

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Andrew Jackson Elementary SchoolOther names/site number: N/AName of related multiple property listing:  
N/A**2. Location**Street & number: 17 St. Andrews StreetCity or town: Halifax State: NC County: HalifaxNot For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.In my opinion, the property x meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:    national    statewide x localApplicable National Register Criteria: x A    B    C    D

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**Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer      Date**

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**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

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**Signature of commenting official:****Date**

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**Title :****State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

- Private: ☐  
Public – Local ☒  
Public – State ☐  
Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

- Building(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

##### Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u>     | <u>1</u>        | buildings  |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | sites      |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | structures |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | objects    |
| <u>1</u>     | <u>1</u>        | Total      |

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**  
**Historic Functions**

EDUCATION: school

**Current Functions**

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification MODERN MOVEMENT

#### Materials:

Foundation CONCRETE

Walls BRICK

Roof SYNTHETICS

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Andrew Jackson Elementary School is located on a large, flat, cleared parcel between the State of North Carolina's Halifax Historic Site and the Roanoke River. The one-story, flat-roofed modernist building is organized around a central, double-loaded corridor with an auditorium wing at its southeast and a single-loaded corridor that extends to the northeast. The building's exterior is clad in brick veneer and features large masonry openings, currently infilled, that housed large banks of windows. The façade features two projecting sections, each housing recessed porch entrances and one bearing the words ANDREW JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL in metal lettering in an Art Deco font. Interior finishes are utilitarian with brick or concrete block walls and vinyl tile floors. The office, bathrooms, and classrooms are lit by skylights. The auditorium wing consists of an open seating area with a small proscenium stage at the southwest and a kitchen at the northeast.

## Narrative Description

### Site

The Andrew Jackson Elementary School is located on the northeast side of St. Andrews Street between North Dobbs and North King Streets in the town of Halifax. It sits on a roughly nine-acre rectangular parcel that is flat, grassy, and largely cleared, save for two mature trees. Wooded land owned by the State of North Carolina lies between the school parcel and the Roanoke River, roughly 400 feet to the northeast. The school property is within the boundary of the National Register-listed Halifax Historic District but is not listed in the inventory of the 1969 National Register nomination, nor would it fall within its period of significance. The school sits on the southwest portion of its lot. Though the façade is at the southwest, a semicircular drive off King Street services the southeast side of the building. The rear school yard is largely a flat, grassy lawn with a few mature trees, a shed, a basketball court, and playground equipment.

### Exterior

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The school is a one-story building, clad in brick veneer, with a flat roof. It comprises three parts: a lunch/auditorium wing at the southeast, a single-loaded corridor wing at the northwest, and between them a double-loaded corridor accessed by the primary entrance. The flat roof has irregular eaves that in some places extend broadly past the wall face below and in some places are flush with the wall plane. The northwest and southeast elevations and the portion of the façade housing signage are clad in running bond brick, the remainder of the exterior is clad in six-course American bond

The façade has two projecting sections, each 33 feet wide, that extend roughly 12 feet forward of the intervening central wall plane. Each projecting section has a recessed porch at its respective south corner supported by a brick pylon and sheltering an entrance. One of these sections is at the north end of the façade and the second, housing the school's primary entrance, is approximately 100 feet to its south. The façade continues for an additional 70 feet beyond the southern projecting section. Between the projecting sections the façade is divided into three bays by narrow brick pilasters. Large masonry openings between the pilasters appear to have housed large windows or sets of windows but have been infilled with concrete block and house small windows that are currently covered. The southern projecting section of the façade has metal letters affixed to the wall, spelling ANDREW JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. Its porch shelters double doors, each leaf with a single light, the entire entrance flanked by glazed panels. The north wall of this porch has paired five-light windows. A flat canopy roof supported by metal poles extends southeast from the entrance porch along the façade and wraps the corner of the building.

The southeast elevation of the building consists of the lunchroom/auditorium wing and is divided into three parts. The central part is slightly taller than the flanking sections and has three masonry openings that have been infilled with concrete block. The section south of center has an exterior stair that ascends to the northeast to a recessed entrance bay with double entrance doors protected by the canopy that extends from the façade. The section north of center has a staggered wall in two sections. The section adjacent to and flush with the center section shelters a recessed entrance on the building's northwest elevation.

The northeast elevation of the school is in three parts. The auditorium wing at the south and the classroom wing at the north both extend to the northeast and flank the recessed center section that houses the double-loaded corridor. The auditorium wing's northeast elevation includes a recessed entrance adjacent to a loading dock. At the loading dock, exterior steps lead to a concrete platform sheltered by a canopy which is supported by a metal post at the north and by a pierced brickwork wall at the south. Within the porch is a window and a door, and north of the porch, but sheltered by an extension of the roof canopy, is an additional window. Two more windows continue along this section of wall. The northwest wall of the auditorium wing has three windows that are aligned along an exterior path. The path leads to the southwest, and is bordered by brick retaining wall and covered by an extension of the roof supported by metal posts. It terminates at a double door with a transom above, which is the central portion of the school's northeast elevation and on axis with the primary entrance. Along the central, recessed section of the building's northeast elevation are four large masonry openings that have been infilled with concrete block and smaller covered windows, as on the façade.

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The building's northern classroom wing has six masonry openings, all covered or filled, that appear to have housed a door and five windows on its southeast wall. These openings are set toward the western section of the wall, leaving a large expanse of brick veneer at the east. At the rear terminus of the northern wing is a brick veneered wall with a recessed entrance bay at its south.

The northwest elevation of the building is divided into bays by narrow brick pilasters. All intervening masonry openings have been enclosed. Most are large openings with a common sill that stretch the width of a bay, but one bay has two sets of smaller paired window openings that resemble those at the primary entrance porch.

### Interior

Despite the closure of most of the windows, the building's interior continues to have ample natural light from a series of skylights. Throughout the building, the metal truss roof structure is exposed. The interior is organized around two main intersecting hallways with an auditorium wing to the southeast. Interior walls are either brick or concrete block. Floors are vinyl tile with vinyl wall base. The interior has suffered some fire damage in classrooms at the north end of the building.

The main entrance leads to a short hall with an office and restrooms on the north before intersecting with the double-loaded corridor. Beyond that intersection, is a rear exit at the end of the hall on axis with the primary entrance. The office has large, glazed panels providing sightlines to the main entrance. The restrooms have concrete block walls with tiles affixed at the lower half.

The auditorium wing is south of the entrance. It has a slightly raised proscenium stage at its western end and an open seating area to the east which was generally used as lunchroom seating, beyond which is a kitchen area that is serviced by the exterior loading dock. The classrooms off the single- and double-loaded corridors have rectangular clerestory windows along the hallways. As with most of the interiors, walls are concrete block, floors are vinyl tile and roof trusses are exposed.

The property contains one modern, noncontributing, prefabricated storage shed east of the building (ca. 1980) made of corrugated metal with a gable roof.<sup>1</sup>

The Andrew Jackson Elementary School remains on its original site, thus retains integrity of location. Despite window enclosure and fire damage, most of its design elements remain including circulation, plan, form, massing, signage, and fixtures, giving it a relatively high degree of design integrity. Located in close proximity to the state's Halifax historic site, its setting is largely intact including undeveloped land toward the river and a limited, low-density

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<sup>1</sup> A second shed, seen under a tree in the background of one image has been demolished.

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residential area at the north. It retains integrity of setting. There is evidence of roof repair, and masonry openings for windows have been infilled. Otherwise, despite limited fire damage, it retains a high degree of integrity of materials. Likewise, given limited changes, the integrity of workmanship is high. Though vacant, it still communicates the appearance of a school, giving it a high degree of integrity of feeling and association.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

Rain and erosion exposed remains of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling on the property, thought to have been the Webb house, in 1965.<sup>2</sup> To be provided by osa

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<sup>2</sup> "Heavy Rains Lend Hand in Restoration Project," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 18, 1965.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE:BLACK

### Period of Significance

1959-1970



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**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Charles C. Davis, Jr.

Trader Construction Company

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

Andrew Jackson Elementary School is significant in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black as an “equalization school” in an effort to stave off full integration. Through the 1950s, considerable sums were spent to build and improve schools for African Americans in Halifax County. While some in the African American community continued to press for full integration, others saw value in improved facilities which, like Andrew Jackson Elementary School, often became a symbol of community pride. The design and construction values were an improvement over the existing schools for Black students, and the school distinguished itself academically as the first African American elementary school in the county to be accredited. It continued to serve a segregated student body until 1970 when Weldon’s school integration plan was fully implemented. Andrew Jackson Elementary School continued to operate until 2001 when it closed, and students were moved to Weldon Elementary School. It is significant at the local level. The Period of Significance begins in 1959 when the school opened and ends in 1970 when the school and the school system were integrated.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Within Halifax County, the Weldon City school system (with jurisdiction that extends to the town of Halifax) was independently chartered in 1903. The enabling legislation for the system outlines its boundary, authorizes bond and local tax funding, and appoints a Board of Trustees. The board is directed “to establish graded public schools for the white and colored children of said district” funded “in such a manner as shall be deemed just to both races, providing equal school facilities for each.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Roanoke Rapids School District was also carved out of the county’s jurisdiction. Weldon City Schools has continued as a separate, semi-independent unit though its relationship with the Halifax County School System fluctuated over the years, as has its boundary.

<sup>3</sup> An Act to Establish Graded Schools in the Town of Weldon, Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina (1903).

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Through the mid-twentieth century, local schools were segregated by race as was the custom. In 1950, a building program was proposed for schools throughout the county. While reporting was not entirely clear, capital improvements suggested for Black schools totaled at least 3-4 times the expenditures planned for White schools.<sup>4</sup> This may have been in response to survey reports by Nathan Carter Newbold of the state's Division of Negro Education, who noted, "Halifax has the most monumental task of providing adequate school buildings for its colored children of any other county in the state."<sup>5</sup> It could also be a result of the anticipated impact of the 1951 ruling in *Blue v. Durham Public School District*.<sup>6</sup> The federal court ruling in this case found discrimination in the Durham schools with a lack of equal access to opportunity for black students. The *Blue* trial was followed closely in legal circles and covered widely in the African American press. Not only were disparities proved and found unconstitutional, but the school board was not granted sovereign immunity from liability. A similar suit filed closer to Halifax in Wilson County in 1950 was settled with an agreement to build two new Black high schools.<sup>7</sup> While the rulings were a victory in one sense, legal scholars of the time, including Thurgood Marshall, were concerned that equalization could reinforce a segregated system.<sup>8</sup> Attorney Donovan J. Stone, in an article about the *Blue* case, draws attention to a January 1951 editorial in Raleigh's *News and Observer* that justifies those concerns. It began by describing the judge in the case as "a most conservative jurist" and noted that the decision extended beyond Durham: "it applies with even greater force to some other counties." It continued to undergird the decision as being vital to segregated schools, suggesting "real equality must be quickly established if separation and segregation in our schools is to be countenanced by the courts."<sup>9</sup>

There was no rush to integrate Weldon and Halifax County schools in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v Board of Education* decision in 1954, though the State Board of Education met in June of that year to consider how the ruling might impact the state's school building program.<sup>10</sup> The Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education, established by Governor Umstead, suggested in its December 1954 report that there was little support for school desegregation in North Carolina. "The Committee is of the opinion that the mixing of the races forthwith in the public schools throughout the state cannot be accomplished and should not be attempted."<sup>11</sup> The report supported local control of school assignment of students, which was implemented in part with the 1955 Pupil Assignment Act. A second committee, the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Education—chaired, as the first, by Thomas Pearsall—devised the eponymous Pearsall Plan, which included numerous measures that could be manipulated to

<sup>4</sup> "Building Set for Halifax," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), January 19, 1950.

<sup>5</sup> The Division of Negro Education State Department of Public Instruction, "Study of Negro Schools in Halifax County," Halifax County Board of Education Minutes, August 31, 1949, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina as quoted in Shantara Nicole Strickland, "For the Sake of Freedom: Landownership, Education and Memory in Halifax County, North Carolina, 1900-1960" (master's thesis, North Carolina State University, 2013), 45.

<sup>6</sup> Suit was filed in 1949.

<sup>7</sup> Donovan J. Stone, "Blue v. Durham Public School District and the Campaign for School Equalization in North Carolina," *1 N.C. CVL. RTS. L. REV.* 2 (2021), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Donovan J. Stone, "Blue v. Durham," 50.

<sup>9</sup> "Warning from a Friend," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), January 27, 1951.

<sup>10</sup> "School Board Will Discuss Desegregation," *Winston-Salem Journal*, June 2, 1954.

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education*, December 1954.

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avoid integration. Most of the more drastic options were never exercised by local school boards, which relied on the Pupil Assignment Act and Freedom of Choice programs to keep schools effectively segregated. Among the members of the second committee was Halifax State Senator W. Lunsford Crew, who was quoted in 1956 as saying, "I think the governor and every member of our committee is very desirous of continuing the public schools as nearly as possible in their present form."<sup>12</sup>

Crew's support of the status quo was not universally accepted. African American attorney and Weldon resident James R. Walker, Jr. was reported critical of the Pearsall plan and was quoted: "I believe that the Negro civic and political leaders in a sectional conference next month will come out with a better solution to the school problem than the recommendations of the Pearsall Committee."<sup>13</sup> He may have been referring to a short-lived attempt by the NAACP to use a petition drive to integrate schools through the county.<sup>14</sup> It was nearly a decade later that a coordinated populist response to segregated schools reemerged. The delay was in part the result of a divide between supporting integration or achieving full equalization for segregated schools.<sup>15</sup> Scholar Shantara Strickland describes a rationale within the African American community for equalization: "Realistically, while they understood that integration could result in better funding, many also feared that white teachers would discriminate against their children in the classroom or that the school buildings that once served as cultural centers, similar to the black churches, would be destroyed."<sup>16</sup>

In May 1956, the local board of education presented to the Halifax Board of Commissioners a proposed spending plan that included close to \$3,000,000 for capital improvements. The plan recommended school consolidation. "Construction of schools to be used by Negroes was stressed in the report."<sup>17</sup> Later that year, the Weldon school unit reconnected with the Halifax school unit, which prompted some redistricting and which put under Weldon's jurisdiction Halifax Elementary School, Pea Hill School, Andrew Jackson School (an earlier building, not the nominated property), and Allen Grove School.<sup>18</sup> The school board appointed a committee to find a building site for an African American school to consolidate and replace the smaller schools in the area.<sup>19</sup>

It was not until the following year that the various county education boards cooperated to advance a local bond referendum to finance school construction. The proposal was not without

<sup>12</sup> "Ballot Seen on Proposed School Law," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), March 6, 1956.

<sup>13</sup> A native of eastern North Carolina, James Walker was one of the first two African American graduates of any program at The University of North Carolina, graduating from the law school in 1952. He returned to the region and was active in numerous civil rights activities and lawsuit; "Negro Files at Warrenton," *Statesville Record and Landmark* (Statesville, NC), April 12, 1956.

<sup>14</sup> Shantara Nicole Strickland, "For the Sake of Freedom: Landownership, Education and Memory in Halifax County, North Carolina, 1900-1960." (master's thesis, North Carolina State University, 2013), 48.

<sup>15</sup> Strickland, "For the Sake of Freedom," 48.

<sup>16</sup> Strickland, "For the Sake of Freedom," 57.

<sup>17</sup> "Halifax Schools," *Durham Morning Herald*, May 12, 1956.

<sup>18</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, July 9, 1956.

<sup>19</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, July 9, 1956.

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opposition.<sup>20</sup> A local faction expressed concern about the county's debt exposure.<sup>21</sup> Proponents of the measure stressed the county's solid financial condition and pressing space demands with an estimated need for 169 new classrooms, of which 161 would be for African American students. The creation of new and improved "equalization" schools for African Americans was one strategy to discourage integration. Legislator Lunsford Crew espoused this strategy. He was quoted in the *Rocky Mount Telegram* as saying, "Nobody has a foolproof plan to stave off integration in our schools, but the best way to keep the schools on a segregated basis is to make all the schools good ones."<sup>22</sup>

In December 1957, a new school in Halifax for African American children designed by architect Charles Davis was put out to bid. It was planned to consolidate two small frame schools in the area and was supported by the local bond program.<sup>23</sup> The school was anticipated to have 26,700 square feet of space, be built of brick concrete block and steel, and have a lightweight roof deck. It was advertised with 12 classrooms, a library, offices, a multi-purpose room, and a kitchen. The school was designed by Charles Craig Davis, Jr. (1919-2015). A native of Wilmington, he studied at North Carolina State University and the University of Illinois and briefly worked for F. Carter Williams in Raleigh before moving to Roanoke Rapids and establishing his own practice. Davis was locally prolific and specialized in schools. Between 1958 and 1978, he designed more than 30 school projects in Halifax County. In March 1959, the school board meeting was held in the new school and the board toured the building along with Charles Davis. Davis noted a few punch-list items but recommended the building be accepted, which the board voted to do.<sup>24</sup>

Andrew Jackson Elementary School opened in 1959. The school was named for Andrew Joshua Jackson (1830-1924), an African American born enslaved in Virginia who was taken to Halifax County, North Carolina as a young boy and was known at that time as Jackson Barnes. He became a blacksmith. He changed his name after the Civil War to Andrew Joshua Jackson. He became ordained clergy, and also worked and donated funding to support education. He served as a pastor at the Jackson Chapel First Missionary Baptist Church in Wilson but lived in Halifax County until his death in 1924.

Many of the original students who came to Andrew Jackson Elementary School had attended Rosenwald Schools, which were an improvement to what had been offered at the time of their construction, but by the late 1950s, still had no plumbing and were heated by stoves. The Andrew Jackson School was a masonry building with electricity, plumbing, ventilation systems, and a lunchroom/auditorium wing. With the opening of Andrew Jackson Elementary School, the school board sold the Allen Grove School, the Pea Hill School, and the old Andrew Jackson school building.<sup>25</sup> In the fall of 1961, Andrew Jackson Elementary School became the first elementary school in Halifax County that served African Americans to be accredited by the

<sup>20</sup> "Halifax School Bond Issue Plan Faces Opposition," *Durham Morning Herald*, April 2, 1957.

<sup>21</sup> "Bond Issue Fight is Predicted in Halifax," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, April 27, 1957.

<sup>22</sup> "Sen. Crew Talks on School Bond," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 2, 1957.

<sup>23</sup> "Weldon Board Asks Bids for Halifax Negro School Unit," *Durham Morning Herald*, December 10, 1957; "Halifax Proceeds with School Plans," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), December 16, 1957.

<sup>24</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, March 1957.

<sup>25</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, September 16, 1959.

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North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, based on a review of curriculum, instruction, and resources.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the school board continued to implement a Freedom of Choice Plan. Student reassignment requests are woven throughout the school board minutes of this period. A revised assignment plan and transfer application were developed in the spring of 1963. In that year, the School Committee of the Progressive Civic Union, an African American organization serving six counties in northeastern North Carolina, petitioned the Weldon Board of Education to integrate the soon-to-be-completed Ralph J. Bunche High School in Weldon and to integrate the existing Andrew Jackson Elementary School.<sup>27</sup> Spokesman James R. Walker said the actions of the Progressive Civic Union were “intended to get the school boards in step with the times and to get the schools brought up to the integration levels being experienced in other parts of the state . . . (in response to) the proposed creation of a race commission to keep the races separate, as suggested by N. C. representatives Thorne Gregory of Halifax and John Kerr of Warren County.”<sup>28</sup> The committee addressed the board at its July meeting with a statement delivered by A. C. Cofield. Contents of the statement are not recorded in the school board minutes. Apparently, the board discussed the petition but took no action.<sup>29</sup>

It was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed that there was federal capacity to survey schools for compliance with anti-discrimination policies and for the Attorney General to institute actions against schools in response to a local complaint. Perhaps empowered by the legislation, members of the Halifax County Voters Movement represented by Rev. Clyde Johnson addressed the school board requesting financial and statistical data about the schools and petitioning for a Black school board member.<sup>30</sup> The organization returned in January 1965, when Rev. Johnson was joined by Mrs. Salter J. Cochran, Rev. A. I. Dunlap, and Rev. Jeremiah Webb to continue to press for representation on the school board and inquire about the integration of school facilities. They also “made inquiry regarding the board's position regarding the conditions which must be met to continue receiving federal funds.”<sup>31</sup> The following month the school board's attorney, John James, discussed with the board their requirements to comply with the legislation.<sup>32</sup> In April, James presented a compliance plan, which the board adopted.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> “Negro Elementary School in Halifax to be Accredited,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 6, 1961.

<sup>27</sup> Keith Hundley, “Weldon, Halifax, Warren Petitioned by Civic Union to Integrate Schools,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 4, 1963; according to Shantara Strickland, “In 1955 the Progressive Civic Union (PCU) emerged as a key civil rights organization in Weldon. The PCU was aligned with the Eastern Council on Community Affairs (ESCA), which functioned as a communication network that linked more than twenty-five counties eastern North Carolina. The ECAC mainly focused on mobilizing blacks throughout the area while the PCU focused on disenfranchisement and other civil rights issues concerning African Americans in Weldon.” Shantara Nicole Strickland, “For the Sake of Freedom,” 69.

<sup>28</sup> Keith Hundley, “Weldon, Halifax, Warren Petitioned by Civic Union to Integrate Schools,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, May 4, 1963.

<sup>29</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, July 16, 1963.

<sup>30</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, October 20, 1964. The organization was established in early 1964 after the March on Washington to advocate for civil rights. “Halifax Voters Movement,” <https://aaahc.nc.gov/programs/nc-civil-rights-trail/nc-civil-rights-virtual-trail/halifax-voters-movement-1964-1969>.

<sup>31</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, January 19, 1965.

<sup>32</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, February 16, 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, April 14, 1965.

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In May of that year, after receipt of letters from A. C. Cofield, chairman of the Halifax County Voter Movement, and John R. Salter, Jr., field secretary of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., and a subsequent conference with the school superintendent, Mr. Cofield, and the principal of Weldon High School, the school board moved to insulate themselves and the superintendent.<sup>34</sup> They approved a motion “that the Superintendent is hereby directed by the Weldon school board to limit his conferences and correspondence on local school problems, in his capacity as Superintendent to students and their parents. The Weldon school board does not recognize any organization or individual as a representative of the Weldon school patrons except the Parent-Teacher organizations at various schools and it will not deal with any other group.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1966, the *Revised Statement of Policies of School Desegregation Plans Under Title VI of The Civil Rights Act of 1964* was issued, and the board adjusted its plans and policies. The board affirmed that faculty should be hired on the basis of professional qualifications.<sup>36</sup> Litigation by Verta S. Pridgen and the North Carolina Teachers Association prompted the school board to meet and cooperate with the organization in its fact-finding. As a result, in the summer of 1967 the school board attempted to negotiate a consent order, and the board moved that “the Superintendent be instructed to endeavor to obtain more faculty integration in all schools. The action of the Superintendent in trying to obtain more faculty integration must be consistent with the policy of the board inflowing from the best qualified persons.”<sup>37</sup> By mid-July, the school board had accepted a consent order, and the plaintiffs and the school board moved “that the Superintendent be authorized to pay the costs of the order and other cost of the action from the proper source.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1968, after several years of reliance on a freedom of choice plan, the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare contacted the school board to address the board’s dual school system. The Weldon City Board of Education submitted an integration plan to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in September 1968 to meet the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The plan was initially rejected because although the plan was to desegregate high schools in 1969, a freedom of choice program would continue for lower grades until 1970-71. A letter from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare

<sup>34</sup>The Halifax County Voters Movement formed in the wake of the March on Washington in August 1963. In addition to increasing Black voter registrations, they “would hold non-violent demonstrations, including economic boycotts of White-owned businesses that discriminated against Black patrons, support and file federal lawsuits and engage with local governing bodies, including the county commissioners, to advocate for civil rights.” “Halifax Voters Movement,” <https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/nc-civil-rights-trail/nc-civil-rights-virtual-trail/halifax-voters-movement-1964-1969>. The Southern Conference Educational Fund was an outgrowth of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare established during the New Deal and bolstered by its subsequent relationship with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as it retooled itself to address racial segregation in the South. “Southern Conference Educational Fund,” <https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/alliances-relationships/scef/>.

<sup>35</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, May 4, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, April 20, 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, July 6, 1967; Verta Pridgen’s suit, filed by attorney James R. Walker, Jr., challenged the firing of the most qualified Black teachers in anticipation of integration, among other things. “Teacher Files Action Against Weldon School Board,” *The Carolina Times*, June 18, 1966.

<sup>38</sup> Weldon City School Board Minutes, July 19, 1967.

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noted that they saw no obstacle to integrating elementary schools nor any legitimate justification for the delay.<sup>39</sup> A seemingly slightly revised plan that desegregated primary grade faculty members in advance of pupils and that divided elementary school students into attendance areas in both Weldon and Halifax met with approval in April of 1969.<sup>40</sup> By 1970, all students in grades three through eight in the Town of Halifax attended Andrew Jackson Elementary School. Though the schools were legally integrated, Andrew Jackson remained a predominantly African American school as many white parents opted to send their children to private “segregation academies.”<sup>41</sup> The school continued as an elementary school until its closure in 2001. The vacant school was targeted in an arson attack in 2019 and again in 2021.

<sup>39</sup> “HEW Rejects Weldon Plan for Desegregation,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, December 6, 1968.

<sup>40</sup> “Weldon School Plan is Accepted by HEW,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, April 3, 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Eddie Davis (former Andrew Jackson Elementary School teacher), conversation with the author, May 7, 2025.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 9

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**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

1. Latitude: 36.331761° Longitude: -77.587293°

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is all of that Halifax County tax parcel 0601261 as shown on the map entitled National Register Boundary Map Andrew Jackson Elementary School.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes all of that parcel acquired for the school in 1956 and currently owned by the Weldon City Schools Administrative Unit.

**11. Form Prepared By**

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date: May 12, 2025

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**Photo Log**

Andrew Jackson Elementary School  
Halifax  
Halifax County North Carolina  
Mary Ruffin Hanbury

November 2023  
Façade, view to NE  
1 of 19

10 of 19

November 2023  
Façade, view to N  
2 of 19

November 2023  
Northeast elevation, view to SW  
11 of 19

November 2023  
Façade, view to N  
3 of 19

November 2023  
Northwest elevation, view to NE  
12 of 19

November 2023  
Façade, view to E  
4 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, entrance, view to NE  
13 of 19

November 2023  
West corner, view to E  
5 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, auditorium, view to W  
14 of 19

November 2023  
South corner, view to SW  
6 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, auditorium, view to NE  
15 of 19

November 2023  
East corner, view to SW  
7 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, classroom, view to N  
16 of 19

November 2023  
Northeast elevation, view to SW  
8 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, Double-loaded corridor, view to NW  
17 of 19

November 2023  
Northeast elevation, view to S  
9 of 19

April 2024  
Interior, Classroom, view to S  
18 of 19

November 2023  
Northeast elevation, view to SW

June 2024  
Shed, view to NE  
19 of 19

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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Tier 1 – 60-100 hours  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.