

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 PropertyHistoric name: Sunshine School

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 202 Hairston StreetCity or town: Eden State: NC County: RockinghamNot 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 local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D_____
Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal GovernmentIn my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria._____
Signature of commenting official:_____
Date_____
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources_____
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

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</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>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: not in use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; WOOD: Weatherboard;
ASPHALT

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Sunshine School occupies a 2.21-acre parcel southwest of the city of Eden's central business district in Rockingham County, North Carolina. The one-story, side-gable-roofed, two-classroom school served African American students from 1935 until 1955. The building embodies standard characteristics of early-twentieth-century educational architecture such as German siding, single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors, large classroom window openings, flat-board door and window surrounds, narrow vertical-board wainscoting, plaster upper walls, a hardwood floor, and a built-in bookcase. Although the plan, fenestration, and simple finishes are typical of one- and two-room, frame, 1930s schools, the building exhibits distinctive features such as molded cornices, bracketed auxiliary entrance canopies, and multi-pane casement windows in shed rooms. Leaksville architect James W. Hopper probably designed the building. Sunshine School possesses a high degree of architectural integrity and historic significance.

Setting

Sunshine School is located in a historically African American neighborhood in the north Rockingham County community of Draper, which merged in 1967 with the adjacent communities Leaksville and Spray to become the city of Eden. When constructed circa 1935, the school was southwest of Draper's municipal limits. Sunshine School stands on the east side of Hairston Street opposite the former Saint Paul Missionary Baptist Church, a front-gable-roofed, vinyl-sided sanctuary built in 1934. Modest dwellings—mostly one-story, gable-roofed, and frame—constructed from the 1920s through the 1960s line neighboring grid-plan streets. Many residents worked at the nearby Fieldcrest Mill or Spray Cotton Mill. Some of the earliest dwellings in the neighborhood were built by mill owners and rented to employees. Charles D. and Gracie Hairston, who resided in the one-and-one-half-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style, 1941 house at 1011 Knott Street, commissioned construction of the adjacent commercial building at 1003 Knott Street. The concrete-block structure with a variegated red brick façade encompasses a one-story, two-section, east wing erected in the mid-1940s and a two-story west

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section constructed in 1952. The original portion housed Charles Hairston's grocery store and David Harris's single-chair barber shop. The addition was a social club called Coconut Grove operated by Charles's brother Edward Hairston. The first floor contained a refreshment counter, bar, dining tables, and restrooms, while the second floor was a dance hall.¹ Draper's small commercial district is approximately one mile northeast.

Site

Sunshine School stands at the northwest corner of a 2.21-acre parcel bounded by Hairston Street to the west, Georgia Avenue to the north, Knott Street (originally Clarke Avenue) to south, and two parcels containing a residence and the Hairston commercial building to the east. The southwest corner of the rectangular parcel extends across Hairston Street. A few large deciduous trees punctuate the grass lawn. Two basketball goals southeast of the school were added while the site functioned as a summer recreation center during the late 1950s and 1960s. Sunshine School students played softball in the field south of the basketball goals.²

Sunshine School, circa 1935, contributing building

Exterior (Photographs 1-4)

The one-story, side-gable-roofed, German-sided, two-classroom school has a north-south orientation with the primary façade facing west. The building rests on a red brick foundation and is sheltered by a late 1970s asphalt-shingle roof that replaced an asphalt-shingle roof.³ The molded cornice has gable-end returns. A redbrick chimney stack pierces the east roof slope near its south end. Although much of the siding is in good, albeit weathered, condition, a few boards are missing or deteriorated on each elevation. The original siding color appears to have been white. The building is not insulated.

In the hip-roofed wing that projects from the west elevation, two small rooms flank the entrance porch. Each room was originally lighted with a twelve-pane wood casement window on its west elevation. The south window remains; the north window was replaced in the late 1970s with a one-over-one aluminum-frame storm window. Both openings were covered with steel security bars and framed by louvered wood shutters that are shorter than the window opening. An air-conditioning unit pierces the wall north of the north window.

The porch has a painted beadboard ceiling. The north pilaster that framed the porch opening has been removed. The south pilaster's simple molded capital remains but the shaft boards have

¹ Rockingham County property cards; Rockingham County Deed Book 266, p. 182; Deed Book 892, p. 763; U. S. Census, population schedules, 1920-1950; Bobby Jeans Scales Manns and Margaret Blackstock, telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, August 11, 2025; Carolyn Brown Adams (Charles and Edward Hairston's niece), telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 12, 2025; Clifford Harris (David Harris's son), telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 16, 2025.

² Clifford Harris, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 16, 2025.

³ Contractor Robert Bagby executed the late 1970s renovation for the current owner Alice Mae Hampton. Robert Bagby and Alice Mae Hampton, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, June 25, 2026.

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been replaced. Two single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors provide classroom egress. The doors and transoms above them were covered on the exterior with steel plates in the late 1970s. At the same time, the narrow-board floor was replaced with poured concrete edged with red brick and a single bricked-edged concrete step and straight concrete ramp with low red brick kneewalls and painted tubular steel railings were constructed.

North and south of the shed rooms, a hip-roofed canopy supported by an oversized triangular bracket shelters a four-horizontal-panel door and transom covered by steel plates. The canopies have beadboard ceilings and molded cornices. Two formed-concrete steps rise to each entrance. The low metal railing with slender balusters at the south steps is a mid-twentieth-century addition.

The north and south elevations were originally blind. The round-arched louvered vent in the south gable is original. A one-over-one aluminum-frame storm window and two air conditioning units, all added during the late 1970s, pierce the south wall. A horizontally sliding aluminum-frame window has been installed at the north wall's center. Plywood fills the opening created for an air conditioning unit east of the window and covers the gable vent. Steel bars secure the windows on both elevations.

Vertical board fill indicates the extent of two wide openings on the east wall that originally contained groups of tall windows. Two horizontally sliding aluminum-frame windows were installed during the late 1970s. The only historic photograph located thus far is of students and teachers standing in front of the porch, with portions of the east windows visible through the open front doors. The windows appear to have been double-hung twelve-over-sash separated by wide mullions.⁴ (Exhibit A) Although the original window configuration is unknown, the openings many have contained as many as five tall windows.⁵

Interior (Photographs 5-10, Exhibits A and B)

The original plan is substantially intact, with north and south classrooms and small rooms in the west sheds. (Exhibit B) The classrooms were originally separated by a folding partition that spanned the wide opening in the central wall. The partition comprised hinged four-horizontal-panel sections that opened from the center and folded like an accordion to the east and west sides. The opening has a flat board surround. Narrow vertical-board wainscoting with molded baseboards and chair rails covers the lower third of plaster walls. Although portions of the north and south walls that once contained blackboards have been covered with beadboard, molded trim remains. The width of the original window openings on the east wall is demarcated by wainscoting height, as it was slightly shorter beneath the windows.

On the west wall, flat-board surrounds frame four original single-leaf, four-horizontal-panel, exterior doors; a narrower matching closet door at the south shed's south end; and a bookshelf.

⁴ Undated Sunshine School photograph from the collection of former student Minnie Miller.

⁵ School plans and specifications published in the 1930s by the North Carolina Department of Education recommended nine-over-nine sash windows approximately seven feet, seven inches tall.

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The closet now functions as a utility room. North of the closet, two late 1970s flat-panel doors provide restroom egress. The south opening is original. The north opening was added when the original cloak room was divided in half to create restrooms. The doors flank a bulletin board. Within the restrooms, vertical-board wainscoting remains on perimeter walls. Both have sheet vinyl floors and wall-mounted white porcelain sinks. The south toilet is pale blue; the north is white.

The doors on either side of the central wall provide front porch egress. North of the central wall, a portion of the west wall was removed to create a pass-through counter for the late 1970s kitchenette in the shed room. The flat-panel door replaced the original door. A board shelf spans the west wall beneath the window. A counter with a laminate top extends across the east wall. The closet at the north shed's north end, accessed from the kitchen, retains an original narrow four-horizontal-panel door. The closet was modified to serve as a restroom. Both the kitchen and restroom have vertical-board wainscoting on perimeter walls and vinyl composition tile floors. The built-in bookcase on the west wall north of the kitchen has a vertical-board-sheathed back and four shelves above a cabinet with a double-leaf paneled door.

The hardwood floor is in good condition. The plasterboard ceiling was replaced with gypsum board with a textured finish and ceiling fans and linear fluorescent lights were installed during the late 1970s. The walls, ceiling, and woodwork are painted white. The historic photograph illustrates the metal flue for a heating stove at the north classroom's southeast corner. The flue turns to the southeast.⁶ (Exhibit A) That stove was no longer in place when most of the former students interviewed for this nomination attended classes. Rather, they remember the wood-burning cast-iron stove that stood on a metal floor plate in the south classroom's southeast corner.⁷ A round flue hole in the ceiling indicates the stove location.

Integrity Statement

Sunshine School possesses integrity of location and setting as it occupies its original site, a 2.21-acre parcel that allowed ample space for recreational activities. The surrounding area remains primarily residential. The one-story, side-gable-roofed, two-classroom building also possesses integrity of design, materials, and workmanship due to the retention of character-defining features of early-twentieth-century educational architecture including building form, finishes, plan, and circulation pattern. The school displays distinctive characteristics such as molded cornices, bracketed auxiliary entrance canopies, and multi-pane casement windows in shed rooms, as well as typical elements such as German siding, single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors, large classroom window openings, flat-board door and window surrounds, narrow vertical-board wainscoting, plaster upper walls, a hardwood floor, and a built-in bookcase. Despite some deterioration due to deferred maintenance, the building is in good condition. Although most windows have been replaced, one twelve-pane wood casement window remains

⁶ Undated Sunshine School photograph from the collection of former student Minnie Miller.

⁷ Carolyn Brown Adams remembers stoves in both rooms. Bobby Jeans Scales Manns and Margaret Blackstock, telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, August 11, 2025; Carolyn Brown Adams, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 12, 2025; Clifford Harris, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 17, 2025; Alice Mae Hampton, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, June 25, 2026.

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on the west elevation. Original window opening size is apparent on the east elevation. The installation of one small window on each of the north and south elevations did not significantly diminish integrity. Likewise, modifications such as facing four original doors on the west elevation with metal exterior plates, replacement of the narrow-board porch floor with poured concrete edged with red brick, and installation of a concrete step and concrete and brick ramp were made in a reversible manner. The classrooms retain original volume. Floor plan changes are minor and confined to the shed rooms. The school displays integrity of feeling and association through its physical characteristics as well as its function as a public school from circa 1935 through 1955.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ 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

(Enter categories from instructions.)

BLACK ETHNIC HERITAGE

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

circa 1935-1955

Significant Dates

circa 1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hopper, James W., architect, attributed

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Sunshine School possesses significance at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of education and Black ethnic heritage and Criterion C for architecture. Sunshine School, built circa 1935, is one of only a few extant early-twentieth-century Rockingham County public schools erected to serve African American children. Teachers Anita M. Hairston and Sara B. Williamson provided first- through seventh-grade instruction in the two-classroom building, which replaced an earlier school with the same name. In fall 1955, students were assigned to Douglass School in Leaksville, which thereafter accommodated all grades of Leaksville Township's Black youth. Sunshine School subsequently functioned as a summer recreation center, social club, and church. The building was one of many Rockingham County public schools constructed, enlarged, or renovated during the 1930s following receipt of federal funding from the Civil Works, Public Works, and Works Progress administrations. The one-story side-gable-roofed building embodies standard characteristics of early-twentieth-century educational architecture such as German siding, single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors, large classroom window openings, and flat-board door and window surrounds. Although the plan, fenestration, and simple finishes are typical of one- and two-room, frame, 1930s schools, the building exhibits distinctive features such as molded cornices, bracketed auxiliary entrance canopies, and multi-pane casement windows in shed rooms. Intact interior elements include narrow vertical-board wainscoting, plaster upper walls, a hardwood floor, and a built-in bookcase. The building was probably designed by James W. Hopper, the Leaksville Township Public School District architect during the 1930s. The period of significance begins circa 1935, when the school was likely constructed, and ends in 1955, when it ceased to be used for its original purpose.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion A: Black Ethnic Heritage and Education Context

Sunshine School is locally significant under Criterion A for Black ethnic heritage and education as one of only a few extant public schools in which Rockingham County's African American children were educated from the early twentieth century through the mid-1950s.

Public Education in Rockingham County

North Carolina's African American children were afforded limited educational opportunities during the nineteenth century. Religious groups including Moravians and the Society of Friends, known as Quakers, provided basic literacy lessons for free Blacks and enslaved people, and according to oral tradition, continued even after the General Assembly in 1830 enacted legislation forbidding the education of North Carolina's enslaved population.⁸

Public schools served only white children in some urban and rural areas beginning in 1840. A ten-man committee oversaw Rockingham County school district creation and building construction. A one-story, side-gable-roofed, one-room, log building—allegedly the first public school in North Carolina—opened on January 20, 1840, in the southeast Rockingham County community of Williamsburg. By 1848, thirty-nine teachers instructed students in thirty-five districts.⁹ Terms were short and facilities primitive.

Private academies provided more comprehensive courses of study for white students but charged tuition that was cost-prohibitive for the average family. Private schools for white youth included Leaksville and Madison academies, both established in 1820, and Wentworth Academy, organized in 1846.¹⁰ In rare instances, free Black youth attended private North Carolina schools before 1865, but no documentation of such opportunities for Rockingham County children has been discovered.

Although Reconstruction policies included the promise of universal access to quality academic instruction, this pledge was not fulfilled. In 1868, 3,103 white and 1,641 Black youth between the ages of six and twenty-one resided in Rockingham County. It is unknown how many

⁸ Emma King, "Some Aspects of the Works of the Society of Friends for Negro Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Volume I, Number 4, October 1924, 403; Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 153.

⁹ "Rockingham County," *North Carolina Standard* (Raleigh), February 12, 1840, p. 3; R. D. W. Connor, *Improvement in Rural School Houses and Grounds, 1900-1906* (Raleigh: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1907), 20; Lindley S. Butler, *Rockingham County* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1982), 45.

¹⁰ "Leaksville Academy," *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh), February 18, 1820, p. 4; "Madison Academy," *North Carolina Star*, June 16, 1820, p. 3; "Boarding School," *Patriot* (Greensboro), January 17, 1846, p. 3; "Wentworth Academy," *Patriot*, September 5, 1846, p. 3; Butler, *Rockingham County*, 45; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1867* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1867), 96.

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attended public schools.¹¹ The North Carolina General Assembly, mandated by the state's 1868 constitution to provide free public education for all children, adopted in 1875 an amendment that allowed for the creation of "separate but equal" schools. As educational facilities relied on inequitably distributed local funding, this policy left Black students with inferior buildings and supplies, shorter terms, and fewer instructors. Despite these challenges, African American leaders promoted education as a means of realizing individual potential and strengthening communities by facilitating access to future opportunities. The State Colored Education Convention, composed of 140 delegates from forty counties, met in Raleigh in 1877 to plan systemic educational improvements. Politicians in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, Washington, and Winston soon sponsored initiatives to create the state's first Black graded schools. Aspiring African American teachers undertook advanced studies at normal schools established by religious denominations and private entities in Charlotte, Concord, Elizabeth City, Fayetteville, Franklinton, Greensboro, Goldsboro, Plymouth, Raleigh, Salisbury, and Winston.¹²

The five-man Rockingham County Board of Education (RCBE) delineated thirty-seven school districts in fall 1877 and named three-person committees of local residents to oversee each district. White children attended thirty-four schools, while fourteen schools served Black youth. Enrollment during the 1877-1878 term numbered 4,155 white students and 2,540 African American pupils.¹³ Madison's Black and white residents subsidized a private school for African American students that met in a house for three month sessions beginning in 1880. White merchant and tinsmith Milton Stamps led classes during the first term.¹⁴

Nathaniel Scales Smith became the first Rockingham County superintendent of public instruction on March 10, 1881. He initiated a teacher training program, sought funding for school improvements, and implemented standards for county boards of education established in 1885 by North Carolina legislators to ensure more uniform public school operation.¹⁵

Rockingham County school district boundaries were regularly redrawn and district quantity fluctuated. Students received instruction in small, log or frame, purpose-built, publicly owned schools as well as in churches, homes, and other buildings on private property. Funding was apportioned based upon census data rather than enrollment, an important distinction in rural areas where enrollment was low and attendance sporadic, particularly during planting and harvest seasons when children worked longer hours on family farms. During the 1884-1885 term, 1,704 African American children regularly attended forty-one schools and 2,089 white youth studied at fifty-two schools. Black enrollment represented around fifty percent of the

¹¹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Raleigh: M. S. Littlefield, 1869), 54.

¹² Crow, et. al., *A History of African-Americans in North Carolina*, 79, 81, 100-102, 153-155; Hugh Victor Brown, *A History of the Education of Negroes in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Irving Swain Press, Inc., 1961), 32-34.

¹³ Butler, *Rockingham County*, 69; Rockingham County Board of Education meeting minutes (hereafter abbreviated RCBEMM), July 30, September 1, and October 1, 1877; September 1, 1878; September 1, 1879.

¹⁴ US Census, population schedules, 1870-1880; Eudoxia Dalton, interview with Deborah Ross Russell, July 20, 2016; Charles and Jean Rodenbough. *Town of Madison: A Heritage to Honor, 1818-1968* (Madison: Madison Sesquicentennial Commission, Inc., 1968), 19.

¹⁵ RCBEMM, June 1, 1881; January 1, 1883; "County Board of Education," *Reidsville Times*, June 20, 1884, p. 3; "The New School Law," *Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), March 19, 1885, p. 2.

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school-age population, while white enrollment was about forty-three percent. Educational facilities remained inequitable. Leaksville's Black residents petitioned the RCBE for a public school in 1886, as the community's youth had been without academic instruction since 1884.¹⁶

The number of Rockingham County schools decreased by the 1889-1890 term. Seven frame and twenty-eight log buildings served 2,637 white children, while 2,113 African American children studied in four frame and eighteen log buildings. The frame school for Reidsville's Black students erected in summer 1889 was staffed by five teachers by 1892. Although many Reidsville youth worked in tobacco factories, average annual attendance at the school increased from 163 students in 1887 to 221 in 1894. Private institutions for white youth included Reidsville Female Academy as well as Leaksville, Madison, and Wentworth academies and a small subscription school in Madison, all of which tutored male and female students.¹⁷

When state subsidies for public education became available in 1897, legislators did not apportion funds to Black schools, but local taxes and citizen contributions allowed for ongoing school operation. Small rudimentary buildings served most Rockingham County students. During the 1900-1901 session, 1,149 African American youth received instruction in fourteen log and twenty-two frame schools, while 4,348 white youth studied at one brick, eight log, and sixty-seven frame schools. The term length averaged eighteen weeks.¹⁸ Only two log schools, both for African American children, were in use during the 1910-1911 term. Otherwise, Black students attended frame schools—thirty-two rural and one in Reidsville—and were instructed by forty-two teachers. White youth enrolled in two schools in Reidsville and sixty-seven rural primary schools staffed by 125 teachers.¹⁹

More state funding became available in the early 1910s when the general assembly designated capital for extensive improvements to all public schools. Municipal and county boards of education implemented stringent teacher qualification standards, undertook building renovation and construction, and consolidated smaller schools. Between 1910 and 1912, rural North Carolina communities erected 132 African American and 574 white schools, many using plans distributed by the Department of Public Instruction. In 1912, the state enumerated 2,226 rural and 105 urban Black schools and 5,265 rural and 181 urban white schools. Private schools including Palmer Memorial Institute in Guilford County, established in 1902 by African American educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Laurinburg Institute in Scotland County,

¹⁶ "An Appeal," *Dan Valley Echo* (Leaksville), April 15, 1886, p. 2; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Raleigh: P. Hale, 1887), 118, 121.

¹⁷ "Colored Graded School," *Reidsville Review* (hereafter abbreviated *RR*), July 3, 1889, p. 5; "Faculty," *RR*, September 16, 1892, p. 7; "Our Graded Schools," *Webster's Weekly* (Reidsville), June 6, 1895, p. 3; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1890), 73, 76, 102.

¹⁸ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1902), 94-95.

¹⁹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1912), 48, 54, 57.

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created in 1904 by Emmanuel Monty and Tinny McDuffie, remained alternatives for Black children.²⁰

The RCBE accelerated its school improvement program during the 1910s. Five schools for white children and four schools for Black pupils were built in Rockingham County in 1912. Three schools for African American students were erected in 1913: a one-room building in Sadler and two-classroom schools in Leaksville and New Bethel Township. A two-room school in Simpsonville Township was constructed in 1914, followed by schools in Madison and three rural locations in 1915.²¹ During the 1914-1915 term, the RCBE operated eighty-one rural and two Reidsville schools for white students. Approximately \$27,000 was expended for white school construction and repair in rural areas and \$1,591 in Reidsville. African American students attended thirty-eight rural schools and one in Reidsville. The rural school improvement expenditure was \$490, while Reidsville received \$312. One white and three Black schools were log. Typically, one or two teachers provided first- through seventh-grade instruction. High-school-level classes were not offered to Black students.²²

Despite some progress in the 1910s, inherent disparities between Black and white educational facilities prevailed. Prominent educators including Nathan C. Newbold, James B. Dudley, and Charles H. Moore thus began addressing the appalling condition of African American schools. Newbold, appointed Agent for Rural Black Schools in 1913, remained in that role until becoming the state's first Director of the Division of Negro Education upon its 1921 creation. With the aid of philanthropic concerns such as the Jeanes, Peabody, Rosenwald, and Slater Funds, he hired supervisors and teachers for rural schools and orchestrated building upgrades. Newbold regularly traveled throughout the state to promote Black education.²³

School curricula were modified in response to the Department of Public Instruction's 1920 implementation of academic benchmarks and high school ratings. Institutions interested in standard high school classification were required to offer seventh- through eleventh-grade courses during school sessions of at least 160 days, possess a minimum of three certified teachers and forty-five pupils in average daily attendance, and execute a department-approved study program utilizing appropriate materials. By the end of the 1920-1921 term, 116 public high schools for white students had attained accreditation. To improve facilities and instructor caliber, North Carolina disbursed eighteen million dollars in operational funds to public African American elementary and high schools, summer programs, normal schools, and colleges between 1921 and 1925. Of that amount, teacher salaries totaled around ten million dollars, new

²⁰ State legislators first allocated funds for Black elementary schools in 1910. Jim Sumner, "The Development of North Carolina's Public School System through 1940," context essay prepared for the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, 1990, 5-6; William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 445-447; 8-9; Crow, et, al., *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 155-158.

²¹ "Money Apportioned," *RR*, January 18, 1913, p. 2; "County Colored Schools," *RR*, October 16, 1914, p. 4.

²² North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1912), 66, 98, 101, 104-107.

²³ Brown, *A History of the Education of Negroes in North Carolina*, 61, 64; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 204; Hugh Victor Brown, *E-Qual-ity Education in North Carolina Among Negroes* (Raleigh: Irving Swain Press, Inc., 1964), 129-130.

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buildings and equipment five million dollars, and teacher training and higher education almost three million dollars. In 1924, the state certified twenty-one Black campuses: four normal, three rural, and fourteen urban schools. At the close of the 1929-1930 academic year, the Department of Public Instruction enumerated 608 white and sixty-eight black accredited high schools. Rockingham County offered high-school-level instruction at eight white schools and three Black schools in Madison, Reidsville, and Leaksville.²⁴

Rockingham County Public School Consolidation

North Carolina strengthened compulsory school attendance legislation in 1919, resulting in escalated enrollment that could not be contained on existing campuses. The Department of Public Instruction's 1921 inventory of 7,467 public schools revealed that 3,698 one-room and 2,460 two-room schools, together comprising eighty-three percent of the total number, served the state's children. Although the vast majority of those buildings were frame, eighty-one log and 248 brick structures were in use. Most housed first- through seventh-grade students; only seventy of one hundred counties, including Rockingham, operated at least one rural high school.²⁵

In order to meet state standards and alleviate overcrowding, county school superintendents and boards of education oversaw widespread school construction, gradually reducing the total number of campuses and school districts. Statewide road improvements facilitated school consolidation by allowing for more efficient busing. In Rockingham County, the RCBE maintained countywide public school system oversight and managed rural schools, while the Leaksville Township, Madison, and Reidsville boards of education guided municipal school operation. The Leaksville Township Public School District (LTPSD) was established in May 1921 and chartered in April 1929.²⁶

As Rockingham County school administrators sought to construct new buildings, they solicited funding from the state, community members, and philanthropic concerns. State appropriations subsidized construction of three substantial Reidsville schools during the 1920s. In August 1921, Danville, Virginia-based contractor Lonzo B. Flora's company completed a two-story, brick, \$50,000 high school for African American youth on North Scales Street named in honor of African American educator Booker T. Washington. Winston-Salem architect W. C. Northup rendered drawings for the school, an addition erected in 1923, and a substantial brick high school for white students also finished in 1923. In June of that year, Booker T. Washington High School became the first Black Rockingham County institution and one of the earliest in North Carolina to attain statewide accreditation. The high school stood near a two-story,

²⁴ Sumner, "The Development of North Carolina's Public School System through 1940," pp. 17-18, appendices; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, *Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1921-1934*; North Carolina State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, "North Carolina's Social Welfare Program for Negroes," Special Bulletin Number 8, Raleigh, N. C., 1926, 42; "Consolidation in Rockingham," *RR*, May 14, 1924, p. 1.

²⁵ Jim Sumner, "The Development of North Carolina's Public School System through 1940," p. 7, appendices.

²⁶ Leaksville Township Public School District board meeting minutes (hereafter abbreviated LTBMM), April 4, 1921, April 12, 1929.

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weatherboarded, ten-room, Black graded school. Contractor Charlie B. Flora and Son of Danville, Virginia, replaced the frame building in 1924.²⁷

The Rosenwald Fund, Slater Fund, and General Education Board, all organizations devoted to improving educational opportunities for southern African American children, also supported construction and operation of Rockingham County's Black schools. Between 1915 and 1932, the Rosenwald Fund, in collaboration with local and state boards of education and private citizens, facilitated completion of 823 North Carolina buildings including schools, teachers' residences, and industrial education shops, more than in any other state. In addition to financial contributions, the foundation provided architectural drawings for buildings of various types and sizes.²⁸

Ten schools—Blue Creek, Elm Grove, Garrett Grove, Hayes Chapel, Leaksville, Madison, Sadler, Springfield, Stoneville, and Wentworth—were erected in Rockingham County between 1916 and 1929 utilizing local, state, and Rosenwald Fund contributions. Eight were small, weatherboarded, one-, two-, or three-classroom buildings. The six-teacher school in Madison completed in 1924 is the only extant building. The largest facility, in Leaksville, was an expansive one-story brick building containing ten classrooms. Leaksville architect James Woodson Hopper designed the school erected in 1928 by Greensboro contractor J. R. Owen at a cost of \$58,000. Local residents and the State Literary Fund provided \$55,900. The Rosenwald Fund contributed \$2,100. The school was named in memory of African American writer, orator, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.²⁹

In 1930, Leaksville Township's public school system encompassed twenty buildings, only three of which were brick (Douglass and schools for white students in Leaksville and Flinchum). Although economic challenges ensuing from the Great Depression limited facility improvements, obsolete buildings were gradually decommissioned. After voters approved issuance of a \$250,000 bond to subsidize school construction on July 15, 1930, J. W. Hopper designed six brick buildings to serve white students—Burton Grove, Draper Graded, Lakeside, Leaksville Graded, Leaksville High, and North Spray—in collaboration with Greensboro architect William Crumley Holleyman Jr. The Leaksville High School project included a commodious auditorium. Lakeside and North Spray schools were one-story buildings, while the others had two stories.³⁰

²⁷ "New School Buildings," *RR*, April 8, 1921, p. 1; "Of Local Interest," *RR*, July 22, 1921, p. 5; "Local Schools," *RR*, October 14, 1921, p. 1; "L. B. Flora," *RR*, June 2, 1922, p. 1; "Notice," *RR*, March 30, 1923, p. 6; "Local News," *RR*, June 13, 1923, p. 5; "Graded School," *RR*, October 6, 1924, p. 3; "Past Year," *RR*, February 11, 1925, p. 1.

²⁸ Kyle Obenauer and Claudia Brown, "Rosenwald Schools in North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2015, 29, 41, 46.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 43; "Rockingham County Schools," Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, 1917-1948, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, Special Collections, Fisk University, <http://rosenwald.fisk.edu> (accessed in April 2026); "Contract," *RR*, December 2, 1927, p. 5.

³⁰ LTBM, March 26, 1930, July 16, 1930, March 16, 1931; "Large Construction Program," *Greensboro Daily News* (hereafter abbreviated *GDN*), October 8, 1930, p. 12; W. C. Holleyman (1939), an Atlanta native, moved to Greensboro in 1921 after graduating from Georgia Tech in 1917 and working in New York City. He was employed by prominent Greensboro architect Charles C. Hartmann's firm before establishing a practice with Arthur Zimm in

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The RCBE continued to receive allocations from state and federal agencies for education-related projects during the 1930s. Between 1932 and 1935 the North Carolina Emergency Relief Administration, the state's first New Deal program that created jobs for unemployed citizens, and the federal Civil Works Administration (1933-1934) subsidized Rockingham County school painting, remodeling, reroofing, enlarging, erecting, and demolishing buildings; landscaping grounds; creating athletic fields; constructing retaining walls; and installing water pumps and tanks.³¹

The federal Public Works Administration, created in 1933, also supplied funds to subsidize school improvements. Greensboro architect Harry Barton planned additions for two Madison schools. Danville architect J. Bryant Heard designed three Reidsville projects: two white graded schools and a four-room north wing at Booker T. Washington High School.³² James Woodson Hopper rendered drawings for ten Rockingham County schools and additions erected in 1934-1935. Hopper, a Henry County, Virginia, native, was educated at the University of Michigan, Tulane University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Columbia University. His Rockingham County commissions beginning in 1916 included mill employee houses, a theater, a Leaksville hospital, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Leaksville, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Spray, thirty-five schools, and industrial, commercial, and municipal buildings. He operated a construction company in partnership with his father James M. Hopper.³³

Rockingham County's school consolidation program was well underway by fall 1935. Forty-six (twenty-nine rural, eight Leaksville, four Madison, and five Reidsville) schools served 10,387 white students, while 3,571 African American children received instruction at thirty-eight

1928. During the 1930s, he designed many Guilford County public schools and additions, six buildings at N. C. A & T College (now N. C. A & T University), a dining hall and Spencer Dormitory at Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (now UNC-Greensboro), a Burlington Mills office, the Greensboro Civic Center, and the Hayes-Taylor YMCA for Greensboro's African American residents. Residential commissions include a 1930 replica of Westover (a circa 1750 house near Charles City, Virginia) in Pinehurst. "W. C. Holleyman Jr.," *Greensboro Record* (hereafter abbreviated *GR*), January 13, 1939, p. 1; "New Businesses," *GDN*, November 28, 1928, p. 10; "Replica of Westover," *GDN*, August 1, 1930, p. 4; "Board of Education," *GDN*, July 10, 1937, p. 10; "Trustee Board," *GR*, October 6, 1937, p. 14; "Plans," *GDN*, April 6, 1937, p. 1; "Woman's College," *GDN*, July 15, 1937, p. 8; "Civic Center," *GDN*, September 14, 1938, p. 9; "Plans for Additions," *GDN*, September 16, p. 14; "Permit," *GR*, February 22, 1938, p. 3; "College Dining Hall," *GR*, November 3, 1938, p. 1; "Caesar Cone," *GDN*, January 1, 1939, p. 5.

³¹ LTBM, November 28, 1933; J. S. Kirk, Walter A. Cutter and Thomas W. Morse, eds. *Emergency Relief in North Carolina: A Record of the Development and Activities of the North Carolina Emergency Relief Administration, 1932-1935* (Raleigh: North Carolina Emergency Relief Administration, 1936), 516.

³² "Rockingham to Open School Bids," *GDN*, August 21, 1934, p. 7; "A Danville Man," *RR*, August 10, 1934, p. 5; "Local Office," *RR*, December 11, 1934, p. 1; "Negro High School," *RR*, January 1, 1939, p. 1.

³³ "Draper," *RR*, March 24, 1916, p. 5; "Notes," *RR*, April 4, 1916, p. 5; "Leaksville," *RR*, April 7, 1916, p. 5; "Spray," *RR*, May 9, 1916, p. 5; "J. W. Hopper," *RR*, November 28, 1916, p. 6; "New Hospital," *Tri-City Daily Gazette*, November 27, 1923, p. 1; "Leaksville-Spray Notes," *RR*, April 28, 1924, p. 1; "The Cornerstone," *The Arrow* (Spray), September 18, 1924, p. 1; "Past Year," *RR*, February 11, 1925, p. 1; "Danville Man," *RR*, August 10, 1934, p. 5; "Contracts Let," *GDN*, October 6, 1934, p. 13; "J. W. Hopper," *Winston-Salem Journal* (hereafter abbreviated *WSJ*), April 22, 1965, p. 3.

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(twenty-five rural, five Leaksville, five Madison, and three Reidsville) schools.³⁴ In Leaksville Township, Black students attended two one-room schools—Springfield and Sunny Homes—and three two-room schools—Blue Creek, Moir Town, and Sunshine. After Douglass School was destroyed by fire on October 23, 1938, student received instruction in a lodge hall and a hastily constructed six-room addition at Springfield School on the outskirts of Leaksville. J. W. Hopper designed the new Douglass School, a one-story, brick, hip-roofed, fifteen-classroom building with an auditorium/gymnasium erected by Leaksville contractor John Smith and Son in 1939 at a cost of approximately \$65,000. Equipment, furnishings, and site improvements expenditures were about \$45,000. The Public Works Administration contributed to the construction cost of Douglass School; Draper Junior High School for white students, also completed in September 1939; a four-classroom addition at Reidsville's African American Washington School; and a well and water tank at Intelligence School for white youth near Madison. Mooresville-based Barger Brothers was the general contractor for the Draper and Reidsville projects.³⁵

Enrollment increases during the 1940s exacerbated the need for new and enlarged facilities. Students received first- through eleventh-grade instruction until 1942, when twelfth grade was added. Rockingham County public school construction and maintenance was deferred during World War II due to material and labor shortages, planning for African American school consolidation continued. A 1944 survey documented thirty-one Black schools erected between 1889 (Williamsburg School) and 1940 (Ruffin School) in rural Rockingham County and Madison. The survey area encompassed nine of the county's eleven townships. Schools in Leaksville and Reidsville townships were not inventoried. Most buildings had one or two rooms, with a corresponding number of teachers instructing an average of twenty to seventy-two students annually between 1930 and 1944. At Elm Grove, Piney Fork, Ruffin, Sadler, and Stoneville Schools, three teachers taught between ninety and one hundred students per year in three-classroom buildings. All provided first- through seventh-grade-level education. At Madison Elementary School, six faculty members instructed an average of 214 children per term. Madison High School enrollment ranged from twenty students in 1930 to a peak of 134 youth in 1942. There were five teachers during the 1943-1944 term, when enrollment dropped to ninety-nine pupils.³⁶

Many Black children walked between three and four miles from their homes to school. Only seven buses were available to transport them in 1943-1944. Although there were seven rural school districts, the sixth contained one school for white students in Mayodan. Black students were bused to Madison. High-school-age youth residing in rural southeastern Rockingham

³⁴ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Part II* (Raleigh: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1937), 12-13, 74-75.

³⁵ "Negro School" *GR*, October 28, 1938, p. 3; "Contact is Awarded," *GDN*, September 3, 1938, p. 7; "Contracts Let," *RR*, November 24, 1938, p. 1; "Bids are Received," *RR*, February 1, 1939, p. 3; "Rockingham Adds," *Twin City Sentinel*, March 22, 1939, p. 1; "Leaksville's \$100,000 School," *Twin City Sentinel*, June 13, 1939, p. 1; "Holmes Postpones Opening," *WSJS*, September 3, 1939, p. 5.

³⁶ Statistics provided are for the 1929-1930 through 1943-1944 terms. Joshua Corbett Colley, "A Plan for Consolidation of Negro Schools in Rockingham County, North Carolina," Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1944, pp. 8-13.

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County were bused to Washington High School in Reidsville. White students throughout the county rode sixty-nine buses to larger consolidated schools.³⁷

The RCBE's school consolidation and improvement program resumed after voters approved a \$1.5-million bond issue in November 1946 and March 1947.³⁸ An ambitious plan to erect three schools to serve all rural Black students was enacted. Lincoln, in the northeast Rockingham County community of Oregon Hill; Roosevelt, south of Reidsville in the Haw River community; and Stone, in the northwest Rockingham County community of Stoneville, opened in fall 1950. Madison's new African American school, named in memory of local Black surgeon and scientist Charles R. Drew, was also completed at before classes began in September. Seventeen decommissioned rural African American schools were sold at auction on March 2, 1951.³⁹

Facility improvements subsidized by state funds and municipal bonds continued through the 1950s. Work at African American campuses included replacing Booker T. Washington High School in Reidsville at a cost of \$357,000 in 1951. Asheville architect Lindsey Madison Gudger designed the expansive brick one- and two-level school erected by Greensboro contractor Earl B. Gallimore.⁴⁰ John Smith and Sons built a \$40,000 cafeteria, music room, and vocational shop addition at Douglass School in 1951. Winston-Salem architects Stinson and Arey designed the freestanding \$115,000 building containing seven classrooms and a library for high school students erected by Mooreville general contractor John V. Barger in 1955. Enrollment gradually increased. In October 1957, when Douglass School served all of Leaksville Township's African American youth, twenty-five teachers instructed 535 elementary school children and 120 high school students. Although the expansion initially ameliorated overcrowding, planning for a nine-classroom (including home economics and vocational suites) and auditorium/gymnasium addition commenced in 1956. The work was executed in 1959.⁴¹

Sunshine School History

On August 24, 1934, the RCBE purchased a 2.21-acre parcel southwest of the Draper municipal limits from Mebane Virginia Land and Water Power Company, which had platted a subdivision called the Jamestown Addition in August 1931.⁴² The acquisition occurred while the RCBE was utilizing federal funding from the Public Works Administration to subsidize school construction, renovation, and expansion. A November 1933 LTPSD list of approved PWA projects includes a three-room school for African American youth near Draper, likely Sunshine School, although the building has only two classrooms. J. W. Hopper, the architect for LTPSD at that time, probably

³⁷ Ibid., 4, 14-17.

³⁸ LTBMM, October 29, 1946, April 30, 1948; "Notice," *Leaksville News*, February 6, 1947.

³⁹ Rixie Hunter, "Leaksville Works for Better Schools," *WSJ*, February 12, 1950, pp. 1 and 4; Rixie Hunter, "Tri-Cities Schools," *WSJ*, February 13, 1950, p. 5; "County Schools Begin," *RR*, September 4, 1950, p. 1; "Notice of Resale of Land," *RR*, February 16, 1951, p. 6; "New School," *WSJ*, June 24, 1955, p. 18; "Legal Notice," *RR*, September 25, 1958, p. B7.

⁴⁰ "New Booker T Washington High School," *RR*, September 24, 1951, pp. 1 and 8.

⁴¹ LTBMM, February 6, 1950; March 31, 1954; May 13, 1954; March 12, 1956; "Leaksville School," *Twin City Sentinel*, July 22, 1950, p. 5; "Firm at Leaksville," *GDN*, March 25, 1951, p. 8; "New Addition," *WSJ*, August 6, 1955, p. 18; "Bond Money," *GDN*, December 19, 1958, p. 15; "Construction Delayed," *GR*, August 5, 1959, p. B3.

⁴² The Jamestown Addition plat is not on file at the Rockingham County Register of Deeds.

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rendered drawings for the school. He designed ten other Rockingham County schools erected in 1934-1935.⁴³ Sunshine School replaced an earlier school with the same name. The location of that structure, which was not owned by the school system, is unknown.⁴⁴

Two teachers, Anita M. Hairston and Sara B. Williamson, provided first- through seventh-grade-level instruction at Sunshine School in fall 1935. Leaksville native Anita Mildred Martin Hairston (1909-1991) taught first- through third-grade students in the north classroom. Hairston attended Winston-Salem Teachers College (Winston-Salem State University since 1969) from fall 1928 until spring 1930 and earned a BS in Education in 1944.⁴⁵ Sara Belle Williamson (1899-1959) of Reidsville, a graduate of Knoxville College in Tennessee, instructed older students in the south classroom. The curriculum comprised reading, language, spelling, writing, arithmetic, social studies, health, and physical education. Classes typically began on September 1 and ended on May 30, with a two-week break in late December.⁴⁶

Former students provided insight into their tenure at Sunshine School. Although most lived within walking distance, some rode school buses or were dropped off as their parents drove to work. The school day lasted from around 8:30 am until 3:00 pm, with recess and lunch breaks. Student desks were arranged in rows facing the blackboards and teachers' desks on the north and south walls. The youngest students were assigned desks closest to the front of each classroom. Teachers actively instructed one grade level, assigned students independent work, and moved to the next grade. Anita Hairston's classroom included a piano she played during music lessons and programs. She also offered piano lessons after school. In early years, Sara Williamson would cook food including stewed prunes on the wood-burning heating stove in the north classroom. Children either brought lunches to school or went home to eat. Older students carried buckets of water for drinking and cleaning from pumps in the front yard and near Clarke Avenue south of the school. Large windows on the east elevation provided ample light. Coats were hung on hooks in the cloak rooms. The folding central door was open during musical performances and other functions attended by community members. Youth played hopscotch, kickball, softball, and other games on the lawn. Two small, weatherboarded, two-seat outhouses painted white were located east of the school near the lot's edge.⁴⁷

⁴³ The name "Sunshine School" first appears in Leaksville Township school board meeting minutes in an August 12, 1935, list of teachers by school. Planning for a new school for Black students near Draper began in January 1933. LTBMM, January 17, 1933; November 28, 1933; "Rockingham to Open School Bids," *GDN*, August 21, 1934, p. 7; Contracts Let," *GDN*, October 6, 1934, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Only a few references to Sunshine School predating 1935 have been located. A second teacher was hired in 1930 after a partition wall was erected. Sara Williamson and Anita Hairston, the Sunshine School faculty, taught children during the day and offered night classes for adults on Mondays and Thursdays from 7:15 to 9:15 pm in spring 1931. It is not known how long evening instruction continued. LTBMM, March 20, 1930; May 13, 1930; October 27, 1930; "Night Schools," *RR*, February 16, 1931, p. 6; "Wiping out Illiteracy," *RR*, March 11, 1931, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Email correspondence with Tom Flynn, Associate Director of Archives, Research, Learning, and Outreach, WSSU Archives and C.G. O'Kelly Library, Winston-Salem State University.

⁴⁶ "Sara B. King," *RR*, June 8, 1955, p. 8; "Sunshine School," Principal's Annual Elementary School Reports, 1948-1949 and 1949-1950, Rockingham County, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of General Education, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh. These are the only principal's reports for Sunshine School on file for the duration of the school's operation.

⁴⁷ Clifford, Margie, and Jeanette Harris were transported by bus from their home in the Sunny Home community. Clifford was licensed to drive a school bus in 1959 when he was sixteen, a rising sophomore at Douglass School.

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Records related to the school's operation are sparse. Early enrollment numbers are unknown. Former student Bobby Jean Manns remembers that there were about five children in her first-grade group and around twenty total students in the younger classroom in 1941. The LTPSD continued to consolidate campuses, closing Moir Town and Sunny Home Schools for African American students at the conclusion of the 1947-1948 school year. Some of those children were assigned to Sunshine School, where daily attendance averaged seventy-five of eighty-one enrolled children in 1948-1949. Seventh-grade students attended Douglass School beginning in fall 1949, when seventy-seven children enrolled at Sunshine School. The first-grade contingent was the largest, comprising twenty students. Two two-room African American schools—Sunshine and Blue Creek—remained until Douglass High School could be enlarged to accommodate all Black youth. Margaret A. Blackstock thought there were between twenty and thirty students per classroom during her first-and second-grade terms (1953-1954 and 1954-1955).⁴⁸

Sara Williamson continued to teach after marrying Reverend Joseph King on November 16, 1952. The LTPSD proposed moving approximately one hundred fourth- through sixth-grade children from Sunshine and Blue Creek Schools to Douglass School in fall 1953, but it is unclear if this transpired due to parental objection. Regardless, in September 1955, Sara King, Anita Hairston, and youth who would have attended Sunshine School were assigned to Douglass School. An adjacent eight-room building completed that summer provided high school classrooms and a library for upperclassmen.⁴⁹

Anita Hairston and Sara Williamson King were respected leaders with deep community connections. As they attended church services, joined civic organizations, and frequented local businesses, they built relationships that contributed to a nurturing school environment in which students were inspired to achieve and held to high standards. Their pedagogical approach facilitated development of academic, leadership, and teamwork skills and fostered personal growth, thus empowering youth to pursue higher education and realize community uplift. Sara Williamson chaired the Racetrack Health Club, formed in 1946 by African American Reidsville residents in conjunction with a municipal health committee to facilitate disease prevention and control. Initiatives included promoting diphtheria, whooping cough, smallpox, and typhoid vaccines and tuberculosis awareness. Immunization clinics for children and adults were held at

He was one of six teenage bus drivers, all of whom had two routes. Clifford's included stops near the former Sunny Home and Sunshine Schools and in the Piney Fork community where students gathered to ride to Douglass School. Bobby Jeans Scales Manns and Margaret Blackstock, telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, August 11, 2025; Carolyn Brown Adams, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 12, 2025; Clifford Harris, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 17, 2025; Alice Mae Hampton, telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, June 25 and July 1, 2026.

⁴⁸ LTBMM, April 29, 1948; Rixie Hunter, "Leaksville Works for Better Schools," *WSJS*, February 12, 1950, p. 1; "4,500 Due to Enter Leaksville Schools," *WSJ*, September 1, 1950, p. 8; Bobby Jeans Scales Manns and Margaret Blackstock, telephone conversations with Heather Fearnbach, August 11, 2025; "Sunshine School," Principal's Annual Elementary School Reports, 1948-1949 and 1949-1950.

⁴⁹ "Sara B. King," *RR*, June 8, 1955, p. 8; Margaret Blackstock, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, August 11, 2025; LTBMM, February 8 and 10, 1953, March 31, 1954; October 22, 1957; "New School at Leaksville," *WSJ*, June 24, 1955, p. 18.

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locations ranging from municipal buildings to schools, stores, and YMCAs. Sunshine School regularly hosted clinics. At a service honoring her twenty-eight-year tenure as a Rockingham County teacher held at Saint Paul Baptist Church on May 29, 1955, former students and neighborhood residents lauded her contributions to the community. Anita Hairston stated that King taught “citizenship, thrift, truthfulness, love, and cooperation” as well as academic subjects.⁵⁰ Anita and her husband Robert Lee Hairston, an agent for Durham-based North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, resided in Leasksville, where they attended Mount Sinai Baptist Church. Robert Hairston was a member of Saint James Lodge #138 and Anita joined the Bethshevier Chapter 389-A Order of the Eastern Star, a fraternal organization open to Masons and their female relatives.⁵¹

Sunshine School served as a summer recreation center during the late 1950s and 1960s. After Alice Mae Hampton purchased it from the LTPSD on January 12, 1972, she engaged contractor Robert Bagley to remodel it to accommodate a social club. It later functioned as a sanctuary for Greater Power Holiness Church, pastored by Carl Sellers.⁵² Mrs. Hampton still owns the school. Her son Raphiel Hampton, under the auspices of the Hampton Historical Foundation, is seeking funding to execute necessary repairs with the goal of creating a community center. The City of Eden designated the school a local historic landmark on October 17, 2006.

Criterion C: Architectural Context

Sunshine School is locally significant under Criterion C for architecture. The one-story side-gable-roofed building embodies standard characteristics of early-twentieth-century educational architecture such as German siding, single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors, large classroom window openings, and flat-board door and window surrounds. Although the plan, fenestration, and simple finishes are typical of one- and two-room, frame, 1930s schools, the building exhibits distinctive features such as molded cornices, bracketed auxiliary entrance canopies, and multi-pane casement windows in shed rooms. Sunshine School is a rare and intact example of the simply executed frame buildings that served many Rockingham County students through the mid-twentieth century.

Early-twentieth-century North Carolina Public School Design

Although form and finish varies, many rural early-twentieth-century North Carolina public schools were one-story, gable and hip-roofed, frame, one- or two-room buildings simply executed in an economical manner that allowed for rapid construction, flexible use, and future expansion. Schools were efficiently arranged to take full advantage of natural light and air circulation and facilitate connectivity between interior and exterior spaces. Weatherboard

⁵⁰ Sara King was resident counselor in a young women’s dormitory at NCA&T College from October 1957 until her death on December 29, 1959. Her date of birth varies on official records. Based on the 1900 census, 1899 appears to be correct. United States Census, population schedule, 1900; “Health Committee,” *RR*, September 25, 1946, p. 5; “Negro Health Week,” *RR*, April 2, 1948, p. 8; “District Health Officer,” *RR*, May 19, 1948, p. 5; “Sara B. King,” *RR*, June 8, 1955, p. 8; “Counselor at A&T College Dies,” *Jackson Advocate* (Mississippi), January 16, 1960, p. 7.

⁵¹ Anita Martin and Robert Hairston married on November 21, 1934, in Danville, Virginia. They resided at 935 Galloway Street at the time of their deaths. “Hairston Funeral,” *News and Record* (Greensboro), March 30, 1991, p. 6; “Robert Lee Hairston,” *News and Record*, March 6, 1998, p. B4.

⁵² Rockingham County Deed Book 678, p. 866.

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sheathing and wood-shingle or standing-seam metal roofs were typical. Brick piers or continuous brick foundations elevated buildings to diminish dampness and insect infestation. Porches and vestibules provided sheltered egress. Small coat, lunch preparation, and storage rooms often projected from the main block. Groups of tall multi-pane, double-hung, wood sash windows illuminated and ventilated classrooms. Windows were typically located on only one elevation, ideally to the left of desks, to minimize eye strain. Interior finishes included narrow tongue-and-groove hardwood floors, plaster-on-lath or beadboard-sheathed walls and ceilings, tall baseboards, beadboard wainscoting, wood door and window surrounds, wood-frame blackboards, built-in coat and storage closets, raised-panel doors with operable transoms, and molded chair rails, cornices, and picture rails. Movable partition walls and folding doors maximized spatial use for instructional purposes and enabled community gatherings. Small stages accommodated performers and lecturers. Heating stoves were located in central corners to share common chimneys, effectively radiate heat at a safe distance from students, and avoid interference with desk placement.⁵³

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)'s Division of Schoolhouse Planning issued standardized floor plans, elevations, specifications, and guidance regarding educational building construction beginning in 1903. Some plans were executed as drawn, while others were adapted by architects and contractors to reflect local needs and site conditions. Publications included detailed building materials lists for schools, privies, dormitories, and teacher residences as well as sample contractor agreements, with the goal of reducing overall cost while improving building quality. Site preparation, sanitation, landscaping, and playground arrangement are first addressed in the 1914 edition. Direction regarding entrance drive, drinking fountain, well house, septic tank, drainage trench, baseball diamond, tennis court, basketball court, and playground equipment configuration and construction followed. Dimensioned drawings detailed typical wall sections, roof and floor framing, entrance canopies, steps and railings, wood trim profiles, window and door frames, doors, windows, cabinets, blackboards, and bookcases. Door, window, and cabinet hardware, and paint and varnish type, proper application method, and color were specified. NCDPI proposed exterior paint schemes including solid white, white siding with light gray trim and white sash, gray siding with white trim and white sash, light cream siding with light brown trim and light cream sash, and dark brown siding with light cream trim and sash. On the interior, ceilings were ideally white or cream and walls cream to reflect light, while a dark color, preferably brown, was suggested for wainscoting, trim, and doors to minimize glare and maintenance.⁵⁴

Early-twentieth-century Rockingham County Public Schools

Sunshine School, which was southwest of Draper's municipal limits when constructed circa 1935, is one of the most intact early twentieth-century rural schools for African American children in Rockingham County. Although the condition of all public schools recorded by Sarah A. Woodard during the 2003 Rockingham County survey has not been verified, aerial and

⁵³ State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Plans for Public Schoolhouses* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1911); State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Plans for Public Schoolhouses and School Grounds* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1914); State Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Plans and Specifications," 1934.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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Google Street View photography illustrate that many documented buildings have been demolished or altered. In Eden, Burton Grove School, Lakeside School, Leaksville Graded School, North Spray Graded School, and Spray Graded School, all of which accommodated white youth, are gone. Draper School (1939) for white students at 1719 East Stadium Drive and Douglass School (1939, 1951, 1955) for Black children at 1130 Center Church Road, Eden, remain. Those buildings and Sunshine School, all designed by Leaksville architect J. W. Hopper, were designated Local Historic Landmarks by the Eden Historic Preservation Commission and City Council on October 17, 2006. Sunshine School's construction was subsidized by a Public Works Administration allocation. The 1939 buildings were erected with Works Progress Administration funding.

The thirty-one rural schools that served Rockingham County's African American youth in 1944 were simply executed weatherboarded buildings with either gable or hip roofs sheathed with standing-seam and pressed metal or asphalt shingles. At thirteen schools, shed (nine), hip (three), or gable (one) porches sheltered entrances. At the hip-roofed, weatherboarded Haw River (1932), Hickory Grove (1933), Madison High (1933), and Chapel Hill (1938) schools, porches spanned the distance between two shed rooms that projected from the façade like at Sunshine School. Early buildings were elevated on brick or stone piers, while those built after 1920 had continuous brick foundations with the exception of Ruffin School (1940), which is supported by brick piers. Most buildings were not electrified, and none had plumbing. In most cases, single or grouped six-over-six double-hung wood sash provided natural light and wood stoves supplied heat. Electric bulbs hung from the ceilings of four of the twenty-six county-operated schools. The light fixtures at Madison elementary and high schools had opaque globes. Two outhouses were located near each school. Piney Fork and Ruffin schools had wells. Otherwise, students carried water from neighbors' springs or wells.⁵⁵

The earliest extant rural schools built for African American students appear to be Bluestone School (1919, RK 1550) at 126 Dibrell Road and Poteat School (circa 1920, RK1494) on Worsham Mill Road in northeast Rockingham County. Like Sunshine School, both are one-story, two-classroom, German-sided buildings with shed rooms flanking a porch sheltering two entrances. However, they are more simply executed than Sunshine School. Both have standing-seam-metal hip roofs with exposed rafter ends, while the gable-roofed Sunshine School features a molded cornice. Sunshine School's west roof slope extends in the same plane to cover the shed rooms and porch, while the earlier schools have lower shed roofs. Bluestone School's window openings have been enclosed with painted plywood around early-twenty-first-century sash. The exterior doors have been replaced and aluminum-frame storm windows installed. Two square, brick chimney stacks rise from the roof. The interior integrity level is unknown. Poteat School's deep setback in a wooded area precludes condition and integrity analysis. Sunshine School retains original single-leaf four-horizontal-panel doors, one multi-pane casement window, and flat-board door and window surrounds. Intact interior elements include narrow vertical-board wainscoting, plaster upper walls, a built-in bookcase, and the hardwood floor.

⁵⁵ Joshua Corbett Colley, "A Plan for Consolidation of Negro Schools in Rockingham County, North Carolina," pp. 23, 29-60.

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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): NC SHPO SSN# RK0632

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.21 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 36.507978

Longitude: -79.706372

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of Rockingham County tax parcel 709013244447 (2.21 acres), as indicated by the heavy solid line on the enclosed map. Scale: one inch equals approximately one hundred feet.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompassed the acreage historically associated with the school.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Heather Fearnbach
organization: Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
street & number: 3334 Nottingham Road
city or town: Winston-Salem state: NC zip code: 27104
e-mail: heatherfearnbach@bellsouth.net
telephone: 336-765-2661
date: June 2, 2026

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:**

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Historic Photograph



Exhibit A. Sunshine School, west elevation, undated photograph from the collection of former student Minnie Miller

Photographs

Name of Property: Sunshine School
City or Vicinity: Eden
County: Rockingham State: North Carolina
Photographer: Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.
Date Photographed: August 7, 2025

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1. West elevation (above) and 2. Southwest oblique



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3. East elevation (above) and 4. North elevation (below)



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5. Looking south from north classroom (above) and 6. North classroom, west wall



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7. North classroom, looking north and 8. South classroom, looking north



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9. South classroom, looking southeast (above) and 10. South classroom, west wall



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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.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

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.