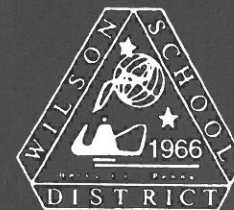


WILSON SCHOOL HISTORY

by

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1994

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FOREWORD

This endeavor is my best effort to chronicle not only the Wilson School District history but the schools from 1740 in this area which encompasses the current Wilson School District. I have researched the minutes of both the school board and the school authority as well as reviewed videotapes about earlier times provided by Robert Weirich. I reviewed also Clayton Rehrer's document "Chronological History" as well as the Spring Township 125th Anniversary document. I have attempted to put "flesh to the bare bones" of history of which I personally have shared some 19 years officially and a lifetime otherwise.

It must be noted that after this is published other facts will come to the fore which I have not chronicled; moreover, the next edition will include a history of athletics and music and biographies of the principals over the years. This history is about people and what they accomplished. There is no substitute for a dedicated teacher.

*Dedicated to my wife
of nearly 46 years
and
my loving family*

EARLY SCHOOLS

The church and school were very closely related since the early schools existed within the church. These were pay schools, each child paying a few cents per day. One of the first church-schools was located at the eastern end of Sinking Spring as early as 1740. After this log church school was removed, a stone octagon schoolhouse was erected in 1811. It was located in Spring Township (Mull Avenue and Penn Avenue) later to become Sinking Spring Borough (1913). Tuition for the Octagon school house was 3 cents per day. Light came through six small windows of twelve panes each.

The day began with the first class reading from the Testament. Teachers had responsibility to repair quill pens. Some of the teachers were: John Bush of Lancaster, Daniel Bitler of Robesonia, Thomas Huelett and Henry Stetler of Boyertown. No diplomas or certificates were required to teach. Some prominent citizens who attended this school before 1850 were Richard B. Krick, Levi S. Witman, Cyrus A. Ruth, Benjamin Luft of Wernersville and George N. Peiffer, Justice of the Peace at Mohnton, Pa. On December 10, 1959 the historic schoolhouse was razed to become the site for a gas station.

In 1834 the Pennsylvania Free School Act gave authority to impose local taxes for the support of free public schools to each county, township, borough or city ward, and made them responsible

for operating schoolhouses for children who might otherwise be unable to receive instruction.

In 1850 Spring Township separated from Cumru Township. By 1854 there were 14 free schools in newly created Spring Township, each averaging 46 students for terms of four months. In 1867 the school term was five months until 1887 when it was increased to six months. After 1898 the term expanded to seven months and in 1921 the term was increased to seven and one half months, then eight months in 1922.

In 1873 the State's new constitution created a Department of Public Instruction to administer public education beginning at age six and extending through primary and grammar school grades. On September 22, 1883 the Spring Township Board of Directors awarded a contract to collect taxes to Albert Yocum at 2.04 per centum. In 1887 large districts were authorized to have high schools. Districts had to provide free textbooks beginning in 1893. In 1897 attendance at public schools was compulsory for children 8 to 13 years old.

In 1876 Thomas J. Oberlin opened a private school which is the current site of the Bean Funeral Home. He called his school the Charter Oak Academy. It was a beautiful two story colonial building built in 1802 (Mull Mansion). The school operated successfully from 1877 until 1892 when a two story brick graded school was built and named Sinking Spring Elementary School located on Vester Place. Professor Oberlin then closed the academy.

ONE ROOM SCHOOLS

The area which constitutes the Wilson School District had many one room schools including Artz's school at Mohns' Hill, the Vinemont school a short distance from the railroad crossing, and Gelsinger school near Gring's sand quarry on Gelsinger Road which was vacated in 1929. These three schools remained until they were consolidated into the Merkel school, which was a two and one half story frame structure at the intersection of Chapel Hill Road and Mohn's Hill Road. Clayton Rehner was the head teacher at this Merkel Grade School in 1936. There was much concern voiced with petitions from citizens to keep these three schools open but to no avail. The Merkel school burned to the ground in 1957 and later the remains, which included the 1 1/8 acre plot, were sold to Harold Balthaser for \$2,500. Some of the other one-room schools were: Van Reed's school which was eliminated in 1910, and Gehman's school, which was closed in 1919. Kissinger's school, located on Kissinger Church Lane adjoining the church, was closed in 1928, and Steffy's school, located on Bern Road near the intersection of Broadcasting Road, closed in 1927. On May 27, 1929 Silas Brown, the supervising principal, placed John Sharman at Gelsingers', Lillian Brunner at Vinemont and Julia Milander at the Merkel school. Other one room schools were the Evans school which was located in what is now the Wyomissing School District, but was destroyed to make way for the Warren St. by-pass; Spohn's school on Spohn Road which was vacated in 1910; Marshall school on Schearer Road and another Marshall school at Millertown on Chapel Hill Road.

SCHOOLS OF THE 1920'S

On May 7, 1925 the Spring Township School Board had as its president Aaron Marks. On May 25, 1925 the board appointed architect Claude Mengel to draw plans for a two room annex to the North Wyomissing Heights building (currently Berkshire Heights) and allocated \$18,000 for the project. The low bid came in at \$16,598. Wernersville National Bank was used by the district for financing projects.

On July 6, 1925 an organizational meeting of the Spring Township School Board was held and the board elected Calvin Unger as its president. The secretary was Granville Frey, treasurer was Aaron Marks. On May 3, 1926 bids were received for finishing and erecting a sectional school building at Garfield and West Lawn Avenues in West Wyomissing for \$14,897. This building was located where the western part of today's playground is situated, facing West Lawn Avenue. School tax was 18 mills, plus \$2.00 per capita.

In the late '20's the school board seemed to travel for its meetings to different schools. At a continuation meeting from January 6, 1927 at the West Wyomissing building, a resolution was passed to have the school district build an eight-room addition with gymnasium and auditorium for West Lawn school. Richard Moll was the supervising principal of the district at that time. Clayton Wenrich was president of the School Board. The board instructed David Sharman, Jr., solicitor for the board, to draw up the necessary legal papers.

On March 3, 1927 the board approved a motion by Granville Frey, and seconded by Jacob Hertzog, to build a two-room portable annex to the school building in the village of West Wyomissing due to the crowding of students in the area.

The first crisis of the new district occurred in 1927 when the new borough of Wyomissing Hills sought officially to withdraw from the school district and seek its own district. Wyomissing Hills had only 50 students. Objections were filed by the board with the state educational council to no avail.

In 1929, Alvin Kemp, county superintendent, made one of his visits to our district. He reported favorably with the new North Wyomissing Heights (Berkshire Heights) four-room addition and suggested we transport children who were seventh and eighth graders from Conrad Weiser, Merkel and Lincoln Park schools to the junior-senior high school building. In so doing he said it would make room for students in the Conrad Weiser building and also to observe pupils in the three one-room schools - Artz's, Gelsingers and Vinemont. Staff could be reduced by two teachers. On March 28, 1929 salaries for elementary teachers were set at a minimum of \$900 per year and secondary teachers were paid \$1,200 per year.

Grade schools in 1929 were West Lawn with 339 pupils; West Wyomissing with 234 pupils; North Wyomissing Heights with 232 pupils; Lincoln Park with 25 pupils; Conrad Weiser with 148 pupils and the Merkel building with 75 pupils. North Wyomissing Heights School covered seven grades with the remaining schools covering six grades. At this time there were 28 teachers in grade schools and 21 in the high school. Wellington Kachel of Sinking

Spring R.D.2 was awarded a contract to transport students for years 1929-1932 for \$300 per month. There were 51 students transported by bus in 1929.

A HIGH SCHOOL IS BUILT

Next was the thought of building a high school. On October 31, 1927, President Calvin Unger, Vice President Bert Frame and architect Claude Mengel inspected a proposed site to erect a new high school building. On March 22, 1928 the board met for the purpose of selecting two suitable parcels of ground to erect the proposed school, which would be a junior-senior high school.

Site No. 1 was the West Lawn site located on the crown of the hill facing Fairview Avenue. Site No. 2 was on the east side near the proposed boulevard. This site was not recommended. Site No. 3 in West Wyomissing on Reading Boulevard and about 265 feet at the intersection on Wyomissing Boulevard had eight acres of ground with a price of \$5.00 per acre for first six acres, then \$1,000 per acre for the remainder of the ground.

Site No. 1 was chosen. The David Sternberg property extended east 300 feet fronting on the proposed Wyomissing Boulevard. On June 19, 1928 architect Claude Mengel presented the three plans and the board adopted Plan No. 1. The board resolved to hire landscape architect Elmer Muhs for general plans for the new high school and playground area. On March 13, 1928 a \$175,000 loan for new land was approved. On September 24, 1928 the board resolved that the new high school building be known as the

Wilson Building. Granville Frey moved and Jacob Hertzog seconded the motion.

On October 19, 1928 the Board awarded a contract to Irvin Roth of Intervilla, PA (later West Lawn), for \$97,950. Property was then purchased from Berks County Real Estate Company. On February 18, 1929 the Board ordered architect Claude Mengel to have the following inscription placed on the name panel: "Wilson High School, Spring Township School District." There is no mention of where the "Wilson" came from or whether it was named for President Woodrow Wilson, but it is assumed to be the case as Wilson students were then known as the "prexies," or more formally, the presidents.

On March 8, 1929 the Board purchased additional land, 140 feet front along the proposed Grand Boulevard as surveyed by civil engineers Neubling and Mast.

DEDICATION PROGRAM OF THE WILSON HIGH SCHOOL

The dedication ceremony for Wilson High School took place Thursday, November 14, 1929 at 7:30 p.m. Dr. A.C. Rothermel, president of Kutztown State Teachers' College, gave remarks. President Calvin A. Unger presided. Dr. Lee L. Driver, Director of Rural Services for the Department of Public Instruction, delivered the main address. Mr. Richard Moll developed the consolidation of the schools and was the driving force behind the district's beginnings. He closed one room schools, and the successful building program

set the stage for the new junior-senior high school. One of the reasons that helped the township form its own district was financial. The tuition fees paid to Cumru Township were reaching \$40,000.

In 1929 there were four buses used to transport students. The new high school was attracting students from other districts and had 468 students. The cafeteria opened April 8, 1929. There were 54 employees in the district at this time: 29 grade teachers and principals, one instructor of music, Homer L. Landis, and 20 high school teachers (7-12). Silas H. Brown was then supervising principal.

EARLY HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum offered Domestic Arts which provided instruction in foods and clothing. The practical arts provided instruction in mechanical drawing and wood work. The science department taught geography and chemistry. A planetarium was secured for the district's use. The mathematics department taught arithmetic for seventh and eighth grades, algebra in ninth and tenth grades, plane geometry in eleventh grade and solid geometry and trigonometry in twelfth grade. The English department had 200 carefully selected books and provided a well-balanced general home reading course. The foreign language department had 319 pupils. Latin was the predominant foreign language with French and German also offered.

The Commercial Department featured junior business training, bookkeeping, shorthand, and typewriting. Home Economics

was a three year course for grades 7, 8, and 9. It was comprised of food study, family, sick children, preparing and serving meals, good manners and activities that are centered around the home life of the girl. Instruction included real situations in daily life which the girl would encounter, including buying clothing wisely, thrift and health. The Music Department formed in 1926 with the hiring of a music teacher for the West Lawn building. The Hollis Dann Music course was installed throughout the district. A glee club was organized and the instrumental department was begun. The social studies curriculum was comprised of U.S. history, community civics, economic and vocational civics, European history, and problems of democracy. Athletics were begun in the school term of 1927-28. Inter-class basketball used an outdoor court. Track was practiced on a ten-acre tract. Industrial arts featured mechanical drawing and draftsmanship including orthographic projection, pictorial representation and lettering. Woodworking consisted of teaching the manner of use and care of tools. Also design, measuring and sawing were taught.

This new junior-senior high school was built on ten acres. It contained 17 rooms at the beginning. Every classroom was equipped with a bookcase made in the manual arts department. In 1936 a much needed addition of six classrooms was made to the western end as a Federal Public Works Administration project. A general woodshop and art classroom was on the ground floor. A biological laboratory and physics-chemistry laboratory were on the first floor with homemaking and business education rooms on the second floor.

In 1937, with a graduating class of 63, Spring Township was able to secure a PWA federal grant of \$58,091 to construct the west wing to the original building. The district contributed \$71,000 for a total of \$129,091. The plans to add to the east end of the building were turned down by the voters, hence the east wing never was constructed. A food canning center developed during World War II was in the west end. Citizens were encouraged to have "victory gardens" where many of the crops raised could be processed and canned at the school cannery. A school district canning supervisor, Horace Miller, managed the work and came in each day to prepare the vegetables which were brought in by the citizens. The cans were purchased from the school by the contributors.

In 1958 a major building addition was made, developing a campus type of school. It was comprised of a new gymnasium, cafeteria, and vocational agriculture area, including homemaking and industrial arts expansion to the former canning center. Also included was a garage for bus repairs, and a driver training program, a first in Berks County (1937). A hexagonal shaped auditorium was constructed. A music center and radio transmission center were housed in a circular building. All the above facilities were built at a cost of \$5,000,000.

The two relocatable classrooms were installed in 1970 and remain in use today. They are electrically heated and cost \$37,308.00. The power technology shop was constructed in 1973. Also with the shop was an expansion and improvement of the music facilities in the area adjacent to the auditorium. These two projects

cost \$351,057. At this time the senior high school had a total of 45 classrooms.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The teaching-learning process is the primary work of the professional educator. Therefore the selection of a consistent curriculum throughout the 12 years of schooling is prime and an ongoing curriculum-development effort is vital. Curriculum is in a continuous review, revision and updating process recognizing the changing needs and interests of society and at the same time holding on to the traditions that have been successful. The teachers and supervisors are monitored and each teacher receives a written supervisory summary each year.

The key to a successful curriculum is having a person in charge with authority to see to it that a meaningful curriculum stays with the student throughout his/her entire school life. The responsibility for the coordination of the selection of textbooks, library books and other instructional materials rests with the directors of elementary and secondary education; however, principals, supervisors, librarians and students should be involved in the process. Final acceptance of books rests with the Superintendent and the Board of School Directors.

Currently Wilson School District has no position known as "curriculum coordinator". The directors of elementary and secondary education are in charge of curriculum work. The following people have contributed to the school district's curriculum program through

the years: Dr. Carl Constein was the first curriculum coordinator from 1952 to 1959. When a curriculum person is not mentioned that responsibility rested with the directors of secondary and elementary education. Dr. John Reitz served from 1969 to 1978, when he was appointed assistant for finance and planning for the 1978-79 school year. Dr. Aaron Miller and Dr. Lee Fredericks, respectively, took control of curriculum development as directors of secondary and elementary education from 1979 to 1982, when Dr. Aaron Miller retired. Then Dr. Stanley Dubelle and Dr. Lee Fredericks continued with the curriculum assignment from 1982 to the end of 1983. In January of 1984 Dr. Mary Kopa became the director of curriculum. She served until 1987. In 1988 Dr. Hugh Fraser became the director of curriculum and staff development until 1993, when he assumed the position of assistant to the superintendent.

POST WORLD WAR II

After World War II, the district was encouraged to buy war surplus equipment. Some of the items included an old Packard station wagon, a truck, and desks and filing cabinets. We still utilize this buying practice through a distribution center in Harrisburg. In 1945 the federal government offered the district one of the airplanes used during the war for training. The airplane was stored along the 3000 block on Grandview Boulevard. It was used by the industrial arts department classes and it remained there until Grandview Boulevard was opened to more traffic; then it was dismantled and sold for scrap iron.

COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The 1954 composition of the school district included Lower Heidelberg Township, Sinking Spring Borough, as well as Spring Township and the area north of the railroad tracks in Wyomissing. There were 17 school board members, seven from Spring Township and five each from the other two member units. In 1964 these municipalities became a jointure known as the "Wilson School District." In 1966 the Pennsylvania legislature required jointures such as Wilson to become incorporated as third class school districts with nine school board members as it now exists. Formed first was an Interim Operating Committee which was to be the method for transforming from the 17 member board to the nine member board.

William B. Herbein, Berks County Superintendent of Schools, announced that the purpose of this initial meeting was for the election of officers for the Interim Operating Committee and the selection of a name for the new school district. On February 15, 1966 Herbert E. Bryan, acting deputy superintendent of public instruction, certified that WILSON SCHOOL DISTRICT be the name to be used from this date on and be a part of Administrative Unit 63-18 of Berks County as of July 22, 1964. The school district was authorized to be established as a third class school district as of July 1, 1966. This committee would become the school board of the newly established district.

The members of the Interim Operating Committee were: Joseph Clapper, Tom Greene, Bryan Hartman, William Hitchcock, Joseph Keene, Mahlon Miller, Alan Raffauf, John Stowell, Dr. Eugene Barth, June Pomeroy, James Erb, Donald Miller, Millard Reiff, Vernon Steubner, Jeannette Eways, and Sandra Graffius. Alan K. Raffauf was elected president of the committee.

Board presidents from 1925 until 1994 numbered 35. In those 69 years are recorded these names: Aaron Marks was the first president of the then Spring Township School District, followed by Calvin Unger, Jacob Hertzog, Clayton Wenrich, Calvin Unger, Grover Penn, George King, Calvin Unger, Granville Frey, Calvin Unger twice, Irwin Rentz twice, John Fisher, Stanley Heckman twice, Vernon Hassler, Hampton Pullis, Israel Adams, Stanley Heckman twice, Chester Quinter, Leon Borry twice, Edward Bard, Adam Bordner, Millard Reiff, Stanley Heckman, Robert Shearer, Donald Miller, Charles J. Adams, Sr., Henry Eckenroth, Arthur Smith, George Wissler, Samuel Glassmoyer, Donald Miller, Samuel Glassmoyer, Martin Flickinger, Joseph Clapper, Alan Raffauf three times, Wayne Traffas three times, David Seifert nine times, Alan Raffauf twice, David Seifert twice, Beverly Snyder twice, Thomas Ott twice, Vernon Bausher, and Randolph Blatt II four times. Beverly Snyder was the only woman president.

A LOOK AT THE HIGH SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

The planned extensive renovations and additions to the high school will begin in 1995. Six areas will be renovated and a new physical education and gymnasium complex will be erected at the flag pole. Also a three story classroom building will be built tying into the main building west of the present cafeteria running north-south.

Handicapped access facilities are to be constructed throughout the high school. The six science classrooms will be enlarged as well as the guidance facilities. Three elevators will be built throughout the high school and two chair lifts will be added for handicapped students. New electrical outlets in all classes and new computers will be installed. Other features will include new bathroom fixtures, student lockers, large group discussion room, and new cafeteria.

The 1958 portions of the building will undergo varying degrees of renovations to the interior spaces to accommodate program, and to comply with current building codes. Asbestos tile flooring is to be removed and reroofing will take place. The existing gymnasium will be renovated to create the new library, as the existing library, built in 1985, will be utilized by administration.

The new 2,200 seat gymnasium building will include an indoor running/jogging track, exercise room, multiple use area for

volleyball, basketball, indoor tennis, and wrestling. The estimated cost for the total construction is \$18,200,000. The Board has a bond issue for this project of \$21,950,000. The student capacity will be 1,420.

CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This school was approved for construction in 1964. It included a first for Berks County schools--a swimming pool, or natatorium. There was much discussion and dissension then among the citizens, but the board persevered and did what they felt was in the best interests of the children. The school was built on 47 acres with a capacity for 575 pupils. There are a total of 26 classrooms at a cost of \$2,290,000.

In 1986 a major change in the heating system was approved. Heretofore the building was heated by underground pipes from the high school boiler room. By 1986 the system had deteriorated and it was feared that in the not too distant future there would be an emergency and that the Central building would be without heat. The change included installing sixteen small house size boilers operated in tandem and placed in a new building extension on the front of the building toward the stadium. Later, due to operations, and not replacing old equipment, thirteen of the new boilers had to be replaced for two larger commercial boilers.

The complex has fourteen regular classrooms, four science rooms, one special education room, one art room, two industrial arts rooms, two home economics rooms, one reading laboratory, one general music room, one practice music room, a cafetorium, kitchen, library, gymnasium, building storage, natatorium, two faculty planning rooms, a student conference room, an activity room, a guidance center, a health room, and administrative offices. Over 70% of the students walk to school.

The staff numbers 32 teachers and administration and support personnel. The teachers include: art--1, English--4, foreign language--3, guidance--2, human development--1, industrial arts--1, librarian--1, mathematics--3, music--2, physical education--2, reading specialists--2, science--4, social studies--3, and special education--3.

SOUTHERN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The school was built in 1974 on 41.28 acres of land with a capacity of 600 pupils. There are a total of 26 classrooms built at a cost of \$6,105,000 (price includes Cornwall Terrace). This school, in addition to the modern classrooms, has a state-of-the-art library, an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, band room, industrial arts room, nurse's station and office suite. Also there are four science rooms and athletic fields for all sports.

The staff consists of 41 teachers, which include: art--1, English--5, foreign language--3, guidance--2, health services--1, human development--2, industrial arts--2, librarian--1, mathematics--4, music--2, physical education--3, reading specialists--2, science--4,

social studies--5, and special education--4. Twelve percent of these students walk to school, while the others ride school buses.

LEADERSHIP IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Many years prior to today's leadership team the elementary portion of the school system was well represented by dedicated chiefs. The first elementary chief was A.D. Steckel who served from 1956 to 1967. He came to the district from Whitehall Township. Later Mr. Stephen Guresh assisted Mr. Steckel as Assistant Elementary Director and became the Director of Elementary Education in 1967. Mr. Guresh began with the district in 1947 as a teacher and then became a teacher/principal in 1955 for the West Lawn and West Wyomissing schools. He served the district in many ways for 25 years, then retired in 1972. Dr. Lee Fredericks then became Director of Elementary Education and served in that position until 1978, when he was named Assistant Superintendent-Elementary from 1978 to 1981. Dr. Carol Hoffman is the current Director of Elementary Education. Dr. Hoffman came to us from Governor Mifflin School District in 1980 and was an innovator in early childhood education. All of her years with Wilson have been dedicated to the advancement of children in the elementary schools. She was a proponent of providing help to parents by starting district operated day care centers, a first for Berks County. The centers operated without tax monies. She also began a pre-first grade for students

who need extra help before entering first grade. She began as Wilson's Early Childhood Supervisor and later became Director of Early Childhood prior to her being named Director of Elementary Education.

In 1994 there are seven schools under the leadership of a Director of Elementary Education and four principals who have direct supervision responsibilities. West Wyomissing, Berkshire Heights and Lincoln Park schools are currently supervised by Mrs. Nancy Sinkus. Lower Heidelberg and Sinking Spring schools are supervised by Mrs. Sandra Nevitt. Cornwall Terrace school and Whitfield school each has its own principal, respectively, Mr. Niles Stoudt and Mrs. Sally Patterson.

Prior to Mrs. Nancy Sinkus at West Wyomissing was Mr. Joseph Toy who served as principal for the three building assignments for 26 years. Also prior to Mrs. Sandra Nevitt at Sinking Spring and Lower Heidelberg was Mr. Joseph Charnigo who served 19 years. Both of these men came to our district from Governor Mifflin School District in 1967. Mrs. Marjorie Miller was principal after Mr. Charnigo at Sinking Spring/Lower Heidelberg. She also served as principal at the Whitfield school. She began with Wilson in 1963 as a teacher and served for thirty years before retiring in 1993. These three dedicated individuals gave of themselves faithfully to the district.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS: STATISTICS

Berkshire Heights: In 1950 the North Wyomissing area of Spring Township School District was incorporated with Wyomissing Borough, but the elementary school had to be retained by the Spring Township School District by a state law because the property, including the school building, was part of all encumbrances of the Spring Township District for school construction and the sale of bonds required for financing and debt service. This school was built in 1907-08 as a two and one half story brick school for \$25,000. Formerly the North Wyomissing Heights School was built on three acres of land. The building had eight classrooms, four of which were in the original 1907 construction. Minor renovations took place in 1925. An addition in 1929 cost \$175,000. Later in 1966 a construction project included a multi-purpose room, health suite, teachers' room and office. This addition was financed by a bond issue including similar additions to the Lower Heidelberg school at a total cost of \$630,000. Retirement of this building will occur when the new North elementary building is operable. Twenty-seven percent of students walk to school. The December 15, 1993 enrollment figure was 168.

West Wyomissing: Built in 1936 with WPA federal money, a 12-classroom school was erected including office, health room, double assembly room (now library), storage for books and supplies. On May 15, 1937 the school was presented by architect Claude Mengel and was officially accepted by the school district.

The 1937-38 school term was the first full time school year for this new building. It replaced the original building which was an eight room frame building with coal stoves in each room and primitive toilet facilities. The former building was sold at public auction on February 23, 1937 for \$182.

An addition to the east end was built in 1961 at a cost of \$295,000. The addition consisted of an all-purpose room, a cafeteria, kitchen, music rooms and two additional rooms for health and guidance, and for the physical education instructor. The addition included new toilet facilities as well. This building has the highest walking to school student percentage in the district of approximately 91%. There are currently 170 students and 22 teachers; nine are full time, and 13 instructors are either divided among the three schools under this principal or are part-time at this school. That equates to 18.6 students per classroom teacher. There are 13 special education students.

The West Wyomissing school has seven classrooms and two special education rooms. All come under the responsibility of the principal, who has two other schools to supervise. These additional instructors include those in the Head Start Program, a librarian and an aide, a physical education person, instructors in music, art, guidance, instrumental music, speech, enrichment for grades 4, 5, and 6, a math resource person to augment the total math program, a reading specialist, a kindergarten aide, a person to give instructional support, and a program coordinator. Also included in this total effort to serve the children are three cafeteria workers, two cafeteria aides, two custodians and a secretary who keeps everything together.

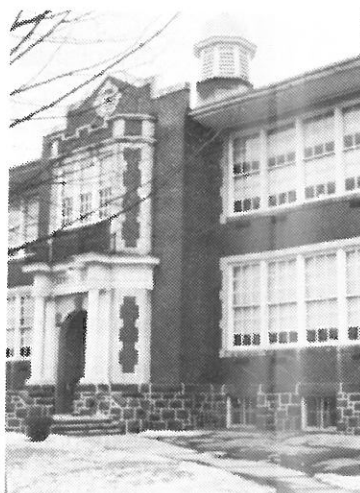
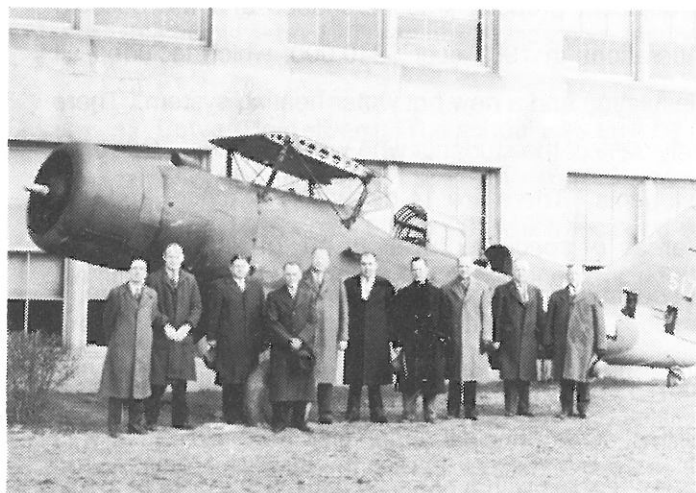
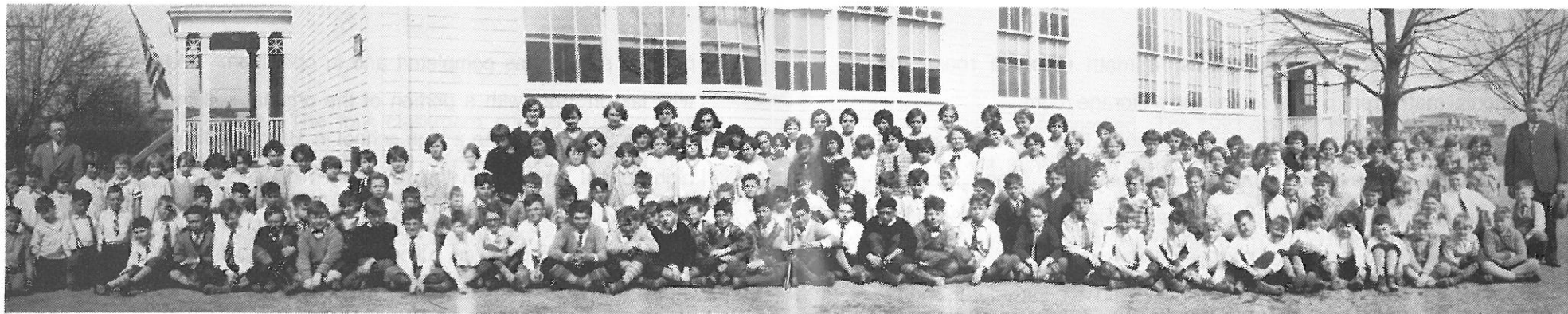
Lincoln Park: The four classroom original building was erected in 1948 at a cost of \$65,000. Today there are nine total classrooms. Completed in 1954, these additional rooms cost \$256,000. There were some renovations in 1957. The school is situated on 5.5 acres of land with approximately 70% of the students walking to school. As of December 15, 1993 there were 147 students. Added to the nine classrooms is a library. Child care is available in this school. There are 7 classroom teachers.

Lower Heidelberg: The school was built on nine acres from the farm of William Delp in 1931 and has nine classrooms. Alterations in 1966 cost \$630,000, which included renovations and an addition to the Berkshire Heights school. Included in the addition were a multi-purpose room, a health room, a teachers' room and an office. All the students at the school are bused. The enrollment in 1991 was 169 and it is presently 180. Staffing is similar to the West Wyomissing school staff with all available services such as speech and reading. This is a country school and has all the charm and camaraderie which make for a fine atmosphere for the students. There are 7 classroom teachers and a reading specialist.

Sinking Spring: This school was completed in 1894. The township supervisors were responsible for this large two-story brick building on a tract of land bounded by Columbia Avenue and Vester Place in the Borough of Sinking Spring. The school was used by Spring Township and Sinking Spring Borough. On December 25, 1921 a fire gutted the school house and by 1923 a new and more

modern school was completed and in operation. The cornerstone was laid in 1922 with a portion of the original building being used. Sinking Spring became a high school in 1904. In 1954 the borough high school united with the township high school to become the Wilson Joint School District. Today there are 15 classrooms on three floors, two reading rooms, a library, a multi-purpose room, a kitchen, music and health rooms and a teacher's room. Locker rooms and offices are included. There is a parking lot which was enlarged in 1967 when an adjacent property was purchased and the building demolished. Alterations in 1962 cost \$340,000, which included all new windows, insulation and a new hot water heating system. There are approximately 32% of the students who walk to school. Currently there are 366 students. There are 14 classroom teachers and one teacher in the areas of special education, art, guidance, librarian, music, physical education, instructional support, and pre-1st grade.

Cornwall Terrace: This school is one of two large elementary facilities. One principal supervises the building. It was built in 1974 on 41.28 acres with a capacity for 525 students at a cost of \$6,105,000 (price includes Southern Junior High School) with an addition in 1991 at a cost of \$1,788,269. 14,622 square feet were added. Included in the addition on the first floor were a gymnasium, rest rooms, vocal music room, early childhood area, resource activity rooms and lobby, physical education office, and three storage rooms. The former activity room was renovated for daily child care including after school care. The second floor



Top: Original West Wyomissing Elementary School - Circa 1930.

Center Left: Government donated W.W. II Fighter Plane.

Center Middle: West Lawn Elementary School.

Center Right: Jeeps purchased through U.S. Defense Bonds by Wilson H.S. students - 1944.

Bottom: Original Sinking Spring Elementary School - Circa 1919.



addition includes three classrooms, a math resource room and remedial math area, a work room, and a storage room.

In the existing area on the second floor two rooms were converted to a television room and computer room. One classroom is now used for learning support children. Approximately 49% of the students walk to school. The gymnasium is fully scheduled for physical education classes. It is also used for intramural sports. Organized sports from the adjoining junior high school use the area after school. The community may use this facility when time is available. Total square footage for this school is 67,082. Currently there are 602 students attending. This school is staffed with 33 teachers, including: two kindergarten, four grade one, four grade two, three grade three, three grade four, three grade five, three grade six, two special education, one art, one guidance, one librarian, two music, one physical education, two reading specialists, and one instructional support team instructor.

Whitfield Elementary School: It took only ten years before there was a need for a school in this area. The community began in 1952 with the first house built at Snyder Road and Mull Avenue (Van Reed Road). The school was built in 1962 on 12 acres of land with a capacity for 700 students. The original building cost \$960,000 with a total of 28 classrooms. An addition in 1969 included eight classrooms at a cost of \$460,000. The latest addition in 1991 cost \$1,825,522. With this addition a new parking facility was added, and 18,584 square feet of space was added to the school. The enrollment at that time was 577. As of December 15, 1993 there

were 660 students enrolled. The 1991 addition included the following features: first floor: gymnasium, physical education office, two flexible rooms for large group instruction, large library and guidance area, teachers' area, and a computer room. The second floor has three instructional areas (flexible rooms). An art area, vocal music room, child care area, and television room are located on the first floor in one of the flexible rooms. Also added at this time were two new heating boilers. Two existing classrooms were converted for special education; another was converted for a computer room. As of 1994 there are 82,456 square feet of usable space, or 15,373 square feet more than Cornwall Terrace. 90% of students walk to school. There are 23 classroom teachers for grades kindergarten through six. Six special education teachers, an art teacher, one guidance person, a librarian, two music teachers, a nurse for health services, one physical education teacher, two reading specialists and one IST teacher and the principal, secretaries, custodial people and cafeteria workers make up the balance of the staff.

Conrad Weiser: This building is no longer a school. After the Merkel school burned in 1957 the students in grades one through six were absorbed here. There were three teachers and 110 pupils, with 44 pupils from Merkel included in that count. Merkel had two teachers.

On May 27, 1966 the school board was advised by State Secretary of the Industrial Board that this building could no longer be used on the second floor. This was the beginning of the end for this school, which was later closed June 4, 1971 and sold to Bohrer-

Reagan Company for \$20,000. There was much dissension among the residents because they didn't want their children to attend the Whitfield school with its large population of non-farm students. One year later the local people were all in favor of the move.

West Lawn: This school also is no longer in existence. The Borough formed from Spring Township in 1923. The school was built in 1904 with a six room addition in 1923. In 1976 the school was sold to the community for \$25,000 and is now a recreational area for West Lawn Borough. There were eight teachers in 1929. The bell from the tower will be placed in the new North elementary building when it is completed.

SOUTH ELEMENTARY SITE

Prior to deciding on building an elementary school on Broadcasting Road, the school board had selected 31 acres on Goose Lane in the southern section of the district and in fact purchased the land to build an elementary school from Sol Shearer for \$488,264.00. They consummated the purchase on March 20, 1992 with every intent to build there. When citizens protested building the school on the site the school board became ensnarled in much controversy because of the waste disposal site only one mile from the proposed school. This waste site is no longer active but because there may be contamination the citizens felt it would not be a good place for a school. The fact that the school site is above the waste

facility didn't matter to them. The fact is any leachate that might escape from the waste site would go down hill and not to the school site which is at a higher elevation than the waste facility. In any case the board decided to go elsewhere (North) for their first choice even though the need for a new school was and still is in the southern part of the district. The board retains the South site and will eventually build there when the waste site is cleaned up. However, the federal clean-up agency will be years in getting to this particular waste facility since it has many such sites to clean up and this site is still in the study phase.

NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDING - NORTH

On May 12, 1971 the district purchased a 40 acre site near where the present plans call for the North Elementary School. The cost in 1971 was \$224,342. Since no school was built there was an agreement with the Henry Janssen Corp. to maintain the property at no expense to the district. When ten years had elapsed without school development, the site was sold back to the Henry Janssen Corp. but the district retained the option to re-purchase the site by 1992 with no increase in price. The present school board did opt for purchase of 25 acres for the new North Elementary School.

Charles W. Watters, executive director of the Pennsylvania Economy League, said by the school year 2003-2004 Wilson's total enrollment from kindergarten through 12th grade will be approximately 5,300 students. This figure shows a 27 percent increase or

1,150 more students. The accuracy of the last complete report in 1989 was off the projected enrollment increase by only 60 students.

As of July 6, 1994 contracts were awarded totalling 7.27 million dollars. Other costs would be architects' fees, movable fixtures and equipment totaling \$721,081.00. Indirect costs such as staff needs, one time equipment purchases such as mowers, and janitorial costs come to \$379,500.00. The total will be \$8,370,581.00.

The proposed elementary school building will be constructed of concrete floor slabs; masonry walls; steel columns; beams and joists; metal roof deck and an insulated sloping metal standing seam roof. Soccer, baseball, field hockey and grass playfields will be constructed on the site. Also to be constructed are bituminous paved entrance roads, bus loading and unloading areas, parking areas, walkways, concrete curbs and sidewalks. The building will be energy efficient and as maintenance free as possible.

The school will have a capacity for 550 students and accommodate kindergarten through sixth grades. It will have one pre-school classroom, two kindergartens, two special education rooms, eighteen regular classrooms, a computer room, an art room, two instructional music rooms, one vocal music room, a large group instruction room, library, faculty room, health care, guidance office, administration office, kitchen, cafeteria/multi-purpose room, gymnasium, TV room, science room and four group-instruction rooms.

Classrooms have been arranged on both floors by clusters of grades in order to facilitate team teaching. Core functions such as

art, library, health, etc. have been placed near the center of the building for accessibility. The instrumental music, cafeteria and gymnasium are grouped away from academic areas for noise control. The library, computer room, gymnasium and multi-purpose room will be available for community use. All students in the new school will be transported by school bus.

SUPERINTENDENTS AND SUPERVISING PRINCIPALS OF THE WILSON SCHOOLS

Wilson has had eight supervising principals or superintendents over its history beginning in 1927. Richard Moll was our first supervising principal. Silas Brown followed him from 1929 through 1933. E. Willis Minnich then was appointed and served from 1933 through 1935. The first supervising principal who served more than a few years was next, William C. Kutz who led the district from 1935 through 1966, for a total of 31 years. After Mr. Kutz retired the board appointed Dr. Carl F. Constein who served from 1966 to 1974. Dr. George Fehr was then appointed and served from 1975 until 1977 when he submitted his resignation. Dr. Aaron Miller served the district as an interim superintendent until 1978. Dr. Stanley Dubelle was then appointed and served from 1979 until he retired in 1992. The current superintendent is Dr. Lee Fredericks.

Here is a brief background sketch of each of the chief school administrators.

Mr. Richard Moll: Our first supervising principal, hired March 9, 1927, was paid a salary of \$250 per month for the first year; \$260 per month for the second year, and \$270 per month for the third year, and \$.10 per mile driving expenses. He is credited with being a person who contributed greatly to getting the new school district started properly. He had taught eighth grade civics. His term was shortened when he was selected assistant superintendent for the County of Berks on January 7, 1929.

Mr. Silas H. Brown: Not much is known about Mr. Brown. He was appointed by the school board for a term of three years, five and one-third months at a salary of \$291.66 per month. He took office on January 21, 1929. On May 21, 1935 the school district paid Silas Brown \$2,250 for all claims he had against the district. Nothing further is mentioned in the records. He died January 25, 1939. At the time of his death he served as supervising principal of Womelsdorf Schools. During his tenure all married women were fired from teaching positions because there were so few jobs available in the faltering economy.

Mr. E. Willis Minnich: Minnich served two years as supervising principal at a salary of \$825.44 per year. Mr. Minnich was chief when the county superintendent, Alvin Kemp, refused to grant permission for the school board to reduce salaries of teachers below the 90% of minimum as the board desired. The staff gave him a 50th birthday party in 1935 but the next month the board failed to renew his contract.

Mr. William C. Kutz: Born in Kutztown on July 27, 1900, he was supervising principal from July 1, 1935 until June 30, 1966. In March of 1935, Mr. Kutz was principal of Pine Grove Borough Schools and was visited by a committee of three directors from Wilson, including Granville Frey, Calvin Unger and Professor Paul I. Speicher, all members of the Spring Township School District Board of Education. Mr. Kutz had completed five years at Pine Grove prior to his tenure with Wilson. He was 35 years of age when he began. He was graduated from Kutztown Normal School in 1918. He continued at Columbia University Teacher's College, New York with an A.M. degree in Secondary School Administration. He entered Penn State in 1932 and continued through 1938 with graduate studies in School Administration.

Bill Kutz retired at age 65 after service of 31 years at Wilson and 44 1/2 years of total service to education. The discipline he brought to the district was a major contribution. He was respected by the students even when he personally meted out punishment. He was a humanitarian with great sensitivity to people and he always took time to help others. When new board members would begin their terms, he made it his responsibility to take them on a tour of the district and to explain the history of the district, pointing out the schools that were no longer a part of the district, as well as the existing schools.

Dr. Carl F. Constein: First superintendent of schools for the "Wilson School District", he had worked within the district where he

was a teacher and head of the English Department and later, curriculum coordinator. He had the experience of the superintendency of Antietam School District from 1961 to 1965, and was chosen for Wilson because of his success. July 1, 1966 was his beginning as superintendent. During his tenure the Cornwall Terrace/Southern Junior High School was constructed as well as an addition to the Whitfield school. The first long range plan by Chaffee Associates of Bethlehem, PA was presented to the board during his tenure. He was noted for his prudent judgment and sense of organization necessary to a growing district. He resigned on July 1, 1974.

Dr. George Fehr: Dr. Fehr succeeded Carl Constein and served from 1974 to June 1978. His challenge was working upon future needs of the school system. He formed citizen groups to advise the district regarding curriculum and general improvements. His tenure was short and he left in the best interest of the Wilson Board of School Directors.

Dr. Aaron Miller: Dr. Miller did the school district a great service in keeping everything moving forward during a turbulent time after George Fehr's resignation. Aaron didn't want the superintendent's job as he was already thinking of retirement, but was instrumental in moving the district in a positive manner. He began with Wilson in 1945, teaching civics and guidance. The second year he taught world history to the 11th grade. In 1957 he became assistant principal at the high school and coached basketball, football and swimming. In 1961 he became the high school principal and served in that capacity for eight years. In 1969

he was the Director of Secondary Education, then in 1974 he was appointed Assistant Superintendent-Secondary and he remained in that position until May of 1978 when he assumed the reins of the school district from June of 1978 to June of 1979. His legacies in support of a sound curriculum and staff are still felt today. He retired June 25, 1982.

Dr. Stanley T. Dubelle, Jr.: Dr. Dubelle served the Wilson School District as superintendent from 1979 until July 1992. He received a B.A. degree in history from Franklin & Marshall College in 1954, a Masters degree in classroom teaching from West Virginia University in 1965 and a Ph.D. degree in secondary curriculum from Penn State University in 1970. He came to Wilson from the Governor Mifflin School District where he was Assistant Superintendent. He also served as director of secondary education in Canton, Ohio from 1972-1975. He began with Wilson on January 1, 1979 and resigned on June 30, 1992. He had been on leave of absence for one year and then retired. Dr. Lee T. Fredericks served during Dubelle's leave as substitute and acting superintendent.

Dr. Dubelle considered getting people to do their jobs more effectively his major achievement. He was one of the few superintendents in Berks County to help ineffective teachers find other jobs even though they had tenure. Approximately 24 such changes were achieved during his superintendency. He considered good staff essential to helping children receive a quality education. He began to change the hiring process for teachers with a comprehensive interview system which would enable the district to hire effective teachers.

The Wilson School District benefited greatly from his efforts even though many times he was at odds with the Board of School Directors. He was experienced as a teacher, coach, building administrator, college professor and administrator. He also served as supervisor of student teachers, curriculum and instruction specialist and central office administrator. His background in educational psychology gave him a unique opportunity to serve in public education.

Dr. Lee T. Fredericks: Dr. Fredericks began with the Wilson School District July 31, 1972 as Director of Elementary Education and as Assistant Superintendent - Elementary from 1978-1981. Then he served as Assistant Superintendent-Administration from 1982 to 1992. He received his Bachelor of Science in Education in May 1964 from Bloomsburg State College and was awarded his Master of Education degree in Elementary Education in January 1967, and his Doctor of Education degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1985. He also received 36 credits and Pennsylvania elementary principal's certification in January of 1968 and Superintendent's certification in April of 1972 from Lehigh University. He came to Wilson from the Pottsville Area School District. Dr. Fredericks was appointed Substitute Superintendent from August 1, 1992 to April 30, 1993 and then Acting Superintendent beginning May 1, 1993, and Superintendent beginning July 1, 1993. His contract continues through June 30, 1997. Much of the credit for the success of the district's elementary education program must go to Dr. Fredericks.

His ability to bring out the best in people has benefited the school district greatly. A hard working superintendent, Dr. Fredericks has formed a good relationship with the staff.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The business side of a school district is complicated and vital to a successful school system. Working with the state bureaucracies and county school systems as well as tax bureaus makes a cooperative relationship necessary to carry on the business of the district. In many cases the work here is not appreciated as the citizens of the district see their financial effort in a different way than does the district. In education all benefit, not only those who have children being educated. Tax monies from those who have no children or those who have already gone through the system are needed so that the entire society benefits by all those who are involved in education.

The district hired an office manager for the 1956-57 school year in the person of Mr. Raleigh Reinert. Mr. Reinert began his career at Kutztown State Normal School and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. He spent three years as the principal of Nockamixon Township High School in Bucks County. He was Borough Secretary of Laureldale for 14 years and then took two foreign assignments to Saudi Arabia and Korea. When he returned he became the Wilson office manager and served nine years faithfully and with distinction. On July 7, 1965 Wilson lost one of its most valuable administrators.

Mr. Clayton Rehrer was the first Director of Finance from 1966 until 1978 ,retiring on August 25, 1978. He further served the district as an authority member until 1986. Mr. Rehrer was a dedicated public servant who always gave his total effort to whatever task was assigned him. He was hired in September of 1936 as a teacher, then advanced to secondary principal in 1952. He was then appointed Director of Secondary Education prior to becoming Director of Finance in 1966. His later effort was primarily financial and was of great value to the district. In his retired years he substituted in the mathematics department of the high school and often said how much he enjoyed being with the children and teaching in general. We are indebted to him for many reasons, one of which is his "Chronological History from 1929."

Dr. John Reitz followed Mr. Rehrer and was Administrative Assistant for Finance and Planning in the 1978-79 school year. He was appointed Director of Finance and Planning beginning school year 1979-80 and held that position until 1982. Reitz retired August 31, 1982. Prior to becoming financial officer he was Director of Curriculum and was hired initially on August 25, 1969. His affable demeanor permeated to all who came in contact with him.

Mr. Douglas Houston was the first person hired as Business Manager in the 1966-67 school year. He retired December 31, 1990, and gave the district credibility and continuity for nearly 24 years. He was on sabbatical leave from January of 1990 until the end of that year. There were many important decisions and much growth during his years at Wilson, including advanced computer use and building growth. Doug was there when needed and on top of problems

before they became difficult. His total and continuous service was greatly appreciated.

Mr. Stanley A. Heintzelman is our current chief of financial matters in the Wilson School District; and I am personally grateful to him, as it was he who asked me to chronicle this history of the Wilson School District. He was hired November 9, 1989 as Business Manager and is currently Director of Finance and Support Services since July 1, 1993. Mr. Heintzelman supervises a staff of nine people and keeps track of a budget of \$31,253,257.00 which includes updating of line items. He is also responsible for the Food Services and Transportation Departments. During his tenure many programs and processes have been brought "in house" rather than through paid contractors.

Improvements have been many, such as the initiation of computerization of the transportation routing system and changing from gasoline to diesel fuel for buses which has resulted in considerable cost savings. Also, he took over from the Intermediate Unit the transportation of disabled students. The data processing system was improved to give the district greater efficiency, and the method of obtaining insurances was revised to improve various district services and coverage while reducing costs. These and other efforts have been made to bring the district to greater efficiency.

The staff of the Business Office includes the Director of Finance and Support Services, Business Office Coordinator, Secretary to Director of Finance, Business Gross Receipts Tax Specialist, Payroll Specialist, Bookkeeper Specialist, Bookkeeper

Assistant, Data Processing Specialist, Data Processing Assistant and Business Office Clerk.

VITAL STATISTICS AND MISCELLANEOUS

The data given is current for the 1993-94 school year. The starting salary for teachers is \$27,500 with the average salary being \$44,487.77. Elementary staff numbers 126, while the secondary staff is 121. There are also seven librarians, four nurses, nine secondary guidance counselors and four elementary school counselors. Our student enrollment for elementary is 2,287, for senior high is 859; and for junior high is 1,007, for a total of 4,153 as of 1993.

The Wilson School District is one of the largest hiring entities in Spring Township, numbering 356 professional staff and 350 support staff. Our budget for the 1993-94 school year was \$28,925,844.00. The child care budget is \$450,244.00--and is self-sustaining. The district has 2,430 businesses in its area for 1994, up approximately 700 businesses from the previous year. The cost per pupil in 1929 was \$8 per month; today it is \$588 per month.

Our teacher-pupil ratio for elementary education is 24.1 and for secondary is 22.5. The teaching staff average years of experience for elementary teachers is 16 years and for secondary teachers is 15.7 years. The average age of the teaching staff is 42.5 years.

In 1965 a summer school was added under the direction of Mr. Aris Kouvaros who was head of the Guidance Department.

The official seal of the school district was designed by Susanna Crawford Fox, a 1932 graduate. The school song was written by Grace Alsberge, a teacher at the West Lawn school.

SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Wilson, like many school districts, was finding financing difficult in the 1940's as growth was exceeding available funds. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted the Municipality Authorities Act of 1945 on May 2, 1945 which allowed school districts to form authorities so that they could borrow more necessary money than the law allowed school districts to borrow under the traditional system. The Wilson District applied to form an authority. The state approved, and there was formed a five member authority that was granted a charter incorporating the Spring Township School District Authority in 1953. Each member could serve five years and be reappointed for additional terms.

The Lincoln Park Elementary School was the first and only project which this Authority undertook. Before any loans were made the school district had to transfer the existing building and land to the Authority which became the owner. The school district became the tenant and paid an annual rental fee of \$17,000 to the Authority for use of the building. When this loan was paid in 1978, the title was transferred back to the school district.

The Spring Township School District Authority ceased to exist as of March 21, 1956 and all functions of this Authority were transferred to the Wilson Joint School Authority. This Authority had

nine members. All building construction was then covered by this new Authority. The members served without compensation and were appointed by the Board of School Directors. They were: Walter Shearer, Hans Weiser, Alfred Johnson, Richard Rhoads, and Leon Keller, all of the Township of Spring. Also, there were McCormack C. Moore, Carolyn Shaplin, from the Township of Lower Heidelberg, and Arthur Holtzman and Charles Reedy from the Borough of Sinking Spring. The first meeting was May 9, 1956. Arthur Holtzman was elected chairman.

The original members of the Spring Township School District Authority were: Leon Keller, Chairman; Paul Geib, Vice Chairman; Donald Bobb, Secretary; Dr. Charles Massena, Treasurer; and J. Richard Schaeffer, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer.

In 1992 all of the Authority's indebtedness was paid in full as scheduled. In 1993 the School Board authorized the termination of the School Authority and all property was turned over to the school district. The last members of the Wilson Joint School Authority were: Brice Alvord; David Shoener; Paul Geib; Treasurer; Paul Gudikunst; William Koch; Martin Matijasich, Secretary; Alan Raffauf, Assistant Treasurer; J. Richard Schaeffer, Chairman; Albert Wicks; and Richard Fehling, Esq., Solicitor.

MAINTENANCE, GROUNDS AND CUSTODIAL DEPARTMENT

This important part of the school district is overseen by the Plant Management Committee consisting of four people. They are

Mr. Larry Bortz, Grounds Crew Leader; Mr. David Smith, Maintenance Crew Leader; Mr. James Umstead, Custodial Crew Leader; and Mr. John Bingaman, Materials Manager. It is their responsibility to see that all the buildings are maintained and the grounds kept in good order. There are 83.3 acres of lawns to be mowed, all within a six day period except when weather does not permit. There are eleven buildings to be maintained which include the transportation center as well as the high school, two junior high schools and seven elementary schools. The office of plant management includes a full time secretary.

The building that houses the equipment and offices is new, having been constructed in 1991-92 at a cost of \$556,659. This building has a sports training area as well as restroom facilities for events at the new track and athletic fields. The building has 11,270 square feet of space. An all-weather track was dedicated, along with the Operations center, on October 11, 1992. The length of the track is 400 meters with six lanes and an eight-lane straightaway, constructed at a cost of \$352,342.

Working with a staff of four crew members and a crew leader, the grounds department maintains upkeep of all sports fields, the all-weather track recently built and all elementary fields as well. In addition to the 83.3 acres of ground to be kept in good condition there are 56.7 acres to be cared for at least twice per year in compliance with township standards. There are 25 acres at the North Elementary site, 30 acres at the South Elementary site and 1.7 acres at Lower Heidelberg school.

Besides mowing and snow removal, there are other tasks to be done on a regular basis. Weeding and mulching, trimming shrubs, hedges and trees, leaf removal at all district buildings and fertilizing all athletic fields following a soil test. Insecticide and crabgrass control for all athletic fields, spraying trees and cleaning up after sporting events are also a part of regular grounds maintenance. During winter weather, snow plowing, cindering and salting of all parking lots, sidewalks and immediate roadway areas occupy a great deal of time.

The maintenance staff includes four crew members and a crew leader. They are responsible for boiler care and upkeep, water softening of the systems, and general maintenance of buildings which include all facets such as plumbing, carpentry, mechanical and electrical work. Besides these daily work requests, the maintenance staff provides in-house renovations to existing rooms and has built several personalized utility pieces for use by our Special Education Department.

The custodial department operates with a crew leader, two "floaters" and a working staff of thirty-four building custodians. The district buildings are cleaned and kept orderly by this staff. During the summer months extra cleaning maintenance is completed such as burnishing, stripping, polishing and buffing of gym floors, classroom floors and hallways. All classroom desks are cleaned and polished.

Purchase for custodial supplies and grounds and maintenance departments as well as inventory and distribution are made by the Materials Manager. This manager tests products for

quality and strength and maintains computer records of products and prices for comparison. Plant management duties include monitoring the environmental areas for asbestos and radon.

A large part of plant management work has to do with coordinating the daily work schedule with all other departments in the district. With the upcoming renovations and additions scheduled for the Senior High School, the Plant Management Committee is directly involved in preliminary meetings with the Construction Management Company hired by the district for this project. It is the management team's experience that assists the management company to come to the correct conclusions regarding the construction for the upcoming project. The team will also be heavily involved with the new North Elementary building which started this year (1994).

FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The cafeteria opened on April 8, 1929. Prior to 1964 the Food Service Department of the Wilson School District was supervised by Miss Elizabeth Bick, a resident of West Reading. The food service office was located in the Senior High building. Miss Bick's responsibilities grew dramatically as the district joined with the surrounding districts.

In January 1964, Mrs. Arlene Kuhlman was appointed Supervisor of Food Service. At that time the district had six cafeterias with forty-two employees, serving 2500 students. The program also supported three lunch rooms (buildings without working

kitchens.) Mrs. Kuhlman retired at the end of the 1981-82 school year.

In April 1982, Connie Milligan Gerarde was selected to direct the Wilson food service program. Connie resigned at the end of the 1982-83 school year due to Mr. Gerarde's job transfer.

On June 18, 1983 Mrs. Patricia Anthony, a registered dietitian, joined the staff and she continues to meet the diverse challenges presented by the educational process and the food service industry.

Currently the district operates four major production kitchens. The Food Services Department prepares approximately one thousand meals per day to the high school. There are ten full time and fifty-four part time staff members serving approximately 4100 students. On the average, 92% of the students purchase a lunch or part of a lunch in one of the nine cafeteria areas. During the 1992-93 school year the department provided 803,339 reimbursable Type A meals.

The mission of the department is to provide 30% of the students' daily nutritional requirements in a clean, warm and friendly environment at a reasonable price. The Board of Education and the Administration of the Wilson School District has understood the impact nutrition has on the health of students. They have strongly supported every effort to maximize the connection between nutrition and education.

In addition to the lunch program the Wilson Food Service Department provides an extensive catering program for special district events, meetings, banquets and workshops.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Prior to 1955 all transportation was provided by contract carriers. On June 22, 1955 the district purchased three 60-passenger Ford buses for \$17,853.00.

Transportation supervisors since 1960 have been: Mr. Baernkopf until 1961; Mr. Carl Merkey until 1966; Mr. Fredericks until 1967; Mr. Clarence Dotterer until 1968; Mr. Paul Minnich until 1977; former State Trooper Balsai until 1979; Mr. Gary Coller, a present Board member, until 1982; Mr. Paul Minotti until 1991; and Mr. Kenneth Noto, the present supervisor. In 1961 Supervisor Carl Merkey hired the first female bus drivers. The first licensed woman bus driver in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was hired as part time driver in our school district. She is Mary Stoudt. Louise Allushuski and Mary Fichthorn were the first full time female bus drivers at Wilson.

From 1960 to 1970 buses didn't have radios, fender mirrors, automatic transmission, or power steering. These developed in later years. The fender mirrors, which allow a driver to see the front of the bus and the rear tires, was an idea developed by Paul Minnich from Wilson and accepted by the State for all buses. This safety invention was graciously given to the State by Mr. Minnich. The State Transportation Department gave Mr. Minnich a certificate and said it would be a privilege to use this design on all State buses.

In 1974, with the construction of Wilson Southern and Cornwall Terrace schools, a new transportation center was included

in the total construction. This center is the location for all our buses and other vehicles.

Repairs of vehicles take place in the transportation center. Included in the repairs are body work and engines. Our transportation center does everything a commercial garage performs and at a great savings to the taxpayer.

Today we have twenty-nine 72-passenger buses and one 51-passenger bus for handicapped students which can accommodate three wheelchairs. There are three 19-passenger mini-buses and one mini bus for the handicapped. Also we have six vans for kindergarten transportation and other uses. The district now buys only diesel buses and vans. Diesel vehicles get about twice the mileage per gallon as do gasoline vehicles.

Eleven of the buses are two years old or newer. All vehicles have two-way radios and selective surveillance cameras. There are 27 routes morning and afternoon; five noon buses for kindergarten and three mini bus runs morning and afternoons. Also we have four morning and afternoon runs with vans to ten private or parochial schools. There are also many extra-curricular trips.

Transportation personnel consists of a Transportation Supervisor, Mr. Kenneth Noto, thirty-eight bus drivers, six van drivers, two aides for the handicapped students who ride with the children, and one mechanic with two garage assistants to do the maintenance work, and a dispatcher.

The center has two bays for repairs, an office and an area for personnel to spend time on their off hours. By being heated with

waste oil it saves the district money. Everything is computerized including the runs and the roster of students using the buses. Each student-rider can be pin-pointed to his/her home by latitude and longitude on a master map.

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WILSON SCHOOL DISTRICT

