



Woodbridge Senior High School 1956

A second senior high school, John F. Kennedy Memorial High School opened in September 1964 with Miss Mary P. Connolly serving as its first principal. This was followed by the opening of Colonia Senior High School in 1967 with its first principal Dr. Donald R. Geddis joining Woodbridge and JFK as the three senior high schools in Woodbridge Township teaching 10th through 12th grades. In the early 1980s, the curriculum changed when junior high schools were renamed to middle schools teaching grades 6th through 8th and senior high schools were grades 9th through 12th. Rapid school openings also took place at the elementary school level throughout the early to mid-20th Century. Expansion continued post World War II attributed to the baby-boomer population increase. A listing of all the Woodbridge Township school openings appears in this brochure.

Special Education

In 1913, the New Jersey State Legislature passed a law to establish vocational schools on a county level. Perth Amboy, New Brunswick, and Jamesburg were among the first towns in Middlesex County to offer courses in mechanical drawing, carpentry, cooking, dressmaking and agriculture. Twenty-five years later, in 1938, plans were made to open a Middlesex County Girls' Vocational School in Woodbridge. On land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Hampton Cutter and with \$120,000 of federal funds toward the \$267,000 cost, the first Vocational High School in Woodbridge Township opened on September 18, 1939. The initial enrollment that first year was 194. The vocational school system continues to expand to this day providing educational opportunity for those not primarily interested in an academic curriculum and seeking instructional training toward a particular trade.

The Beadleston Act of 1954, named for Speaker of the N.J. General Assembly Alfred Beadleston who spearheaded the Act, guaranteed those with developmental disabilities and special needs the right to special education in the State of New Jersey. Once again, Woodbridge Township was on the forefront of this movement providing this type of special education for these disabled pupils as early as the late 1930s.

Early on, School #11 on Ross Street in Woodbridge and later joined by Colonia Junior High School offered classes for educable students with developmental disabilities who were socially functional. In 1956, conditions were made that one classroom for special needs be provided for each 900 students of the total enrollment in the

Woodbridge Township School District.

Woodbridge Township's dedication to special needs paved the way for P.A.C.E. (Program for the Advancement of Children's Education) originally housed at Glen Cove Elementary School in Sewaren. This school was later renamed Matthew Jago School in honor of its principal who made many strides toward special education by offering therapeutic gym classes in the early 1970s and aiding hard of hearing children with the use of state-of-art equipment. The P.A.C.E. program has gone on to win several honors for its innovative work with its children through special education classes.

Student Activities / Extracurriculars

While the faculty and administration in the school district focused on providing the best education for its students, extracurricular and student activities have long been essential to an added learning experience and enjoyment within the school environment.

Before physical education was made compulsory in 1917, baseball was the first organized sport back in 1899 when School #1 served as the town's high school. Football began in 1913 and was banned the following year due to a serious injury to a player, but resumed in 1924 and continues as one of the more popular high school sports. Basketball was introduced in 1914 becoming the first girl's interscholastic sports team. As other sports became popular, they were added to the athletic programs at all levels of the school district. To liven up the games and promote student body involvement, the first Woodbridge High School Cheerleading Squad was organized in 1927.



First WHS Cheerleaders 1927

Numerous non-athletic options existed for student involvement. Music was introduced in Woodbridge schools in 1919 at which time Miss Anna C. Frazer directed the first school orchestra and glee club. The first Woodbridge High School Band took to the field in 1926 establishing music organizations as an important part of school activities.



WHS Band 1932

After the attack on Pearl Harbor leading to our country's involvement in World War II, the WHS Junior Red Cross organized drives collecting scrap metal, newspapers, rubber, tin cans, and discarded iron materials taking an active role to assist in the war effort. Other organizations including the Future Teachers of America and Future Business Leaders of America were chartered as Woodbridge High School Chapters during the 1950s. The Woodbridge Chapter of the National Honor Society was founded on April 19, 1951 to recognize excellence among selected students in our town.

In 1962, Woodbridge Senior High School became involved with the student exchange program through the Middlesex County Association of High School Councils. Elizabeth Sales from England became our first foreign exchange student to study in the Woodbridge Township School District in 1963. A year later, Michael Van Dzura, a WHS junior, was the first Woodbridge student to study abroad in Peru during the summer of 1964.

Student activities and school extracurricular have always been and will always be an integral part in the development of students in the Woodbridge Township School System preparing our students for all their future endeavors while taking on the challenges in our ever-changing world.

Technology & Education

Over the past half century, America has gone from treating technology as a novelty to a necessary function in our everyday lives. On the educational front technology has become a vital part of classroom instruction, curriculum mapping, and standard learning. From the 1980s when computers first gained a foothold in classrooms to the dramatic growth of the World Wide Web, Internet Technology connectedness not only revolutionized business and interpersonal relationships but also education.

In the early 1980s, Schools #19 Menlo Park Terrace and # 23 Woodbine Ave. were selected by lottery to be pilot schools acquiring desktop computers to promote computer literacy for the younger students in Woodbridge Township. In February 1985, four additional schools, #14, #22, #25, and #28 also selected through a lottery, joined the two pilot schools bringing computers to the classroom. Eventually all the public schools in the township at every level implemented computer labs with the emphasis on meeting the needs of all students establishing a correlation between the lab and the classrooms.

The goals of this pilot program included computer literacy, programming to cover computer commands and languages, and

WOODBIDGE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School No.	Elementary School Name	Town	Year Built
No. 1	Mawbey Street School *	Woodbridge	1962
No. 2 / 16	Outlook Avenue School	Colonia	1922/1959
No. 3	Strawberry Hill School	Woodbridge	1931
No. 4 / 5	Avenel Street School *	Avenel	1912/1948
No. 6	Iselin School	Iselin	1917
No. 7	King George Road School	Fords	1909
No. 8	Keasbey School	Keasbey	1908
No. 9	Port Reading School *	Port Reading	1962
No. 10	Hopelawn School	Hopelawn	1914
No. 11	Ross Street School *	Woodbridge	1920
No. 12	Sewaren School	Sewaren	1920
No. 14	Ford Avenue School *	Fords	1924
No. 15	Iselin School	Iselin	1933
No. 17	Inman Avenue School	Colonia	1953
No. 18	Indiana Avenue School *	Iselin	1956
No. 19	Menlo Park Terrace School *	Menlo Park Terrace	1957
No. 20	Claremont School *	Colonia	1957
No. 21	Oak Ridge Heights School *	Colonia	1959
No. 22	Lynn Crest School *	Colonia	1959
No. 23	Woodbine Avenue School *	Avenel	1960
No. 24	Kennedy Park School *	Iselin	1960
No. 25	Lafayette Estates School *	Fords	1960
No. 26	Benjamin Avenue School *	Iselin	1964
No. 27	Pennsylvania Avenue *	Colonia	1964
No. 28	Matthew Jago School * (Originally Glen Cove)	Sewaren	1969
No. 29	Oak Tree Road School *	Iselin	2018

Middle Schools (Originally called Junior High Schools)	Street	Year Built
Woodbridge *	Baron Ave.	1911
Colonia *	Delaware Ave.	1960
Fords *	Fanning St.	1960
Iselin *	Woodruff	1960
Avenel *	Woodbine Ave.	1964

Senior High Schools	Street	Year Built
Woodbridge *	Samuel Lupo Dr. (Orig. Kelly St.)	1956
John F. Kennedy Memorial *	Washington Ave.	1964
Colonia *	East St.	1967

*- Denotes school currently open as of this publication

word processing allowing students to write, revise and correct compositions. Also covered in the program were computer managed instructions to help teachers organize and manage their lesson plans and maintain recordkeeping.

In September 1999, a 3.5-million-dollar plan provided all the schools in Woodbridge Township with internet access connecting over 2,000 terminals to an integrated municipal computer system. The infrastructure was linked to the Main Woodbridge Library system allowing students the ease to obtain books, periodicals, and other research sources directly from their computers. U.S. Senator Robert Torricelli, along with Woodbridge Mayor James McGreevey, heralded this internet system as a model for school districts across the State of New Jersey. Woodbridge Township School District had officially entered the computer age!

It is important to note that technology is a tool used in education and not an end in itself. The future of education has, and always will, lie in what educators can do with current and future advancements and how they can be best used to support the needs of their students.

Pandemic and the Future of Education

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. The pandemic affected every area of public education and put a spotlight on the strengths of our school district. Teachers and educators in Woodbridge Township were forced to show creativity and determination in helping our students continue to get the education they deserved. COVID-19 disrupted traditional classroom learning and brought a shift to remote learning.

Virtual online teaching commenced in March of 2020. Throughout that year, teachers in the Woodbridge School District were given special training with online learning programs where the ZOOM platform was the preferred choice. As the 2020-21 school year progressed, a transition to a hybrid schedule was implemented with half of the student body physically attended school on alternate days. Face masks, social-distancing, and daily temperature checks upon entering school buildings were necessary measures taken. By the 2021-2022 school year, all students were back in the school buildings.

School nurses, who first became part of the Woodbridge Township school faculty in 1919, were also asked to take on extra duties. In addition to providing basic healthcare to its students, the pandemic forced school nurses to screen for COVID-19 and to conduct contact tracing on a daily basis by identifying any individuals in the school who tested positive for COVID or who came in contact with an infected person to interrupt any further spread of the virus among our school community.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a

long-lasting impact on the educational landscape resulting in more adaptive learning opportunities for the future. Throughout the years, the Woodbridge Township School District administrators and faculty have strived to provide the best opportunities for the educational enrichment of its students. This is a goal our school district will continue to achieve as we face future challenges and overcome any anticipated obstacles to provide quality education to its Woodbridge Township residents.

WOODBIDGE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. John Love * 1899 - 1933

Victor C. Nicklaus 1933 - 1956

Patrick A. Boylan 1956 - 1969

Dr. Reigh Carpenter 1969 - 1972

Dr. Fredric Buonocore 1972 - 1995

Dr. Leroy Seitz 1995 - 2000

Kenneth Kuchtak 2000 - 2002

Vincent S. Smith 2002 - 2008

Dr. John Crowe 2008 - 2012

Dr. Robert Zega 2013 - 2021

Dr. Joseph Massimino 2021 -

** Initially called Supervising Principal*

#1 opened for classes, Woodbridge High School (which was part of School #1) graduated its first class. In that same year of 1881, the first reports cards were distributed. More emphasis was placed on teacher training and accreditations with the establishment of this flagstaff school, paving the way for future openings of schools in Woodbridge Township at various educational levels.

In 1895, John Henry Love took over as principal of School #1. During his reign, the school curriculum enhanced with the introduction of new English and Latin courses along with a chemistry lab. The High School faculty within School #1 increased to three faculty members with Mary Van Arsdale and Albarata Dilks joining the staff. As a result of these efforts to strengthen the standard of schooling in Woodbridge, John Henry Love was appointed the first Superintendent (initially called Supervising Principal) of all Woodbridge Township schools in 1899. With the population boom in our township during the 20th century coupled with the need for more modernized educational facilities, School #1 was no longer used as a school and in 1961 became the Woodbridge Township School Administration Building.



Dr. John Love

Board of Education

The New Jersey State Board of Education was established in 1866 and consisted of ten members. On October 19, 1911, by an Act of Legislation, guidelines were established and standards for membership were enacted stipulating members must be citizens residing in New Jersey for at least five years. Other conditions of the Board, appointed by the Governor, were no two members could reside in the same county, at least two members must be female, and no political party could be in the majority.

Prior to the 1911 Act, the State abolished "trustees" in 1894 and were replaced by local Boards of Education to maintain the schools and define its education within

the individual towns. Due to this State law, the first official nine-member Woodbridge Township Board of Education was created. Its inaugural members were C.W. Boynton, John Correia, Jr., Charles B. Demarest, John H. Hilsdorf, Joshua Liddle, John Lockwood, Joseph W. Savage, C.B. Smith, and Howard Valentine. The new board oversaw School #1, along with several additional schools that opened by 1894. A total of 1278 students were enrolled in the schools; 794 at School #1.



Board of Education 1924

According to the New Jersey State Law, since Woodbridge is governed as a "township," its local Board of Education is a separate entity with its own budget and is autonomous to the governing body of the Township. Currently, the local Board of Education is still comprised of nine members. Three are elected at large each year for a three-year term without salary. As of this writing, elections are held each year with the General Elections in November.

High Schools

Prior to 1911, high school classes were held in School #1. When high school became a four-year curriculum in 1897, increased enrollment facilitated the need for a separate building to be designated as the town high school. On October 6, 1910, New Jersey Governor Mr. J. Franklin Fort presided over the groundbreaking ceremony on Barron Avenue to lay the cornerstone for Woodbridge High School. John Pierson & Son from Perth Amboy was the architect for the proposed high school. Ira Course served as the general contractor with John Reed from New Brunswick as the heating contractor.



Original Woodbridge High School 1928

On September 11, 1911, Woodbridge High School officially opened. The origi-

nal facility included John H. Love, Supervising Principal and Miss Edith Whitney, Vice-Principal; along with teachers Isaac Gilhuly, Edith Brandon, Viola Dunham, Ruth Braley, Helen Homes, Anna Shoemaker, Leona Van Ripper, Frank C. Ryder, Nellie Hamel, Anna Keegan, Edith Scott, and Edith Hinsdale. Male students had to wear jackets and ties and females dressed in long skirts and blouses or full-length dresses.



WHS Study Hall 1912

As enrollment continued to rise during the 1920s into the 1930s, additional rooms were annexed to the original structure. These additions included an auditorium, gymnasium, a separate Principal's office, and a chemistry laboratory. With the continued population growth in Woodbridge and the need for more classrooms, a larger Woodbridge High School was proposed on April 29, 1949 during a Board of Education conference.



WHS Faculty 1924

After years of planning, the dream of a state-of-the-art high school in Woodbridge Township came to fruition in September 1956 with the opening of a new \$3,125,000 Woodbridge Senior High School on Kelly St. (later renamed Samuel Lupo Dr.) The old Barron Ave. High School was converted to a junior high school which housed 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. Other junior high school buildings were constructed in Ise-lin, Fords, Colonia, and Avenel from 1959 to 1964.

www.woodbridgehistory.com

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School #1

Special Thanks to Mayor John E. McCormac

Dr. Dolores Capararo Gioffre,
Chairperson
Courtney Lowry,
Vice Chairperson
Kathy Jost-Keating,
Bruce Christensen
Daniel Dias

Daniel D'Arcy
Martin S. Genser
John Lande
Miguel Martin
Ashley Kurbanoglu,
Secretary
Frank Pelzman

Commission Members

The mission of the Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission is to inform, educate, advise and unite public officials and the community at large as an advocate for the preservation of the rich history of Woodbridge Township.

Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

Early Need For Education

The early settlers in Woodbridge Township realized education for everyone would be difficult to achieve without a structured and more systematic approach to schooling. Without a formal system for funding education, local schools would be dependent on tuition payments for children of the well-to-do, church-support, or private tutoring. These arrangements would exclude children on the basis of income, religion, geographic locations, and other reasons.

The Founding Fathers believed the success of a newly-adopted American democracy would depend on an educated populace to ensure our rights and freedoms would be maintained. While the responsibility for schooling rested with the individual localities, Federal legislation in the 1780s provided acreage of specified lands in trust to set aside for the support of public schools.

Initial Development of Woodbridge Education

Education and schooling were given very little consideration when Woodbridge was first settled due to the demands of frontier life in a rural society. As the population grew and Woodbridge Township was given its royal charter in 1669, the need for education became evident. Over a hundred years before land ordinances were established by the Federal Government to set aside property for public schools, in its original charter Woodbridge Township set provisions to set aside two-hundred acres of "good upland." At least one hundred of those acres would be laid out for the "maintenance of free schools" that would be "exempted from paying of the Lord's Rent of a halfe penny per Acre or any other rate of taxes whatsoever for ever."

Early education relied primarily on religious groups within the town. James Fullerton was appointed Woodbridge's first schoolmaster in 1689, followed by John Bleacher, the town's second schoolmaster in 1691 who established the first night school in New Jersey. In 1694, John Brown became the third schoolmaster in Woodbridge. The following year, the State of New Jersey passed a law delegating each town to appoint a salaried schoolmaster to be paid from taxes. This system proved to be challenging due to the difficulty of collecting taxes at that time.

First Schools

During a town meeting in 1701, a proposal was discussed to build a dedicated school in lieu of holding classes in the town's Meeting House, resulting in the dedication of Strawberry Hill built in 1702. Before a well was dug in 1851 to supply water for students at the Strawberry Hill School, the pupils had to leave the classroom to get a cup of water at a nearby home. During the middle of the 18th century a second school was erected on the corner of Bunn's Lane and Amboy Ave. These schools were overseen by George Eubanks, who served as Woodbridge schoolmaster from 1711 until the middle of the 18th century. Students attending these early schools had to pro-

vide their own textbooks and primers used to teach children to read.



Woodbridge Academy from etching circa 1844. Foreground on left.

In 1794, the Woodbridge Academy was built on the west side of Rahway Ave. spearheaded by Revolutionary War activist Jonathon Freeman. The Academy offered preparatory courses for college, West Point, and other military academies. In 1829 it was known as the Woodbridge Classical and Commercial Institute where prominent names in Woodbridge, i.e., Freeman, Cutter, Potter, and Brown were subscribers of the school. It would be later replaced by the Downtown School in 1851.



Triple desk used in Woodbridge Academy

Elm Street Institute, a private high school later known as Morris Academy, opened in 1826 on the site of Henry Potter's Inn on Rahway Ave. Under the direction of James Stryker, this institution offered a variety of courses in mathematics, sciences, history, and foreign languages as essential parts of science and business curriculums. Other schools including the NJ School of Art in 1846 and the Jefferson School that opened in 1866 were among the early educational institutions in Woodbridge Township.

Free School Lands

Before the famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787, along with the earlier Land Ordinance of 1785 that established laws by the U.S. Federal Government under the Articles of Confederation to set aside a section of each township's land for the support of public schools, Woodbridge Township set the trend to bring free education to its residents. Provisions for this resolution were included in Woodbridge Township's 1669 Charter.

This concept did not come without challenges of properly surveying agreed upon land. On October 10, 1682, a committee comprised of Captain Thomas Pike, John Bishop Sr., Thomas Bloomfield and Samuel Morse were appointed to ensure the school lands would be properly sur-

veyed. Over the next 30 years, surveying struggles continued until 1715 when one hundred acres were set aside as free school lands with current landmarks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Garden State Parkway, the Reading Railroad and the Woodbridge-Edison Township line serving as its initial boundaries.

After this initial resolution, school land was granted from year to year to appointed committees and leased for specified time periods. In 1769, the freeholders of the town organized a committee defining its duties and powers to maintain the Free School Lands. The new committee designated as "Trustees" of the Free School Lands of Woodbridge Township included John Moores, Nathaniel Heard, Moss Bloomfield, Benjamin Thornall, Ebenezer Foster, Joseph Shotwell, and Robert Clarison.




Trustees of Free School Lands 1924

Woodbridge School #1

With various schools operating within the township during the 18th and 19th centuries, the need for a primary flagship school in Woodbridge was imminent. Before the consolidation of the school districts and the construction of School No. 1, most of Woodbridge attended classes in one of the one or two-room schoolhouses with all grades instructed in a single room. Woodbridge's public schools were coed from the beginning, although boys and girls were often seated apart in the classrooms and separate Boys and Girls entrances were common. At a town meeting on October 11, 1875, a proposal for this flagship school in Woodbridge was discussed. In January of the following year, clay manufacturer William H. Berry with the trustees announced property on Brown St. (later renamed School St.) would be purchased from James Valentine to build the proposed school with a budget not to exceed \$25,000.

As construction began, Trustee Harry Anderson was named the first principal along with Harry E. Eldridge as vice-principal and teacher Kate A. Moore. A school bell was purchased to be placed atop the building tower with the following inscription: "School District #24, A.D. 1876, C.W. Boynton, President; Howard Valentin, D.C. [District Clerk.] William Berry and Charles Campbell, Trustees. Wisdom is better than Gold."

Woodbridge School #1 was officially dedicated on January 6, 1877 by Woodbridge clergymen. Four years after School



Chartered 1669

Historic Tour of WOODBRIIDGE

Volume XIV
School Days:

A History of Education in Woodbridge Township

Compiled by the
Woodbridge Township Historic Preservation Commission

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