

POUGHKEEPSIE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public education in Poughkeepsie began in 1843, when the state legislature created a village Board of Education. This twelve-member board was authorized to borrow money and raise taxes to build one new school and rent rooms in five other buildings.

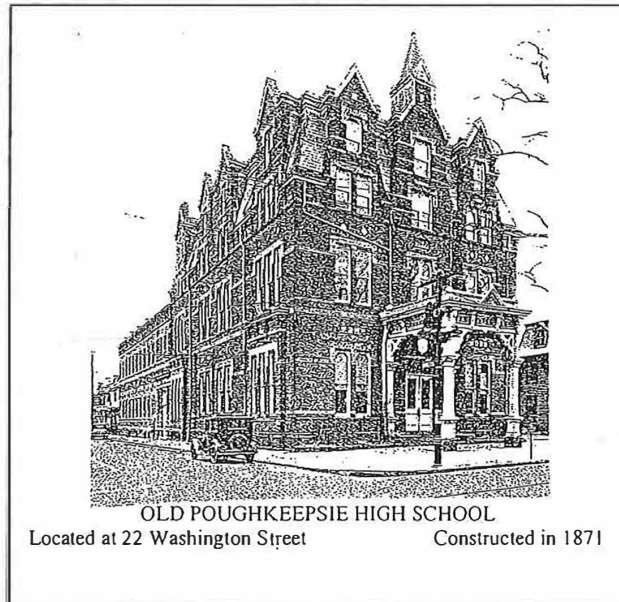
The first free school was built on the corner of Mill and Bridge Streets. The old Abraham Lincoln School, built in 1906 and presently used as apartments, still stands on that site. Another building was built on Church Street around 1856. The second floor of this building housed the high school for a few years until it moved to rented space in the Dutchess Academy, on the corner of South Hamilton and Montgomery Streets. In 1871, a new high school was built on Washington Street and Lafayette Place. At one point, twelve school sites, some as small as one classroom, were scattered throughout the city.

Sites of Other
Historic Schools:

School #1:
Mill & Bridge Streets

School #4:
Bayeaux Street

School #6:
Hoffman Street

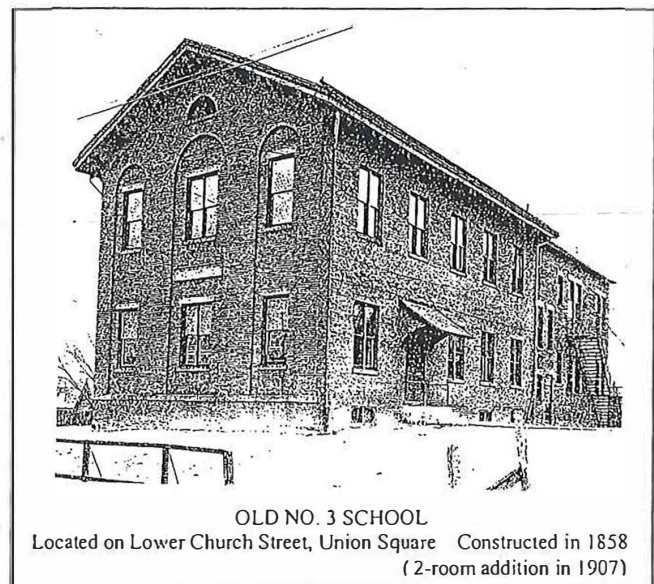
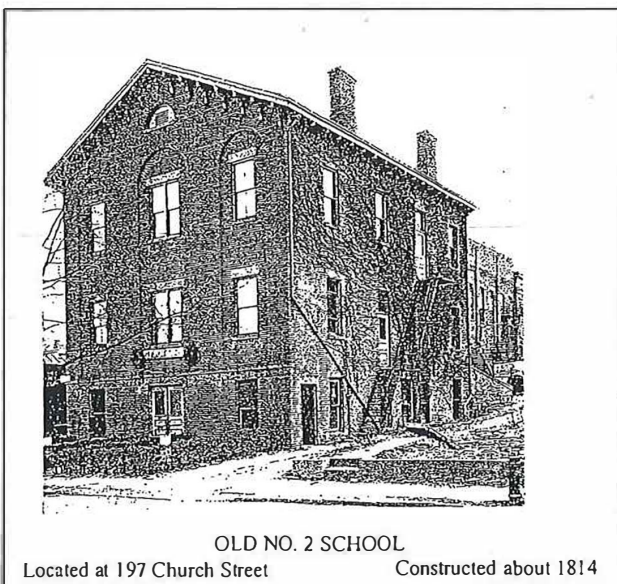


School #7:
Academy Street

School #10:
South Hamilton Street

School #11:
North Clover Street

School #12:
Mill Street





OLD S.F.B. MORSE SCHOOL NO. 5
Located 32-34 No. Clinton Street Constructed in 1800

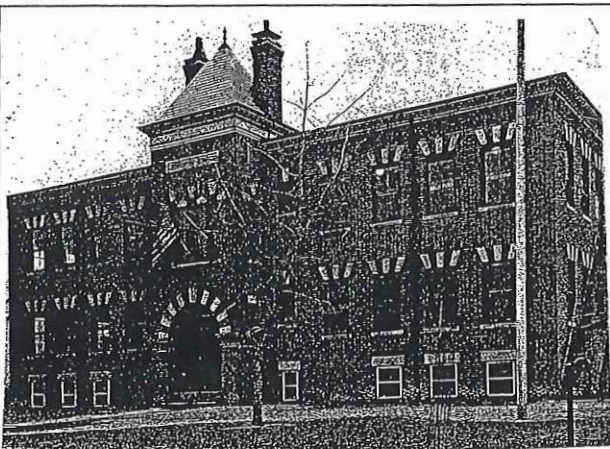


OLD NO. 8 SCHOOL
Located at 150 Cannon Street Constructed in 1875

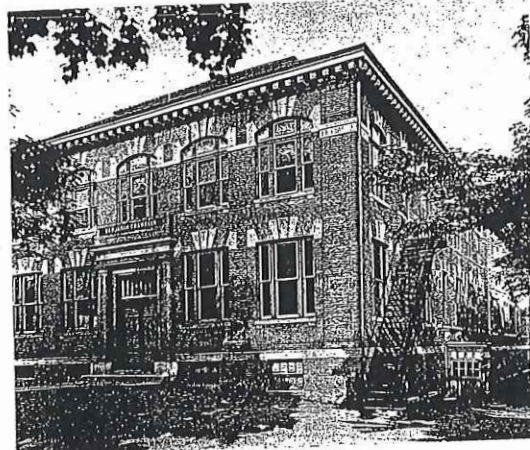
In 1874, the New York State Legislature passed the Compulsory Education Bill which made attendance mandatory for children between the ages of 8 and 14 and made employment of children under 14 illegal during school hours. Prior to education being required in New York State, only pupils who could pass an entrance examination showing they could read, write, locate places on a map and do arithmetic were admitted to the public schools.

A thirty-year period of school construction that gave us the elementary schools we operate today began shortly after the turn of the 20th century. Between 1901 and 1929, when the onset of the Great Depression put a halt to district plans to construct a new high school and a junior high school, a total of eleven schools were built in the city of Poughkeepsie to replace schools that were fifty to seventy years old.

School Buildings Constructed During the First 30 Years of the 20th Century (Pictures taken from the Report of the School Department for 1929)



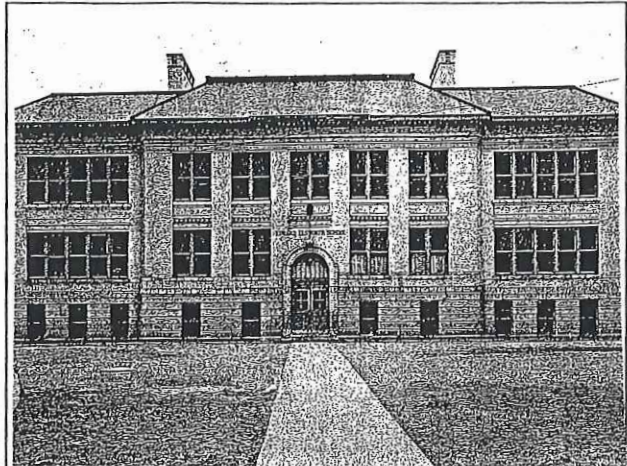
LIVINGSTON SCHOOL
Located Corner of Lincoln Avenue and Dean Place
Constructed in 1901



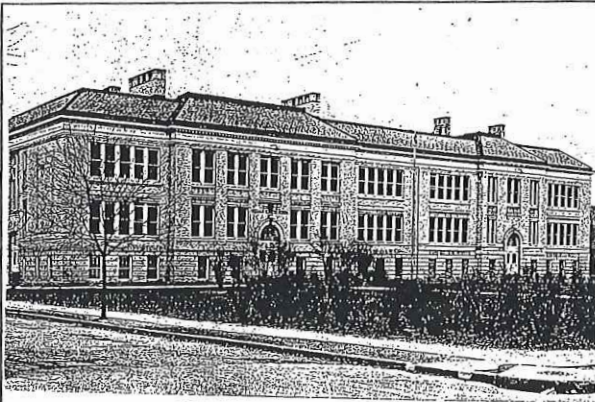
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SCHOOL
Located 50 Delafield Street Constructed in 1904
(8-room addition in 1922)



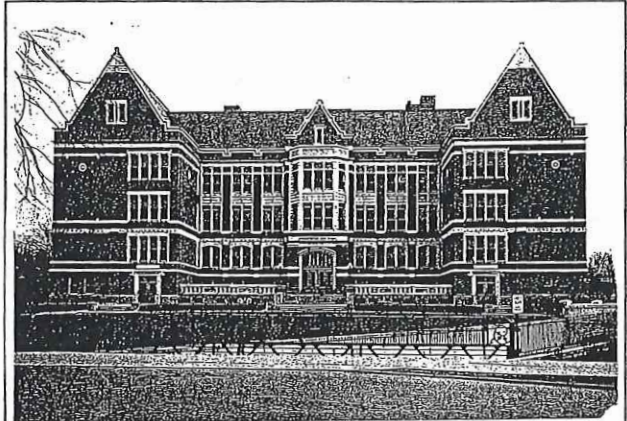
ABRAHAM LINCOLN SCHOOL
Corner Mill & North Bridge Streets Constructed in 1906



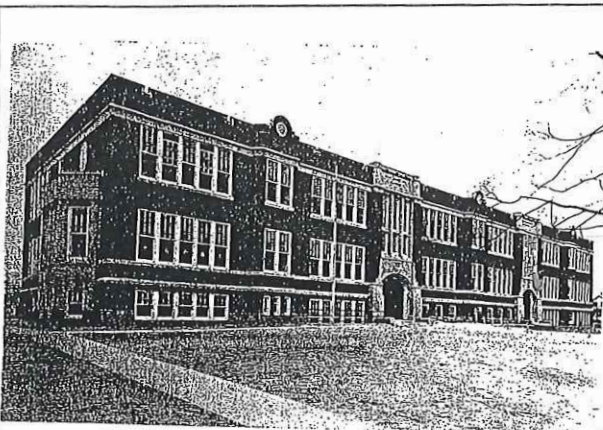
EDWARD ELSWORTH SCHOOL
Located Corner Pine & Jefferson Streets Constructed in 1911



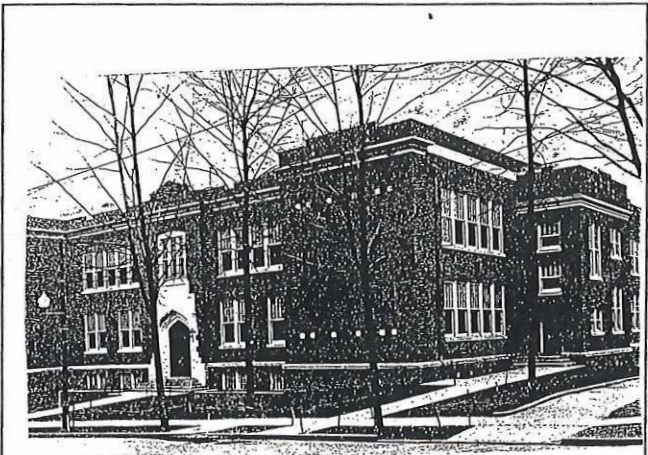
WILLIAM W. SMITH SCHOOL
Upper Church Street Constructed in 1912
(8-room addition in 1922)



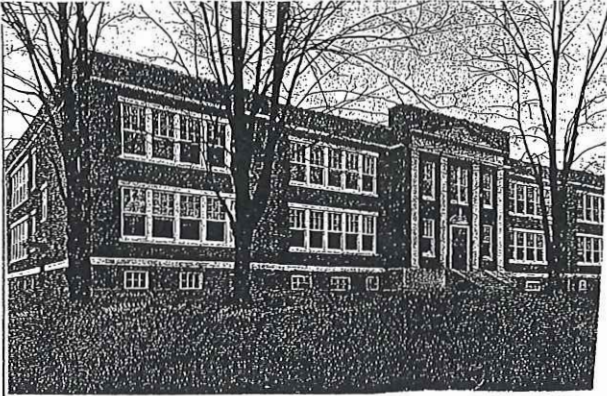
POUGHKEEPSIE HIGH SCHOOL
Opened November, 1914



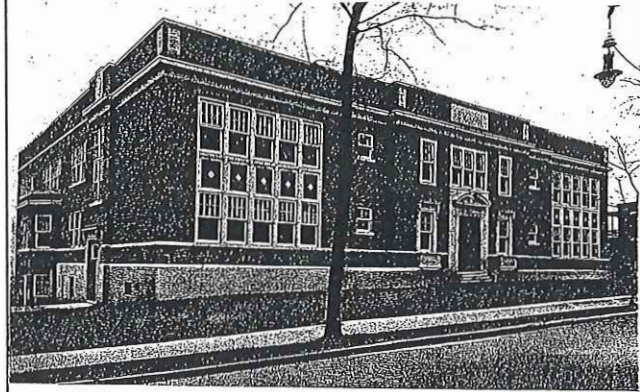
C.B. WARRING SCHOOL
Corner Smith & Mansion Streets Constructed in 1918
(8-room addition in 1922, 8-room addition in 1928)



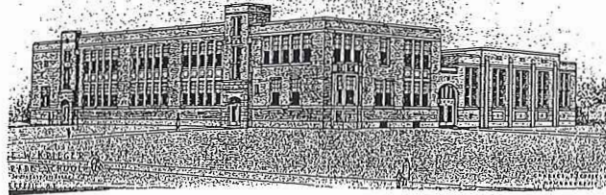
GOVERNOR CLINTON SCHOOL
100-108 Montgomery Street Constructed in 1925



S.F.B. MORSE SCHOOL
101 Mansion Street Constructed in 1928



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS SCHOOL
South Perry Street Constructed in 1929



GEORGE W. KRIEGER SCHOOL
Corner Southeast & Grand Avenues Constructed in 1929

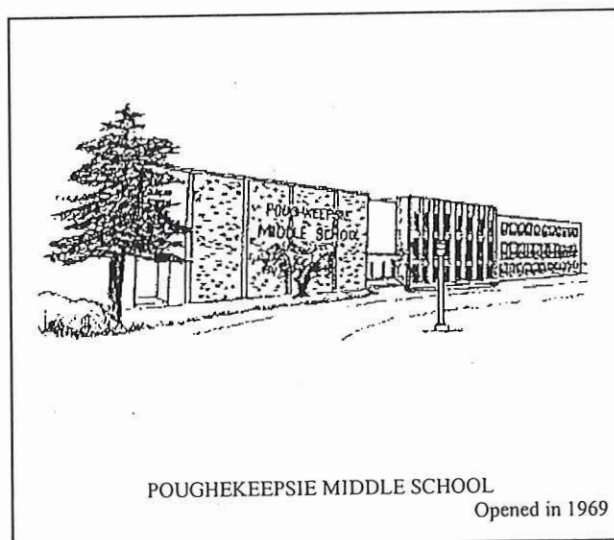
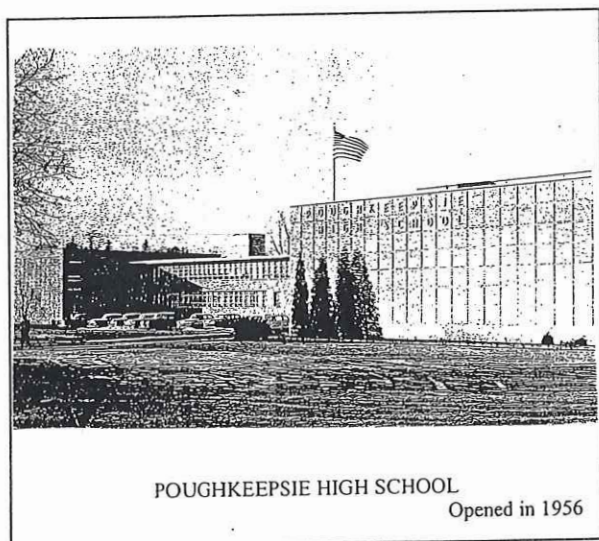
During the Great Depression and World War II, discussion about the need for a new high school and a possible junior high school continued, but no action was successfully concluded. In 1936, the State Education Department rejected a bid by the Board to place an addition on to the high school on North Hamilton Street due to the age of the building and the insufficient size of its site. By the 1950s, when the baby boom began to swell the school ranks, the Board asked the Chamber of Commerce to assist it in identifying a site for a new high school. After several months of study, the Chamber endorsed the construction of the high school on Memorial Field, a playground located behind the W.W. Smith School. A proposition for the new high school was passed by the voters in May 1954. The current high school opened in September 1956.

In the mid 1950s, the State Education Department mandated that school districts create centers for grades 7 and 8 if they had more than a certain number of pupils enrolled in those grades. Previously, pupils in Poughkeepsie attended the K – 8 elementary schools and either left school or went to the high school after 8th grade.

The district established a Betterment fund to raise money for construction of a junior high school. By 1958, it had sold five old school buildings, including the old Poughkeepsie High School. The board established two junior high schools; one in the new Poughkeepsie High School building and the other at the S.F.B. Morse School.

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During the 1960s, urban renewal began to severely change the face of the city. Large sections of the central city core were demolished. The Poughkeepsie Urban Renewal Agency required the school district to sell it the Ellsworth School, located on the corner of Jefferson and Pine Streets, which it demolished in order to build Eastman Towers. Optimistic about the city's future, the Urban Renewal Agency asked the board several times to build a new elementary school, and set aside land for the district to use at the Lincoln Center/Riverview site. Due to the Baby Bust and Urban Renewal, however, the school enrollment declined by around 600 students. Throughout the latter 1960s, the NAACP filed suits against the board, charging that racial segregation existed in the junior high and elementary schools. In 1967, the State Education Department approved plans to construct a single middle school on the site of the high school football field to alleviate racial imbalances. The board decided to fund middle school construction with 10-year bonds which did not require a referendum.



The middle school opened in 1969 as a school for children in grades 5 – 8. Clinton, Krieger, Morse, Smith and Warring were constituted as K – 4 schools. Columbus and Franklin were closed. The board created an attendance area annex for Krieger School at the Smith Street apartments to improve racial balance at that school.

Tensions in the community were high over the new middle school's 5 – 8 grade configuration and the fact that no transportation was given to middle school students. From 1969 to 1971, various 5 – 9 grade organizations were tried. The 5th grades were moved back into the elementary schools and the 9th grade was placed in the middle school. However, by the 1971-72 school year, space became available in the high school due to the fact that the Spackenkill School District, which previously sent its students to Poughkeepsie High School on a tuition basis, completed construction of its own new high school and pulled its students back. The building of the Charles Street and Delafield Spruce apartment complexes in the early 1970s caused the board to reopen the Franklin School. Columbus School was used to house the Pre-kindergarten program.

Urban renewal and model cities projects continued to transform the city during the 1970s. The school district enrollment dropped by nearly 1000 pupils between 1973 and 1979. Gymnasiums were added at Smith and Warring during the mid 1970s. A gymnasium and a six-room addition were constructed at Krieger during that time period. Kitchens were built in elementary schools that had been designed when children went home for lunch.

In the late 1970s, a court case related to school financing closed the loophole that had allowed districts with constitutionally established tax limitations to tax above their limits to cover costs for employee benefits. This created an immediate million-dollar deficit for the district. In 1979, the board closed the two oldest buildings; Franklin and Smith.

In 1980, the district created a Magnet School for children in grades K – 3 at Morse, renaming the building Morse Young Child Magnet School. Students who graduated from grade 3 at Morse were given the option of returning to their neighborhood schools or attending Krieger School for grades 4 and 5, with the district providing bussing for students who lived outside the Krieger attendance area.

Although enrollment in the district as a whole declined slightly during the 1980s, elementary enrollments began to shoot up. By the mid 1980s, the buildings were experiencing a space crunch. In 1987, with the help of a two-year, 1.6 million dollar federal grant, the district reclaimed Smith School, which it had rented to Astor Head Start, and reopened it as the Smith Humanities Magnet School for students in grades 3 – 5. Morse was changed to a K – 2 school, also with no attendance area. The Krieger attendance area annex was re-districted to add in more of the northeastern sections of the city. In 1989, with the assistance of additional federal magnet grant funding, the district reduced the size of the Warring School attendance area slightly to create space for students whose enrollment would improve racial balance at the school. The newly configured school was renamed the Warring Magnet Academy of Science/Technology.

Enrollment in the district continued to grow through the late 1980s and the 1990s. The boomlet that was in the elementary schools in the 1980s began to increase secondary school enrollment in the 1990s. Elementary enrollments have continued to be high as well. The 1990s saw a return to music class on the stage, “art on a cart” and small group instruction in closets and other sub-standard areas. The increasing press of technology in the form of classroom computers, printers, scanners and digital cameras has also reduced the operating space in many of our classrooms, as many have been outfitted with classroom computer clusters to supplement computer laboratories.

During the 1990s, the district commissioned the development of a Master Plan for maintenance on facilities, ADA compliance and renovations. Additional plans were also developed for new construction. Initially, the district proposed building a new high school and using the current high school as a magnet center for grades 3 – 5, and using 4 of the current elementary schools as pre-k – 2 neighborhood centers. This would have allowed the district to take a building at a time offline and undertake significant elementary school renovations. This plan was not fully supported, however, and in 2000, the district endorsed a plan to construct a new elementary school at the site promised to the district in the 1960s by the Urban Renewal Agency; Lincoln Center. Also planned were renovations and possible additions at other buildings. As the board and the administration gathered input from citizens and governmental officials, it became clear that more were in favor of the renovations and additions aspects of the project in the first phase than supported a new elementary school building.

After much consideration of a range of options and input gathering by the board and administration, the district has decided to pursue the second phase of the project first by concentrating on renovations and additions on existing school sites. At this point, the 2001/02 school year, the district has repackaged the plan to focus on solving some of our most pressing and immediate needs. Space problems within the district at the elementary level have been well documented. We have an immediate need to add space for just the purpose of accommodating the present elementary enrollment in a manner that will enable us to stop using substandard space, such as closets, stairwells and storage facilities, for program for children. The proposed program is the first phase of a responsive plan intended to meet the needs of our children and the entire community.