

POTTSGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Pottsgrove School District provides schooling for Lower Pottsgrove, Upper Pottsgrove, and West Pottsgrove townships. Until 1889 these townships were a single township, Pottsgrove, and had one school district, also called Pottsgrove. Lower Pottsgrove separated from Pottsgrove in 1889, and West Pottsgrove separated in 1900. Each formed its own school district.

The present Pottsgrove School District began in 1955, when the townships formed a jointure to operate the schools.

LOWER POTTSGROVE

Lower Pottsgrove educated its children in five one-room schools: the earliest, Crooked Hill (later known as Sanatoga), Jacksonville, Central (also known as Center), Franklin, and Ringing Hill. Classes were held at some of these schools before 1800.

Crooked Hill-Sanatoga School was built on a half acre acquired for four pounds in 1783. The first school on the site, a log building, was used until 1829, when it was replaced by a stone one. This building was replaced in 1866.

On December 20, 1895, the Crooked Hill School was destroyed by fire. In March 1896 the School Board decided to build another one-room school to replace it.

Increased enrollments forced the board in 1925 to purchase a portable building at a cost of \$2,375. This structure was placed in the yard behind the school. Later it was attached to the original building. In 1980 it was used by the Sanatoga Grange.

All the elementary buildings were closed in 1931, when the Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School was built on Pleasantview Road. Still in use in 1980, this facility has undergone several renovations. An all-purpose room was added in 1962; and in 1980 all of the interior was replaced, and an addition was built.

Secondary students earned their diplomas at Pottstown High School until September 1955, when seventh-grade students attended the West Pottsgrove High School.

UPPER POTTSGROVE

For many years before the turn of the century, Upper Pottsgrove operated two elementary schools. Since the Cedar Grove and Chestnut Grove schools could not accommodate the entire student population, Upper Pottsgrove paid tuition to Lower Pottsgrove to send students to Lower Pottsgrove schools.

During the late 1920s the Upper Pottsgrove School Board bought property on Farmington Avenue to build the Consolidated School. Upon its completion in 1929, the Cedar Grove and Chestnut Grove schools closed.

The Consolidated School later became known as Upper Pottsgrove Elementary School and was used for classes until the end of the 1972-73 school year.

Upper Pottsgrove students who wanted to pursue a secondary education attended Pottstown High School until September 1955, when they were included among the classes at West Pottsgrove High School.

WEST POTTSGROVE

West Pottsgrove Township's educational system began before 1900. Classes were held in the Buchanan School on Glasgow Street; one teacher had charge of all of the pupils.

The formal organizing of the West Pottsgrove School District took place on July 2, 1900, in the Madison School. The Madison School, built in 1892, contained two rooms and was located at Race and Center streets. Classes were also held in the one-room Washington School in Glasgow. Four teachers employed for an eight-month term were each paid a salary of \$35 per month.

The construction of a larger building, the Public School Building, began on July 1, 1905, at Elm Street and Monroe Avenue. When classes started there in September 1906, the Buchanan School closed. A two-room annex was approved in 1914. In 1926 four additional rooms were built; and in 1932, two more rooms, a library, a classroom, and an office.

A two-room portable building, located next to the Madison Building at Race and Center streets, was built in 1924 to accommodate the increased number of school-age children in the township's west end. The Washington School closed in 1932, and the Madison School closed in 1937.

In 1940 construction began on the building now known as the West Pottsgrove Elementary School.

Originally intended to house only high school students, the school was redesigned to include both the elementary and secondary students as a result of a fire that destroyed the original school on February 6, 1942. The new building, located on Grosstown Road, was completed in the spring of 1944.

Until 1942, formal education in the West Pottsgrove Public School District consisted of eight years of elementary school and two years of high school. Students who wanted to obtain a high school diploma were required to attend classes for two years in the North Coventry School District (Chester County) or the Pottstown School District. A four-year junior high school was organized in 1931, and a six-year junior-senior high in 1942.

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The Pottsgrove School District as it is known in 1980 developed in two stages. On July 2, 1956, Lower, Upper, and West Pottsgrove townships formed a jointure, including grades one through twelve. Effective July 1, 1966, the three-district jointure was eliminated, and a single unit, the Pottsgrove School District, was created in compliance with the Pennsylvania School District Reorganization Act of 1963. The present Pottsgrove High School was built on Kauffman Road in Lower Pottsgrove Township and occupied in September 1958.

To provide for increased enrollments, the district in 1962 built the Ringing Rocks Elementary School. It accommodated the increase for only a brief time. In 1967 a \$290,000 addition was built. At the same time a \$1.2 million expansion program took place at the Pottsgrove High School.

Since the Western Montgomery County Area Vocational-Technical School in Limerick began operation in September 1967, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade vocational-technical students have attended this school on a half-day basis.

With the opening of Pottsgrove Intermediate School on Buchert Road on September 5, 1973, Pottsgrove High School was reorganized to include only grades nine through twelve, and the elementary schools kindergarten through grade five.

The Pottsgrove elementary school curriculum is designed to meet individual needs. The district pioneered with its system of central libraries, offerings in physical education, and its aural-oral language and modern mathematics programs.

The award-winning intermediate school, for pupils in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, receives visitors from Pennsylvania and other eastern states studying team teaching and the school's programs and architecture.

Pottsgrove High School offers a comprehensive program: tracks for students who wish to follow a college preparatory course, a business education course, a general course, or a vocational-technical course.

The district provides special educational programs for the gifted, learning disabled, and mentally retarded, and employs a full-time psychologist to direct the programs.

The Pottsgrove School District's budget for 1980-81 was \$7,769,919.

Ronald K. Schafer
Librarian, Director of Publications,
Pottsgrove High School

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Board of School Directors of Upper Pottsgrove Townships. *Minute Books.*
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Collegeville-Trappe High School. The former Schwenksville High School closed.

The middle school organization was adopted because ninth graders were considered mature enough to work with the senior high school grades and too mature to associate comfortably with grades seven and eight. It gave positions of leadership to the eighth graders. The purpose of the middle school is to provide an individualized, child-centered education.

Robert W. Cope

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In 1980 the Pottstown School District, contained entirely within the borough, had 19 administrators, 230 faculty members, 7 school buildings, and 3,400 students.

A History of Pottstown 1752-1952 by Paul Chancellor and Marjorie Potts Wendell served as an invaluable source for information on the district.

The earliest schools of this area were under the auspices of the church. The first was established in 1784.

Academies meeting in private residences offered both elementary and secondary subjects. They taught military and naval tactics along with Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, German, and moral philosophy.

In 1838, four years after the ratification of the Common School Law, public education began in two small brick schools. A number of two-story buildings were used between 1838 and about 1888 for elementary schooling.

In 1879 the Boys' High School was located on the north side of Walnut Street between Hanover and Penn and was under the direction of William W.