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The seven-story structure was praised for its sensitivity to its place within a larger urban context. Working with SDP superintendent Shedd, Giurgola's original plan for William Penn featured a collection of small schools, each devolved to specialized programs, set within a landscaped park-like setting. But a combination of community-driven concerns, administrative overturn and budget issues at the SDP resulted in the construction of a much different building. The final design for William Penn featured a massive concrete wall along the entire Broad Street facade. The feature effectively blocked the more open interior, comprised of five interconnected structures and landscaped courtyards. Despite alterations, the final building was widely praised in architectural publications at the time of its opening. Soaring central halls gave way to complex arrangements of interior space, designed to accommodate a multiplicity of teacher and student needs. But in Philadelphia, many considered William Penn a failure from the moment it opened its doors. Original programming, designed around single-sex education, was abandoned. Budget shortfalls left facilities designed to house radio and television stations empty of necessary equipment. Security concerns led to courtyards being fenced in. Deferred maintenance led to the school's quick deterioration, and its reputation as a difficult, if not impossible space, grew.<sup>77</sup> The combination of issues affecting the construction, use, and perception of William Penn are representative of problems that continue to plague Brutalist structures in Philadelphia and throughout the US (specific complications related to school construction during this period are addressed further in Chapter II of this MPDF). In 2013, the School District of Philadelphia closed William Penn High for good. In 2015, it was sold to Temple and demolished to make way for an expansion of the University campus.

<sup>77</sup> Inga Saffron, "Magnificent Failure," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 17, 2015.

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A model of Solomon Solis-Cohen Elementary (1948). The single story classrooms with single-loaded corridors allowed for windows to be installed on two classroom walls. Some classrooms had direct access to outdoor space. This type of plan takes advantage of larger lot sizes available in the Northeast, but was never widely adopted by the SDP. Photo, 1947. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



Large windows at Robert Lamberton (1949), in Overbrook, allow for increased natural light and emphasize the connection between the school and its surrounding community. Light weight furniture, some on wheels, was easy for teacher and students to move around throughout the day, to meet different needs. Photo, 1950. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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Aerial of Northeast High School (1955), located on 35 acres. The campus type plan was designed so it was open to the surrounding community and available for use after school hours. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission photo, 1959.

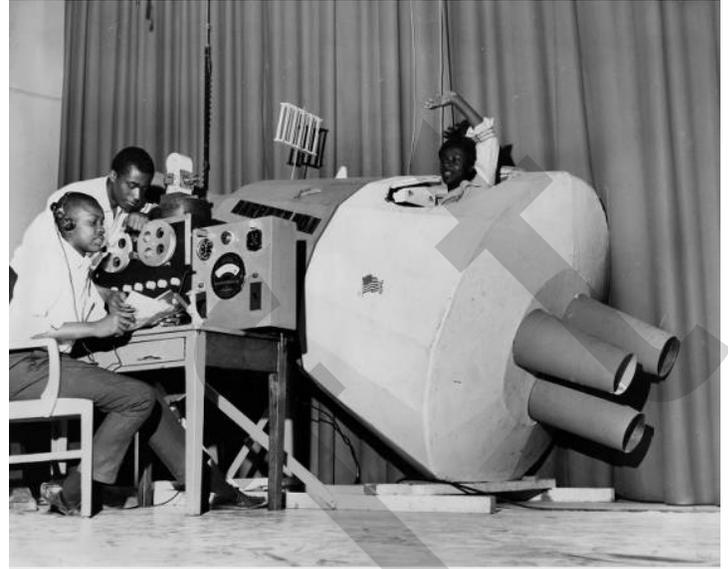


Adult education instruction in metalworking, at George Washington High (1960). Photo, 1966. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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Science and technology curriculum ramped up in the postwar years, resulting in the design of specialized classroom spaces. Above, mock space travel at Northeast High School (left) and Norris S. Barratt Junior High (right). George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



John Hancock Elementary (1967), under construction. The school's round design reflects the experimental pedagogy explored at the demonstration school. Photo, 1967. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

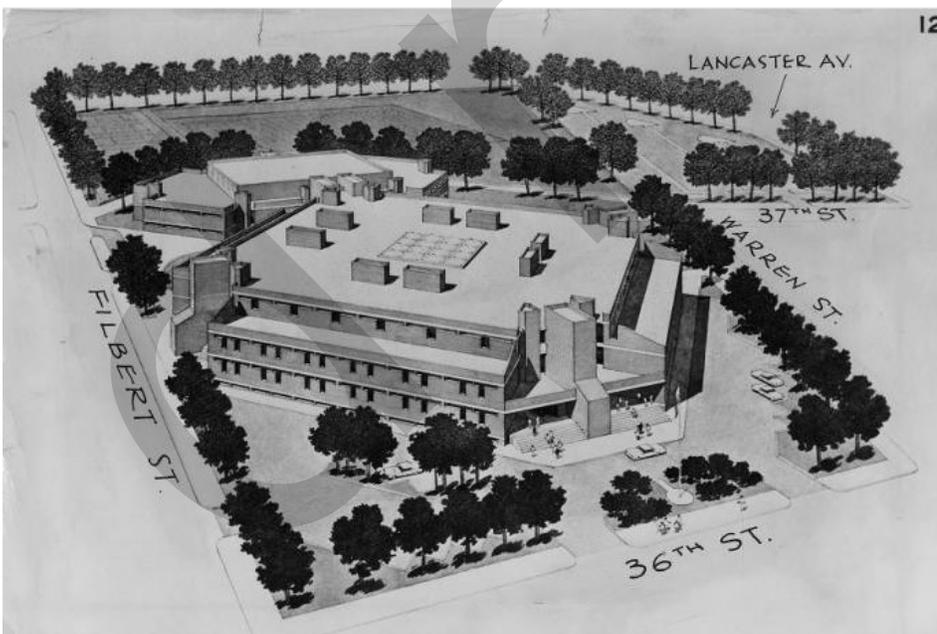
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Model of C.C.A. Baldi Middle School (1974). The school was designed around two large, diamond-shaped clusters, each located on either end of a core that contained the gym and auditorium. The two-story clusters, or nodes, contained conference rooms, teachers' lounges, and reading rooms, with classrooms arranged along the perimeter. The concept was designed to encourage students to engage with one another and with their teachers outside the classroom, in central spaces with built-in furniture provided for research and group work. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



West Philadelphia's University City High (1971), designed by H2L2, reflected multiple trends in architecture, pedagogy, and American society. Its plan resembles one of Baldi's centralized nodes at a much larger scale, and supported experiments with flexible scheduling programs in the 1970s. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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Benjamin Franklin High School (1957) designed by Philadelphia firm Thalheimer & Weiss, is one of the best examples of an International Style school built by the SDP. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.



South Philadelphia High, under construction, 1955. Strips of ribbon windows and simple rectangular massing are two character defining features of International Style Schools. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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The Franklin Spencer Edmonds (top, 1948) and Add B. Anderson (bottom, 1962) schools. Both are good examples of the simple International Style brick elementary schools built throughout Philadelphia between 1938-1968. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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George Wharton Pepper Middle School (1976), located in the Eastwick neighborhood of Southwest Philadelphia, is among the best examples of Brutalism in the entire city. The school was designed by Claudill Rowlett Scott (CRS), a Texas-based firm with a national reputation for school design. Photo by Bradley Maule, Hidden City Philadelphia.

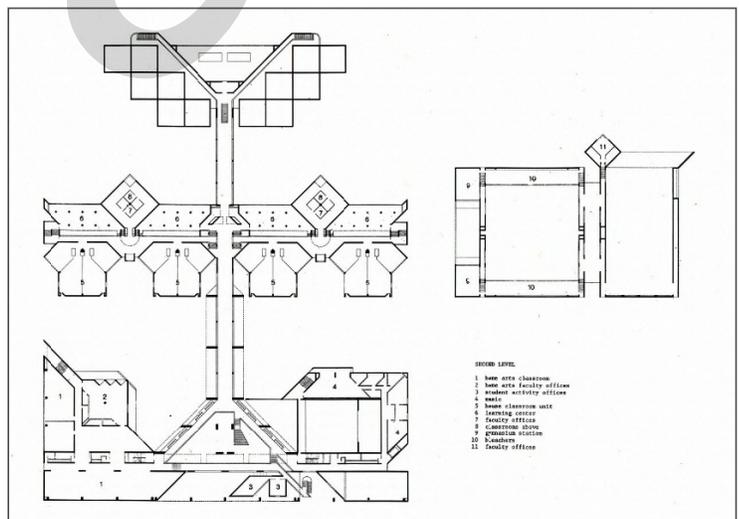
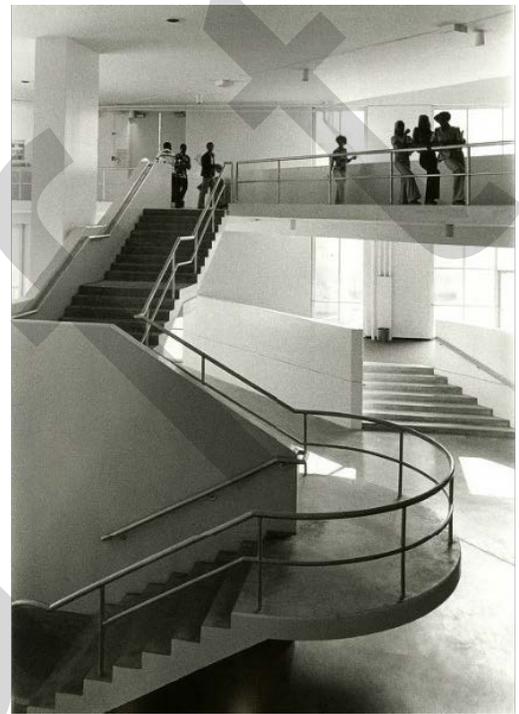


The heavy materials and massing of West Philadelphia's University City High (1971), designed by H2L2, are typical of the Brutalist style. Photo, 1971. George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs, Urban Archives, Temple University.

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William Penn High School, by Mitchell/Giurgola (1974). The school’s stark concrete façade, on Broad Street, belied a complex plan of landscaped courtyards and airy, light filled interiors. University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives.

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## Section F: Associated Property Types and Registration Requirements

To nominate properties under the cover of this Multiple Property Documentation Form, preparers should assess and explain the significance of specific schools in terms of the ways the property reflects trends or major movements in mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century Philadelphia public school evolution, including reform, curriculum, administration, pedagogy and larger social and historical themes highlighted in Section E. Preparers should draw explicit links between the role(s) of education in Philadelphia and the particular community in question, practices of public schooling, and the design and development of the building(s).

It is expected that most properties nominated under this MPDF will be significant either for Education, Social History, or Architecture, or a combination of those themes. Some public school buildings will qualify for the National Register simply because of their architectural importance, while others may qualify for their association with the history of education in Philadelphia, or relation to other historic events like protest movements or labor history. Schools built during this period that retain integrity and reflect the history described above may be considered eligible; and schools closely associated with major events, educational interventions, or designers may be particularly significant. A school may be considered eligible under one or more of the National Register Criteria, but does not need to be nominated for more than one. Thus a school that is considered significant under Criterion A for its educational importance, but which lacks architectural distinction, may be eligible under Criterion A but not Criterion C (architectural merit). Likewise, a school building that is an important example of a particular plan or style may be eligible under Criterion C, though it may not be particularly important in the evolution of Philadelphia's schools. There may be certain schools that may be eligible under Criterion B, for association with an important leader in Philadelphia public school evolution or another individual; consult National Register guidance for Criterion B to pursue such a nomination. For schools potentially eligible under Criterion D, see the guidance provided in the statewide MPDF *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania*.

Most properties evaluated or nominated under this cover will be considered to have local level of significance. There may be a few cases where a property could be shown to have state or national level of significance. To establish a level of significance higher than "local" will require comparisons beyond Philadelphia schools (for architectural significance) or additional context regarding Education or Social History for further state or national perspective.

### *Property Types*

All properties considered for nomination to the National Register under this cover document will have been owned and operated at one time by the Philadelphia School District as public elementary, middle or high schools. The properties currently may remain under the School District ownership, or may be owned by other entities. Current ownership by the school district or city is not required for eligibility, nor is active use as a school. To be eligible for listing under this cover document, a property must be considered to be an important example of a mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century school type or plan, or must have a significant association with the 20<sup>th</sup> century evolution of public education in Philadelphia as outlined above. School properties that entirely pre-date 1938, or for some reason cannot be considered under this cover document, must be evaluated for National Register eligibility independently. Properties that pre-date 1938 but have later additions may be appropriate for consideration under this cover. For the purposes of this document, Philadelphia's public school properties have been divided into two property types, described below with guidance for assessing significance and integrity.

***Single Building Multi-room Schools:*** a single primary building, that may include permanent additions or adjacent trailers. Subtypes include:

- a. Schools that were built entirely within the period covered by this MPDF, 1938-c.1980.

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- b. Schools where the primary building or a portion of the property was constructed pre-1938, with post-1938 additions or other buildings, structures, and landscape features.

Single-building, multi-room schools were built throughout the postwar period, in all Philadelphia neighborhoods, and in a variety of architectural styles. In dense urban areas, the SDP relied on this property type as the most effective way to build within limited lot space. Significant examples of this building type are often associated with schools built in segregated neighborhoods, but are to be found in all areas of the city, particularly at the elementary level.

Significant examples may feature either traditional or innovative plans.

Some significant examples may feature permanent additions or trailers intended to temporarily relieve overcrowding. The construction of permanent additions to these schools, vs. the use of temporary trailers, may be associated with schools built in urban areas vs. schools built in more suburban style neighborhoods.

This type of property will generally include any land historically associated with the school and may contain landscape features such as playgrounds, lawns, sports fields, parking lots, fencing, paths and plantings. The property may include secondary buildings or structures such as small administrative office buildings, shops, garages, storage sheds, pavilions, greenhouses, etc. that are detached from the primary school building.

**Public School Campuses:** multiple related buildings arranged to form a single complex; typically consisting of one or more classroom buildings, with separate structures for gymnasiums, cafeterias, auditoriums, administration buildings, stadiums and any other secondary buildings or structures. The complex will generally have been designed as a cohesive unit, though some portions may pre-date the plan, or portions of the plan may have been implemented later. Subtypes include:

- a. Campuses where all resources were built entirely within the period covered by this MPDF, 1938-c.1980.
- b. Campuses that include resources that were built before 1938 or after 1980.

Public school campus types were built primarily in areas that were undeveloped prior to WWII. This includes neighborhoods in Northeast, Northwest and Southwest Philadelphia. Some examples can be found in other areas, but these are rare. A particular concentration of campus type schools is found in Northeast Philadelphia. This property type is associated with Modern architecture, most notably the International Style. Brutalist examples of campus type public schools can also be found in Philadelphia. Early examples of the type can be found in high schools built for the Northeast. Later (post 1968) examples may be found throughout the city.

Significant examples of this building type are often associated with trends related to suburban architecture. In Philadelphia, these schools were often built in segregated neighborhoods,

Significant examples may feature traditional or innovative plans, or a combination of the two.

Some significant examples of campus type properties may incorporate buildings whose construction pre or postdates the period covered by this MPDF. Some examples may incorporate building with permanent additions or trailers. These additions or trailers may post date the period covered by this MPDF.

The property will include any land historically associated with the school and may contain landscape features such as playgrounds, lawns, sports fields, parking lots, drives, fencing, paths and plantings. If some of the land

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associated with the school property has lost integrity, consult with the SHPO to determine an appropriate boundary.

*Establishing Significance and Assessing Integrity*

For both property types addressed in this MPDF, the approach to establishing significance and assessing integrity is discussed in detail below. These are only guidelines, and relevant properties may be found to have significant characteristic features or aspects of integrity that are not mentioned below. Cases where specific characteristics or questions pertain to a particular property type have been noted in parenthesis.

*Establishing Significance of Public School Properties Under Criterion A*

To be considered eligible under Criterion A, under cover of this MPDF, a particular school property must reflect important developments in the history of educational philosophy and practice, and/or must have an important association with the evolution of mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century education in Philadelphia. Schools may be found to have associations with social history outside the area of Education, like protest movements, Civil Rights or labor history. These schools can be nominated under the broader Social category.

In order to assess whether a school is *significant* for its association with the history of education and/or aspects of social history in Philadelphia, eligibility evaluation or nomination preparers should ask and answer the following sorts of questions:

- How did schooling in this community respond to migration, race and ethnic relations, politics, and other major social forces affecting the Philadelphia? Was any of this history reflected in the choice of school location, size, building materials, landscaping or other features of the built environment?
- What was the school's curriculum? Where did it fit into the history of education in Philadelphia as outlined in Section E above? Did the curriculum reflect any pedagogical innovations of its time? How did it respond to the dynamics of local population growth and changes? How did it incorporate new technology? Did the school's plan or other architectural features, like built in furniture or the design of specialized spaces specifically reflect the curricular goals of the school?
- What "statements" did/does the architecture of the school make about education? Do the plan/layout, façade, and other features of the school's design communicate specific ideas or aspirations about education, its public purpose and role in society?

*Assessing Integrity of Public School Properties Under Criterion A*

To be listed in the National Register, a property not only must be shown to have significance under one or more criteria, but must also retain integrity.

In order to retain integrity, original structures built within the period covered by this MPDF must exhibit physical characteristics that reflect their significance. These characteristics should be clearly legible, despite any later additions or alterations. Examples of physical characteristics and associative qualities that may be particularly relevant to listing a property under Criteria A include:

- Location and a school's setting within the context of a neighborhood, especially as relates to schools that replaced older facilities, or schools that were built next to city playgrounds or recreational facilities.
- Design, as relates to the area immediately surrounding a school as well as other public schools within Philadelphia. In the context of Criteria A this may be expressed in the use of certain building materials, building heights, traditional or experimental plans, incorporation of built in or specifically designed furniture and different treatment of space of building (with campus type plans) that was a reflection of use.

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- Setting, especially as relates to original lot sizes, where a building (or collection of buildings) is located in relation to surrounding streets and within the perimeters of a lot. How multiple buildings relate to one another (in campus type plans) and whether a site was landscaped.
- Feeling, as expressed through landscaping, recreational facilities, parking lots, driveways, fences, windows, choice of building material and other features that express an aesthetic original to the period of construction. As relates to this MPDF, single buildings or campus types may feel urban or suburban, some may feel secure or closed off from their surroundings, while others more open and integrated with outside neighborhood.
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Buildings from this period may be associated with a period of time in evolution of the School District of Philadelphia, or specific events, such as protests or strikes.

*Establishing Significance of Public School Properties Under Criterion B: Association with a Significant Person*

In order to be considered significant under Criterion B in the area of Education or Social History, it must be demonstrated that a school is directly associated with a person important in Philadelphia's educational, social, or political trends and the school must illustrate the person's important achievements. Schools simply named after well-known individuals are not eligible under Criterion B (see Criterion Consideration F, below). Nor is a school eligible that was attended by a famous person, unless the individual is important for something accomplished at the school. To be considered significant for Criterion B in the area of Education or Social History a person must have made demonstrated contributions to or influenced educational practices or developments at the local, state, or national level, and that person must have a direct connection to this school, a connection that relates directly to the person's achievements. An individual such as a popular teacher, coach, or administrator would generally not be considered significant based on National Register guidance. Schools designed by a prominent architect are generally not considered under Criterion B, but would be considered instead under Criterion C. Please refer to the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons* to pursue listing under Criterion B.

*Establishing Significance of Public School Properties Under Criterion C: Design/Construction*

A school may be considered significant under Criterion C if it has distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction. The building should retain features demonstrating important trends in 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles and school design and construction for the defined periods or developments outlined in Section E. A school may also be eligible under Criterion C if it demonstrates different building campaigns that reflect the evolution of school design in Philadelphia, as long as the architectural and landscape elements are distinctive. Properties that simply reflect growth of student population, changing code requirements, or that lack architectural distinction will not be eligible under Criterion C. The plan, materials, design features, and landscape features of the school must clearly reflect prevailing ideas about curriculum, administration and the role of the school in the community or the building must be considered an important example of a twentieth century style.

In order to assess whether a school is *significant* as an important example of design or construction, preparers should ask and answer the following sorts of questions:

- Is the school the work of an important architect practicing in Philadelphia during the period of significance? Where does the school fit within that architect's body of work? How does the school compare with other important Philadelphia buildings of the same style?
- For campus style (and possibly single style plans) is the landscape design for the school the work of an important landscape designer practicing in Philadelphia during the period of significance? Or is landscape design the work of a designer associated with an important architect? How does the school's landscape design compare with other examples of the designers work?

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- Does the school feature distinctive local or regional interpretations of, or adaptations to, the architectural styles discussed in section III of this MPDF?
- Does the school feature any innovative or rare construction methods?
- Is the school's plan or style unique within the context of Philadelphia architecture?
- Does the school feature any interior spaces that are unique to Philadelphia or important examples of a specific style or unique treatment?
- Is the school's architecture reflective of any important developments in curriculum? Where does this type of school fit within the history of educational architecture as outlined in Section E and the statewide public schools MPDF?
- What "statements" did/does the architecture of the school make about education? Do the plan/layout, façade, and other features of the school's design communicate specific ideas or aspirations about education, its public purpose and role in society?

*Assessing Integrity for Public School Properties Significant under Criterion C*

To be listed in the National Register, a property not only must be shown to have significance under one or more criteria, but must also retain integrity.

In order to retain integrity, property types built within the period and covered by this MPDF must exhibit physical characteristics that reflect their significance within the field of design and/or construction. These characteristics should be clearly legible, despite any later additions or alterations. Examples of physical characteristics or features that may be particularly relevant to listing a property under Criteria C are listed below. Please note that this list is provided for guidance only. A property will not be expected to retain integrity for all of these characteristics or features. Any relevant features should be assessed individually. A nomination should then consider how these relate to the larger Aspects of Integrity required to meet Secretary of Interior Standards. Possible characteristics and features related to criteria C include:

- Location, as relates to the relation between a building's style or type and the style or type of buildings typical of the surrounding neighborhood. Was the building designed to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood or stand apart from it? Does it retain integrity to this design decision based on the development of the surrounding neighborhood over the past 50 or more years? This may also relate to aspects of integrity important to maintain a historic feeling.
- Design characteristics including ornamentation (or lack thereof), treatment of materials (or lack thereof), landscaping (or lack thereof), recreational facilities (or lack thereof) arrangement of a building or buildings within the lot, circulation patterns, relation of buildings to one another and their surrounding landscape (in campus type plans), designed views and vistas, small scale site features and interiors treatments, purpose-built furniture (free-standing or built in), originally designed features like murals or artwork.
- Setting, including original landscaping, siting of a school within a lot and a building's relation to open spaces or other buildings (in campus type plans)
- Material, including presence of original building material or replacement in kind. As relates to landscaping, have original landscape plans been maintained? Has vegetation been replaced in kind?
- Workmanship, including evidence of notable craftsmanship or construction methods.

*Establishing Significance of Public School Properties Under Criterion D*

A school or school site may be eligible under Criterion D for its potential to provide valuable information regarding the material culture or social history of 20<sup>th</sup> century education. Eligibility for listing schools under this criterion should be made in consultation with an archeologist. Other themes not related to Education pursued

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under Criterion D will require independent contexts and will not be nominated under this cover. Refer to the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Historical Educational Resources of Pennsylvania* for additional guidance related to Criterion D (Section F pages 5-8).

### ***Criteria Considerations for Both Property Types***

The National Park Service has special guidelines for listing certain kinds of properties, including: religious properties, moved/relocated properties, birthplaces or graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties that have achieved significance in less than 50 years. Please see the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria* for guidance related to these types of properties. The pertinence of that guidance for properties considered under this cover document is summarized below.

It is unlikely that Criteria Considerations will apply for most schools nominated under this cover document. There may be instances where a property formerly owned by a religious institution (Consideration A) was later acquired by the School District for educational use, or when former School District property is now owned by a religious institution. If the property fulfills the Registration Requirements above and is considered important for Education, Social History, or Architecture, the prior or current religious association is irrelevant and the property can be nominated under this cover document. If the property does not fulfill the Registration Requirements, it will need to be evaluated independently from this cover.

Based on current information, it does not appear that any public schools constructed post-1938 have been relocated (Consideration B) but if so, the property may be considered under this cover if it meets the Registration Requirements above and guidance provided for Moved Properties by the National Park Service. Trailers that were provided to supplement classroom space or other needs, and were designed to be moveable, may be considered under this cover if they are in an appropriate setting and historically related to the nominated property.

The SHPO is not aware, at this time, of any school properties that meet the Considerations for Birthplaces or Graves (C); Cemeteries (D), or Reconstructed Properties (E) that would be appropriate for nomination under this cover document. The eligibility of these resources would need to be assessed independently.

There are many schools that are named for local or national leaders in the field of education or historical figures. It is likely that most eligible Philadelphia schools were not built specifically to commemorate an individual, but served a different primary function and will be significant for reasons other than the person for whom they were named. Those buildings do not need to meet Consideration F. To be considered a Commemorative property (Consideration F) and eligible for listing as such, the property must play a primarily commemorative role and can be considered significant independently of this cover for its design or symbolic value.

A property that can be understood to be important for design or association with a person, event, or theme, but is less than 50 years old, or has a period of significance that is entirely or partially less than 50 years old, meets Consideration G. Schools may meet this consideration and be eligible for listing under this cover if it is clear that despite an age of less-than-50 years, the property is an important example of a style or type, or has an important association with Philadelphia's educational trends or social history. Schools that have additions that are less than 50 years old can be eligible if they fulfill the Registration Requirements above and are considered significant. Nominations must make clear that there is adequate perspective and understanding of the importance of the property to fully establish significance under a specific theme. If it is not currently possible to assess significance at this time, due to a lack of perspective or context, evaluation may need to wait a few years.

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## Section G: Geographical Data

The relevant geographic area for this MPDF is the political boundary for the City and County of Philadelphia (c.1980), as that is the area of operation for the Philadelphia School District.

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## Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The context for the MPDF is based upon primary archival research, review of existing literature, field survey, and analysis of existing survey files at the Pennsylvania SHPO (Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission).

Archival and primary sources were examined for information relating to local developments in the theories, practices, and buildings related to public schooling in Philadelphia. Many studies of the history of educational theories and pedagogical practice exist, but these remain rare at the local level. The same is true for the study of academic primary and secondary buildings. Trends in the history of public schooling in Philadelphia have been identified through master's or doctoral theses, professional publications, policy studies and the like. The relevant resources were used to identify historic themes and patterns in 20<sup>th</sup> century public school construction in Philadelphia. These themes were then compared to the findings of the PA SHPO Historic Resources Survey of Philadelphia Public Schools, conducted in 2013-2014. The purpose of the survey was to create an inventory of the 293 known public school buildings in the City of Philadelphia that were built by the School District of Philadelphia for the purposes of public education. The inventory files were studied to identify patterns in school construction, for type, material, size, and style. The results of the PA SHPO can be found on the Philadelphia Historical and Museum Commissions website.

The decision to limit the number of building types to two is in keeping with the approach established in the statewide MPDF *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania*. The single building, multi-room school and campus types were two of three school types identified in that document, which traces the statewide history of school buildings in Pennsylvania from 1682-1969. As no significant new building types were discovered during the research and writing of this MPDF, the relevant building types from the statewide MPDF were determined to be appropriate for use in identifying Philadelphia public schools.

Standards of integrity were based on a combination of awareness of existing conditions and identification of key character-defining features for schools of each property type. All schools experienced change over time depending on their changing or continuing function. Schools adapted for reuse as offices or residences can show little change or can have dramatic alterations in windows, interior floor plan, ceiling height, decorative detail, and materials. Schools remaining in operation as schools will often have interior alterations in floor plan, ceiling height, and surface materials. Such schools will frequently see changes in fenestration patterns and windows. Large communal spaces such as gyms and auditoriums could be divided into new floors. They will likely have additions, sometimes quite large, that expand the footprint of the original building or even engulf it. By identifying key character-defining features of buildings and their associated historic landscapes it is possible to make reasonable decisions regarding the integrity of potential resources. The Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties were the principle document used to develop the guidelines for determination of integrity in Section F.

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## Section I: Major Bibliographical References

### *Local archives*

#### **Athenaeum of Philadelphia**

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia houses architectural drawings and photos of many Philadelphia public schools. The Athenaeum's collection may also be useful in identifying additional work by architects associated with a specific school. The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website is the best way to search the Athenaeum's collection for information on a specific architect or building.  
<https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/index.cfm>

#### **City of Philadelphia Archives**

The Philadelphia City Archives houses information related to some school buildings. In particular they have notes from the meetings of the Arts Commission, which reviewed design proposals for new schools. Searching the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website by school name is the easiest way to find information at the City Archives. <http://www.phila.gov/phils/carchive.htm>

#### **City of Philadelphia Photo Archive**

The city of Philadelphia photo archive contains historic photos, most dating from 1900-1960, searchable by address. <http://www.phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/Home.aspx>

#### **Newspaper and Microfilm Center at the Free Library of Philadelphia**

The Free Library's Newspapers and Microfilm Center has an extensive collection of old Philadelphia newspapers, which can be requested by title or by date. The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and Philadelphia Tribune are particularly useful sources for information about school buildings. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin clippings archives are housed at Temple University, and searching through school clippings at that collection is the easiest way to locate information on a school, if you do not know the exact date of an article you are looking for. The Philadelphia Tribune is the city's main African American newspaper and covered issues related to new schools throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its archives have been digitized and are searchable between 1912-2001, through Proquest. Access to Proquest is available at the Free Library of Philadelphia. <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/faq/guides/genealogy/newspapers.cfm>

#### **PhillyGeoHistory**

The Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network is an online resource where historic maps and aerials from various sources have been gathered and organized in one location. Fire insurance maps and aerial photography from the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be particularly helpful in researching schools.

<https://www.philageohistory.org/geohistory/>

#### **School District of Philadelphia**

The School District of Philadelphia holds original architectural plans and drawings for all schools built in Philadelphia between 1938-1980. The collection is not open to the public and therefore requires researchers to make contact with a school district representative who can schedule an appointment to view specific building plans.

#### **Temple University Urban Archives**

The Temple University Urban Archives houses a wealth of information related to the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the Philadelphia School District. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* news clippings collection are organized according to specific schools and are an excellent way to start tracing the history of a school's construction and

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development. Many of the paper's images have been digitized and are searchable. In addition, the papers of education activists Floyd Logan and Helen Oakes are housed at the Urban Archives. Finding aids for each collection may help you to determine whether they hold anything related to a specific school. The archives holdings are partly searchable via their website but researchers may prefer to contact the archives directly for advice on locating information on specific schools. <https://library.temple.edu/scrc/urban-archives>

### **University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives**

The University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives holds the collections of many of the most important architects working in Philadelphia in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The archives holdings are partially searchable through the Philadelphia Architects and Building website, but researchers may prefer to contact an archivist directly for specific requests. <https://www.design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/about>

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