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## Woodbridge Historical Essay 2023-2024

Most kids today all have one question which is said dreadfully, “Why do we have to go to school?” But seriously, why do we? What is the importance of free education? What would happen if we did not have public schools? Without public schools, the only way kids could get an education is by tuition, commonly in private religious schools. Though, this isn’t quite convenient for families who may not be as fortunate. It all starts with the Founding Fathers. They needed to make sure that our future generations were aware of their rights and freedoms. The people needed to be educated on this as well. They took into consideration families who could not afford an education and decided to open public schools. This was so everyone could get an education for free regardless of religion and income. So how did Woodbridge's first school start? As the population of Woodbridge grew, the need for a school also grew. The idea of building a school was advocated in 1701. The whole township had only one-room schools. Where now we have one school for each town as the population increases and the need for education is acknowledged. We need schools to create more opportunities for adaptive learning in the future. It is needed to create a basic building block of a person's life and their skills of thinking critically. Schools have evolved and some aspects have remained the same between the years 1925 and now. This includes classroom environments, teachers, extracurricular activities, and sports.

A person should feel energized and prepared to study as soon as they enter their classroom. Eager to expand their knowledge and create new goals in their life. Additionally, numerous visuals are arranged throughout the room, and rows of desks for students to sit in. Our classroom is equipped with a smart board in the front. We are privileged enough to be able to have proper heating along with air conditioning, unlike the 1934's. According to the "Leader Journal" on March 2, 1934, it states, "The Woodbridge Township schools will remain open regardless of Journalistic rumors...rumors where started to the effect that unless the board managed to pay \$2,000 to coal dealers there would be a coal shortage in the schools and they would be forced to close. (Page 1)" In this section of the newspaper, it is brought to attention that there had been a coal shortage meaning that they wouldn't be able to heat furnaces in the school. This conflict would have led to the closing of the school. One singular furnace was heating the entire school during those days. We are lucky to have one heater per classroom now. There were no fancy technology boards but instead chalkboards. The classrooms weren't as spacious as they are now, often with three students per bench when now there is a desk for every student. Which shows how much time has changed.

Teachers have a significant role in young students' lives, often motivating them to be what they want to be when they grow up. Teachers however are adults who earn a living. How much does it differ from 1934's though? The Leader Journal of March 9 1934 states, "A possibility of securing more cash in payment of teachers' salaries for December and January... Necessary papers were brought back to Woodbridge and

application was made by the Board of Education for the sum of \$58,892.08...insurance of the bonds for December to January salaries would make the application for cash invalid.” In this text, it is written that the sum of all the teachers' salaries equals \$58,892.08 per year. Currently, an average teacher without a doctorate would make around 50-90k per year differing by a vast number. Regardless of the salary all of the teachers were merely how much one teacher makes per year. They couldn't even afford to pay that salary to teachers and often had to give bonds. A bond is very rare to be given these days. It is inconvenient for any teacher now to accept bonds as a form of payment instead of a regular salary.

Many extracurricular activities are offered in schools these days, including DJ clubs, newspaper clubs, pottery clubs, painting clubs, gardening clubs, baking clubs, math clubs, world cultural clubs, video game clubs, DJ clubs, and bands. The only club mentioned that was in the past was band. As the Leader Journal of March 16, 1934, writes, “John H. Love Traces Growth of Music and Orchestra In Public Schools of Woodbridge Township...Musical instruments were purchased from Mr. Hart...A number of teachers joined...made such an excellent progress that they played for the commencement exercises in the old White Church. (Page 1)” It also states, "Music was first introduced into public schools by the Board of Education in 1890. (Page 1)” Though this article was published in 1934, it is clear that music was first introduced decades ago. Multiple Concerts have been held in modern day times and in the 1934's. This was all because in 1890, the Board of Education decided to add music to the extracurricular classes. Instrumental classes are still provided now till this day as an elective for

students. On the other hand, kids have the choice to participate in sports if they would rather. Take dance, volleyball, track, and bowling for example. Football, basketball, baseball, and cheerleading are some additional sports that were in the 1925s as well. In recent years, it is common for students who do such activities to get scholarships. As it turns out though, it was also common in 1936 with 2 specific students. Written in the Leader Journal on January 17, 1936, on page 9 it says, "'Dirty Dan" as Mr. Sullivan is affectionately called, has heard of the sports caliber of Messrs. Simonsen and Scutti...been informed of the high grades received by the boys in their studies at the Barron Avenue institution... Prof. Daniel Sullivan decided...that two of his school scholarship awards must be extended to the two Woodbridge students." In this statement, two students named Domonic Scutti and Leroy Simonsen receive a scholarship from a professor named Daniel Sullivan as a reward for their athletic abilities and the maintenance of their high grades.

From the middle of the 1900s till the present, Woodbridge Township schools have seen numerous changes. From coal furnaces, bonds, and scholarships, to multiple heaters, to perfectly planned out salaries. These are just some of the ways schools have changed. But in the end, a school is a school. A place where you go to gain knowledge, get inspired, and make friends. Open-minded American schools don't just focus on studies, but provide great exposure to creativity. This is what I hope to see as a continuous pattern in the future of schools in Woodbridge.

# Bibliography

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