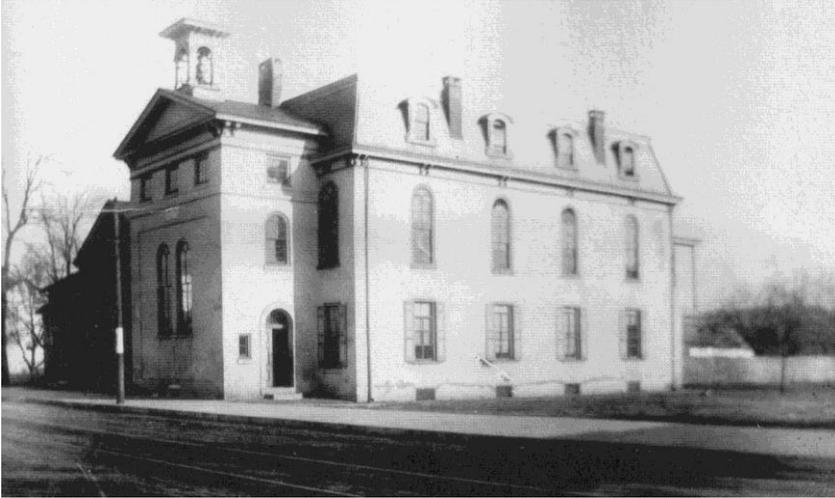


The History of Downingtown Schools

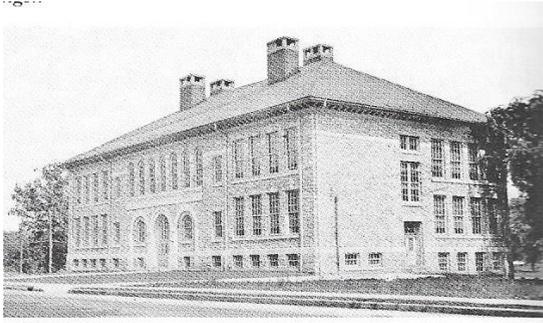
The Downingtown Area School District began in 1859, when the Downingtown school board established the area's first public schools. Instead of names, they had numbers, #1, #2 and #3. The first two numbers were housed on the 1st & 2nd floors respectively, of the White School House on West Lancaster Avenue. The third was located in a building on Uwchlan Avenue. At the time, the annual cost to run all three schools was \$412.52. Within a few years, the population of Downingtown out grew these schools. In 1872, the school board purchased a building on Lancaster Avenue and converted it into the Downingtown Public School. Four years later, the first class graduated.



During the early years of its history, the high school focused almost exclusively on teaching the 3 R's and did not add an athletic program until 1899, when the first football game took place. By 1904, in addition to adding athletics, Downingtown had also expanded its curriculum. To graduate, students had to complete language, history, science and math courses.

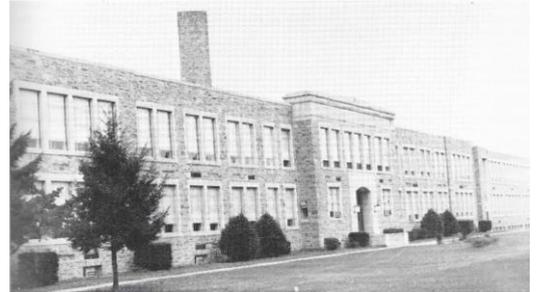
With the passage of the Compulsory Attendance Act of 1907, attending school was no longer an options, but a requirement. Consequently more students came to school, and Downingtown didn't have enough classrooms in which to put them. In 1909, the school board built the West Ward School on Lancaster Ave. The school's construction cost \$60,000.00.





Fourteen years later, to accommodate an every-growing population, the school board had to build yet another school, the East Ward School also on Lancaster Avenue. The construction of this school cost \$100,000.00. Available records do not indicate when the school board stopped using school #1, #2 and #3. However, it is believed that these schools may have been officially closed by 1932.

1932 is the year that the school board spent \$160,000.00 to build the Downingtown Junior-Senior High School on Manor Avenue.



Students from other townships had been traveling to Downingtown to attend school. In 1949, Downingtown's school board decided to join with seven neighboring townships to form an official school district. In 1950, when a ninth township joined, the Downingtown Area School District expanded to cover a total of 82 square miles. As the population of the entire school district grew, more schools needed to be added.

In 1959, Downingtown spent \$4,000,000.00 to build the Downingtown high School. They built it on Manor Avenue, next to the Junior-Senior High School, when then became the Junior High School.



Today, The Downingtown Area School District covers the same 82 square miles it did in 1950. Now the district has a total of 16 schools. Information regarding each of the schools can be found on the district website at www.dasd.org.

Since 1876 Downingtown Area High Schools have graduated over 25,000 students.