

A Brief History of Bibb County School District (1823-2022)

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Editor's Note: This is an abbreviated history of the Bibb County School District through December 2022 based on historical documents referenced at the end of this document.

The Bibb County School District, one of the oldest school systems in the state, is unique in that it is one of four school systems in Georgia that developed and maintained a county school system throughout the history of educational changes in the state of Georgia.

The city of Macon was incorporated on December 8, 1823.

On November 24, 1824, the first school in Macon was chartered. Macon Academy opened under the direction of the Rev. Oliver Danforth, the first schoolteacher in Macon. The school was founded under the auspices of the Commissioners of the Bibb County Academy, who had been appointed by the State Legislature in 1823. A school building was erected on Academy Square. By 1831, it was announced that there were five schools in town and a female academy in the vicinity.

The Academy for the Blind was formally organized in 1851 and the school was chartered by the State Legislature in 1852.

In 1858, the Board of Trustees of the Bibb County Academy agreed to open the school as a free school; however, some tuition was still charged. After the American Civil War, the school reopened as the Macon Free School in 1866.

In 1868, Lewis High School for African American students, constructed by the American Missionary Association, opened. The original site was at the corner of New and Pine Streets.

The General Assembly of the State of Georgia passed a law establishing public schools in the state in late 1870 and Bibb County was able to move into the statewide system. On August 23, 1872, the General Assembly of Georgia passed an act creating the Board of Public Education and Orphanage of Bibb County, a true public school system supported by taxpayer funds. This act provided the Board would be self-perpetuating; the power of filling vacancies was left in the hands of the Board. The Board was also given the authority to levy a tax in Bibb County, subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners, for financing the school program. In January 1873, B.M. Zettler was elected the first Superintendent of Schools.

In the first year of operation, there were six schools in Macon, 43 teachers, and 1,516 students. Total expenditures were \$21,702. The existing schools were First Ward School, Second Ward School, Fourth Ward School, East Macon School, Cotton Avenue School, Lewis High School and several small schools in

the suburbs and county. This is also the year the original Central High School was opened in a building on the corner of College and Bond Streets and the Third Ward School was opened.

From the beginning of the Bibb County Public School System, it was the policy of the Board to build neighborhood schools, which were considered desirable for quality education. The pattern of new schools followed the pattern of the growth of Macon. Each school was built to satisfy the need to furnish a school for the children in the area.

In 1874, South Macon School opened.

In 1876, Lewis High School was destroyed by fire and soon after, the Congregational Church built a new school for lower grades. Meeting rooms in the church were used for high school students.

In 1877, a new public high school was built at the corner of Spring and Pine Streets using lumber from the old Beasley Tavern on Cotton Avenue. The labor was paid for by voluntary contributions from the patrons of the high school.

In 1880, the Alexander Free School was built and the old school building, which had been Elam Alexander's home, was moved to the back of the new lot.

In the same year, trustees of the Macon Free School purchased the Medical College on Mulberry Street and turned it over to the Board of Education. The school was named the Whittle School and replaced the public Macon Free School on the old Academy Square.

In 1882, trustees of the Macon Free School built the Nisbet School on Orange Street.

By 1883, there were 40 schools (city and county), 68 teachers, and a total expenditure of \$27,677 in operating costs.

In 1884, the people of the Vineville area and the residents of East Macon built new schools financed by voluntary contributions.

By 1885, there were 80 teachers and 4,778 students in public schools, with 125 students attending Alexander Free School, and 250 students attending private schools and colleges.

In 1888, a gift from Stephen H. Ballard of New York allowed the construction of a three-story brick building to replace the Lewis High School that had been destroyed by fire in 1876. The citizens of Macon gave \$500 toward building a library and industrial arts room for the school. A gift the next year from Mr. Ballard's sister allowed for the construction of a girl's dormitory. Later, in 1889, the school was named Ballard Normal School in their honor.

In the same year, Gresham High School opened on the corner of Cotton and Spring. It was built by the Macon Free School Board of Trustees at a cost of \$20,000.

The Winship School in Huguenin Heights was built in 1892.

Later that year, the Alexander Free School, which had operated as a separate school, was turned over to the Board of Education.

The King's Daughters organized the Free Kindergarten Association in 1894.

In 1898, Professor W.E. Kilpatrick, in charge of the country schools of the Bibb County School District, put into operation the first traveling library in Georgia.

By the early 1900s, a steady increase in Macon's school population brought the need for more classrooms. In the 10-year period preceding 1907, there was a 44% increase in enrollment. During this period, schools were erected out of funds from two sources, the Elam Alexander estate and public funds.

In 1902, Alexander II was built on College Street, facing Tattnell Square Park.

In 1908, the Newburg School in South Macon was built with public funds.

In 1909, the Board purchased the historic property at the corner of Forsyth and Orange Streets for the eventual building of a new boys' school. Because the need for more high school space was urgent, renovation of the existing building was begun almost immediately. In October 1909, the high school boys used the building for the first time. The name Lanier High School for Boys was chosen in September 1910. The girls continued to attend Gresham High School.

Alexander III School was erected in 1910 by the Alexander Free School Board on a lot donated by Senator A.O. Bacon. The first principal was Mrs. J.T. McElroy. The Alexander Free School Board had been established shortly after the American Civil War, upon the death of Elam Alexander, who left a bequest of \$50,000 to be invested for the setup of a school, which would be entirely separate from the County Free School System. Alexander I and Alexander II schools had been built using these funds prior to the construction of Alexander III.

The Clisby School on Hillyer Avenue opened in 1911 with Miss Jessie Rice as principal. The Bloomfield School opened this same year.

At its May 29, 1912, meeting, the Board received a report addressing the urgent need for a new high school for the county. It was requested that the president of the Board prepare a bill to be introduced making it mandatory for the County Commissioners to levy a special tax to create a sum of \$33,333 each year for a term of three years, with the amount to be paid over to the Board for the specific purpose of building a high school for Bibb County. With these funds, the Dudley M. Hughes Vocational School was built and opened in 1915.

During 1913-14, morning and afternoon classes were held in the Gresham building while a new building was erected at the corner of Forsyth and Orange Streets. The new Lanier High School opened in September 1913. It featured an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,200 and a 690-square-foot stage. The school was co-educational.

A move toward consolidation of several small rural schools led to the building of four new consolidated schools for both grammar and high school students: Rutland in 1914; Union in 1915; Howard in 1916; and Lizella in 1916.

The final pre-war public school building to be erected was Ballard School on Forest Avenue off Vineville in the Pleasant Hill area. It replaced the older school on New Street, which had been bought by the Macon Hospital.

During these years, several curricular changes and innovations came about. The Board of Education set up a manual training program in the public schools. The program extended from simple clay modeling in the first grade to domestic science and woodworking in high school. In 1907, a public school art teacher was appointed.

A fourth year was added to the high school course. The class of 1912 was the first to attend the additional year with their graduation from high school in 1913. No class actually graduated in 1912.

According to archives, one change that met with opposition was the proposal to offer military training in 1915. It was added as an optional course. The coming of World War I ended most of the criticism. In 1917, the course was required for all male students.

In 1917, the committee of the Board on course of study recommended the practice of mid-term promotion, which had been discussed as far back as 1906. The practice of mid-term promotion was adopted and used for 20 years.

In January 1920, a fire destroyed the Clisby School on Hillyer Avenue. The students were transferred to the old Nisbet School on Orange Avenue, which was not in use at the time. The Winship students were transferred to Alexander II and the Winship School was closed. A new school was planned to be named Clisby School. The new school built at the corner of Pio Nono Avenue and Beech Street was, instead, named Winship at its completion. Later, the name Clisby was given to the recently built Vineville School.

Between 1920 and 1921, four other schools opened as well: the Fort Hawkins School, the John W. Burke School, Bellevue School, and the William B. Redding School. Fort Hawkins School was located on the site of a fort, a replica of which now stands on its grounds. Miss Emma Smith served as the first principal of the school with 15 teachers assisting her. The John W. Burke School was located at 2051 Second Street. The school was named for a former member of the Board of Education and Mrs. C.H. Weir was its first principal. While the Bellevue School had previously existed, a new building was required, so in 1920 the new building opened with seven teachers and a principal, Miss Nora Edmondson. After patrons of the Warrior District petitioned the Board to consolidate their district with Lizella, plans for the William B. Redding School were drawn. The Redding School opened in 1921.

The city of Macon passed a bond issue and appropriated \$500,000 for schools in 1922. This same year, a site was chosen on Monroe Street for building an industrial school for African American students. When completed, the school was named Monroe Street School.

In 1923, Virgil Powers School opened to replace the oldest public elementary school in Macon. Miss Minnie Robertson was principal. This same year, the name of Monroe Street School was changed to Hudson Industrial School.

Part of the 1922 funds were used to build a new high school for boys on the old Napier property facing Holt Avenue. The old Napier home place was turned around and moved to a lot facing Napier Avenue. When completed in 1924, the school was named Lanier High School. The name of the old school was changed to Pearl Stephens High School and was used entirely by girls. The students objected to the new name; therefore, the Board changed the name and both schools continued under the Lanier name.

In 1925, the Board voted to add a fifth year to the high school course of study. Therefore, there was no graduating class until 1927.

At the May 1926 Board meeting, the members voted to close the rural high schools at Lizella, Rutland, Union, and Howard. The students in these areas were transported to the Lanier schools by bus.

On August 7, 1926, Mr. Charles H. Bruce, Superintendent of Schools, died. At its meeting on September 9, 1926, the Board received a petition from the Parent-Teacher Association of Newberg School requesting that a new school be named the Charles H. Bruce School. The petition was granted. It was reported on March 10, 1927, that the Charles H. Bruce School had been completed and was occupied. Miss Mamie Holt, who had served as principal of the Newberg School, was the first principal.

In 1928, the Board of Education recommended a \$500,000 bond issue to provide a new grammar school in the Log Cabin Heights area, one in Ingleside, the enlargement of Alexander III, and the improvement of several schools for African American students.

In 1929, Log Cabin School opened. The school was built on four acres of land that had been purchased by the Board of Education in 1925.

This same year, the Alexander Free School Board decided that education could best be served under one organization and from 1929 forward the funds were entrusted to the Bibb County Board of Education.

The Pearl Stephens School, B.S. Ingram, and Miller B opened in 1931. The Pearl Stephens School bears the name of Miss Pearl Stephens who, for many years, was the teacher at the Elam Alexander Normal School from which many of Bibb County's elementary teachers and principals had graduated. The school opened with Miss Norwood Robson as principal. B.S. Ingram School opened with Mrs. Bessie Moseley as principal. Mr. B.S. Ingram, for whom the B.S. Ingram School was named, had served as principal of Hudson Industrial School. Miller B, formerly A.L. Miller Senior High School for Girls, was located on Montpelier Avenue. The Miller A and B Buildings were named for Judge A.L. Miller, Sr., a longtime member of the Board of Education. Mr. H.S. Lasseter became its first principal.

At the meeting of the Board on January 14, 1932, the following study concerning the needs affecting the welfare of children at Clisby and Bellevue Schools was presented to the Board: 786 children attended Clisby School, with 22 teachers. One class was held in the library, one in the teachers' restroom, and four classes in the basement on the same level as the boiler. These rooms were poorly lit, unattractive, and difficult to ventilate according to the study.

In the Bellevue School, according to the study, there were overcrowded and undesirable conditions, including 10 classes with 10 teachers occupying eight classrooms. One classroom was in the auditorium and one classroom was in the teachers' restroom. The auditorium was dark, artificially lit, and cold.

It was recommended to the Board that the sub-standard classrooms at Clisby and Bellevue be abandoned, for they jeopardized the health of the children and affected the learning processes.

It was recommended that the Ingleside School be built with eight classrooms to relieve the crowded conditions at Clisby and Bellevue. A new school district would be arranged so that there would be 578 children and 16 teachers at Clisby, 339 children and 9 teachers at Bellevue, and 270 children and 8 teachers at the new school.

The new school was to be named Alexander IV and \$47,000 came from the Alexander fund. Alexander IV formally opened on November 18, 1932, with 278 children in attendance.

For many years, a high school existed in the Rutland district of Bibb County. On November 9, 1933, the Board decided to change the name of Rutland School to that of John H. Heard School. At the Board meeting on November 25, 1933, it was announced that a remodeling of the school had been approved. At the meeting on June 30, 1934, it was announced that the Heard School was completed. Since 1934, the Heard School has become an elementary school and the high school pupils have been sent to other high schools in the county.

In 1936, the Bibb County School District received 40,000 new textbooks as free textbooks began to be supplied by the state.

L.H. Williams School was formerly the old Pleasant Hill School. The building was a two-story wooden structure, which was not up to code, according to the local fire department. A new building was desperately needed. A member of the community reported to the Board on March 8, 1934, that he had gone to Washington D.C. to see about the project for the new African American schools. At the meeting on November 21, 1935, permission was given to the federal government to aid in the building of the Pleasant Hill School. The government would furnish \$36,913. It was announced at the Board meeting on February 13, 1936, that Pleasant Hill School, built with money from a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant, was completed and had been accepted. The name of the Pleasant Hill School was changed to Lewis H. Williams School at the December 10, 1936, meeting of the Board. Lewis H. Williams had taught at the Pleasant Hill School from 1888 to 1901 and from 1901 to 1918 at the Green Street School.

On February 13, 1936, East Macon School, built with Public Works Administration (PWA) grants, was accepted by the Board as being completed. At the Board meeting of December 10, 1936, the Board, at the request of the African American community, named the East Macon School the Mayland M. Burdell School in honor of Mayland M. Burdell. Mrs. Burdell had taught at Turpin Street School from 1893-1894, was principal of that school from 1894 to 1902, and had been principal of the East Macon School since 1902. The new principal of Burdell School was Mrs. Metta Danforth.

Earlier in its existence, the City of Macon gifted the Board of Education property for the Green Street School in exchange for the property utilized by the Fort Hawkins School. The old Green Street School

burned on July 1, 1936. There was \$9,150 worth of insurance on the building and \$1,400 worth of insurance on the furniture. The children were to be moved to the old Pleasant Hill School. On July 9, 1936, the President of the Board of Education asked about rebuilding the school. They agreed to ask the Public Works Administration (PWA) for \$25,400 with which to build a one-story brick building. The Green Street School building was completed and accepted by the Board of Education at the meeting of the Board on March 11, 1937.

In the minutes from the Board meeting of July 14, 1938, it was stated that the 12-room frame building on Hazel Street would be abolished and a new building would be built on another lot. It was agreed at the meeting of the Board on September 8, 1938, that students from the Hazel Street School would be sent to Ingram for evening classes. Mr. H.T. Cole stated the Public Works Administration (PWA) had granted the money to build the school. On March 9, 1939, it was announced that the Hazel Street building was completed. Later, the Hazel Street School was renamed as the George Washington Carver Grammar School in honor of African American scientist and educator, George Washington Carver.

A number of small schools, both for African American and white students, were established in the school district's early years. Many of these were one- or two-room buildings. Until 1940, there was very little consolidation of these schools serving African American students. As the population shifted to a general pattern of citizens moving into the city, the reevaluation of school needs resulted in the building of three consolidated schools for African American students in the county. These schools were Pleasant Grove, Capel, and Duresville.

After the old Unionville School building burned in 1929, many years of planning and work went into the new building. Unionville School opened in 1942 with Ms. Elizabeth Disroon as principal and six teachers employed.

On May 14, 1942, the Board approved the purchase of land on Houston Road for the purpose of building an elementary school, tentatively called Rocky Creek School. Work began and was completed in summer 1943. The new Rocky Creek School opened on September 8, 1943, with 202 children. The school was officially named the Cynthia H. Weir School, in honor of the late Mrs. Weir, who dedicated 57 years of service to the Bibb County School District as a teacher and principal.

In 1946, an expansion plan for county schools with an expenditure of \$2,000,000 was proposed by the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Mark. A. Smith. Voters approved a \$2,500,000 school and road bond issue in January 1948. The expansion was needed due to the unusual increase in Macon's population during the last decade, largely a product of the activity at Robins Air Force Base during World War II.

With voter approval of a \$2,500,000 school and road bond issue in 1948, the expansion plan for county schools proceeded with many school facilities completed in the next two decades. The pattern of construction of new schools continued the commitment of building neighborhood schools as the population and growth of the city and county continued to expand.

In 1949, the Macon City Directory listed 52 public schools, 3 business schools, 3 religious schools, 2 parochial schools, 1 blind academy, and 1 aviation school. The population of the city of Macon was listed as about 100,000.

At the Board meeting on May 13, 1948, it was reported that some plans had been made to build a new African American grammar school instead of making an addition to Carver. The committee decided to name the school the Ada Jones Banks School. Ada Jones Banks was born in Bibb County, taught at L.H. Williams School, was principal of the Turpin Street School, and also was a teacher in the Wheatley School until her death. The Ada Jones Banks School officially opened in January 1949.

Lanier A was first founded as Lanier Junior High School for Boys. In September 1949, the doors of Lanier Junior were opened to 782 boys with Mr. L.W. Lewis as principal. There were 28 teachers.

In 1949, one of the pushing needs was that of a new comprehensive high school for African American students. The site for the high school was chosen in South Macon because it was almost in the center of the African American population in Macon. Students first attended the high school building in September 1949. The name of the building became Ballard-Hudson High School when Ballard High School and Hudson consolidated as one high school. The school was officially dedicated in November 1949. Dr. R.J. Martin was the first principal.

The Florence Bernd School opened in September 1949. Previously, the building had served as a tuberculosis sanatorium, constructed in 1927. The Anti-Tuberculosis Commission decided to give the building housing the Hopewell Sanatorium to the Board of Education to use as a school. The school was named the Florence Bernd School in honor of Miss Florence Bernd, a longtime teacher in the school system.

In 1950, small school buildings no longer used were sold and the funds from the sales were added to the Building Fund Account of the Board of Education to be used for the construction of new facilities. The school buildings sold at this time were: Alexander I; Antioch; Bloomfield; Goodwin; Old Duresville; Summerfield; Swift Creek; Union Church; Wheatley; and White Springs.

By this time, the conditions at Lanier High School for girls were such that it was deemed urgent to construct a junior high school for girls. It was decided to build the school on Birch Street using lots already owned by the Board and adjacent to Miller Senior High School. Mr. Willingham, Chairman of the Committee for a junior high school for girls, suggested the name be changed to A.L. Miller Junior High School instead of Lanier Junior High School. Students and faculty requested maintaining the Lanier name but were denied and in July the name was officially made A.L. Miller Junior High School. During spring holidays, Mrs. W.G. Lee, principal, and 30 teachers moved to the new school, which officially opened March 20, 1950.

Duresville Consolidated School for the eastern part of the county opened February 6, 1950, with 288 students. Mrs. Lilla C. Parker was its first principal; her faculty consisted of eight teachers.

About this time, it was discovered there were overcrowded conditions at Alexander IV, Clisby, Pearl Stephens and Winship Schools. A new school was needed in the Pierce Avenue area. Mr. Johnson, Chairman of a Special Committee, presented to the Board at its July 9, 1953, meeting the name of Theodosius Davies "T.D." Tinsley for the Pierce Avenue School. Mr. Tinsley was a former vice president and twice president of the Board of Education. At the Board meeting of February 12, 1953, Mrs. Ruth Aultman, a teacher of the second grade at Alexander III, was named principal.

With the opening of the Agnes Barden School in 1954, the crowded conditions in several of the grammar schools in South Macon were greatly reduced; however, this section of Macon was growing rapidly, and other schools would soon be needed.

The African American schools in South Macon were very crowded in the 1950s. It was observed that something had to be done to relieve this crowded situation and a lot already existed on Pio Nono Avenue. The members of the Board of Education decided to name the Pio Nono Avenue School in honor of Mrs. Eugenia G. Hamilton, a teacher who gave long and faithful service to the Bibb County School District. The Eugenia Hamilton School opened on February 1, 1954, with Mrs. Mae Miller as principal.

A group of citizens from the Cross Keys section of Macon presented a petition to the Board of Education concerning the school needs in that section. Previously, the Cross Keys School building had been sold for \$100 and the lot for \$175. Dr. Mark A. Smith, Superintendent of Schools, stated that 1,453 children lived in the Cross Keys section. There were 44 classrooms in the schools in that vicinity. There were 33 children per classroom. A new school was greatly needed. The Cross Keys School was to be named J. Ellsworth Hall, in honor of J. Ellsworth Hall, former President of the Board of Education. The Hall School opened on February 2, 1954, with 360 pupils. Mrs. Lillian Kelley was transferred from the Cochran Field School to serve as the first principal at Hall.

What was originally the Hightower Road School was named the Joseph N. Neel School in honor of Mr. Joseph N. Neel, former Vice President and Treasurer of the Board. On February 9, 1954, pupils from Weir, Burke and Bruce schools moved into the Joseph N. Neel School. Mr. William Brake was appointed principal of the school. It was called to the Board's attention that the Neel school had a male principal and many members of the Board expressed themselves in favor of the "experiment."

The Henry A. Hunt School opened in fall 1955 with Mr. Stewart Gandy, Jr., as the first principal. The Hunt school filled a great need in reducing the classroom size of African American schools in East Macon.

The crowded conditions of Pearl Stephens School had existed for several years. According to records, additions had been constructed and sub-standard classrooms were being used. The County Commissioners were asked to construct a road to a site for a proposed school off Edna Place. At the meeting of the Board on April 18, 1955, it was decided to name the Edna Place School the Joseph B. Riley School. Mr. Riley served for many years on the Bibb County Board of Education. Riley School opened in 1956. The first principal of Joseph B. Riley School was Lloyd Newberry, a former teacher of science at Lanier High School. The building of this school greatly reduced the crowded conditions at Pearl Stephens and Winship schools.

A special called meeting of the Board of Education was held on August 20, 1956, to discuss the building of a girls' high school. The girls' high school was named Margaret McEvoy at the Board meeting on February 14, 1957. Miss McEvoy served in the school system from 1881 to 1933, a total of 52 years. McEvoy High School for Girls opened in September 1957 with Mr. Julius Gholson as its first principal. There were 658 girls in attendance the first year. The school had five grades, 8th through 12th. The crowded conditions at Miller were slightly reduced.

Due to the overcrowded conditions at Barden, Union, Neel, and Weir elementary schools, it was decided that there was need for an additional elementary school. Land was purchased in the Bloomfield area for

this purpose and plans were begun early in 1957 for the construction of this school. Known as the Bloomfield School, it was officially named in February 1957 for Jessie Rice, who had contributed 31 years of service to the Bibb County School District. In January 1958, Mr. B.C. Adams was named principal. Jessie Rice Elementary School opened in September 1958.

Overcrowding at Tinsley, Alexander IV, and Clisby prompted plans for construction of an elementary school that would relieve these conditions. The Board approved purchase of a site in the Kings Forest area. This school was known as the Kings Forest school until February 14, 1957, when it was officially named for Rosa Taylor, who served 53 years as a Bibb County educator. Rosa Taylor Elementary School was completed and opened in September 1958, with Miss May Belle Mullenix as principal.

A new African American high school was planned for East Macon. At a meeting of the School Names Committee, held immediately after the Board of Education meeting on December 12, 1957, it was unanimously decided to name the new African American school for Peter G. Appling. In February 1958, Harry B. Thompson, assistant principal at Ballard-Hudson Senior, was named principal of Appling High School. Appling High School opened at full capacity in September 1958.

In order to relieve the crowded conditions at the Lanier Senior High School, the Board decided it was urgent a new school be built for the boys in South Macon near the new McEvoy School. At the February 14, 1957, meeting, it was decided the new boys' high school would be named the Alfred Ross Willingham School. Mr. Willingham was a member of the Bibb County Board of Education from November 10, 1916, until his death, March 12, 1950. Mr. Lloyd Newberry became the first principal of Willingham. The school officially opened in September 1958.

The Minnie Hughes Butler School, named for a former Bibb County educator, opened in September 1959 with Mr. Horace Hawes as principal.

A survey conducted by the State Department of Education on November 17 and 18, 1960, and reported to the Board of Education on December 8, 1960, indicated the following needs regarding elementary schools in Bibb County:

- An elementary school in the Shurlington area;
- An elementary school in Southwest Macon – Bloomfield area;
- An elementary school in the Pleasant Hill area; and
- An elementary school in South Macon beyond Anthony Road.

These needs were reported as resulting from expanding population growth in these areas. Schools serving these areas already were becoming overcrowded. The following schools were constructed in an effort to meet these needs: Morgan, Danforth, Jones, and Pye.

In the Westfield area, the Board approved naming a newly built school W.T. Morgan. Mr. Morgan had been a member of the Board of Education from 1894 to 1942. On September 5, 1961, W.T. Morgan Elementary School opened with Mr. Elton Wall as principal.

The Danforth building, which opened in September 1965, was an effort toward relieving the overcrowded conditions at Burdell and Hunt Elementary Schools. The school was named for Metta T.

Danforth. Mrs. Danforth served 49 years as a teacher and principal in Bibb County. Mr. Harold L. Purdue was principal when the Danforth School officially opened.

The Walter P. Jones School, located in the Shurlington area, named for a former Bibb County Superintendent, opened in September 1965 with Miss Sarah McElroy as principal.

In the east Anthony Road area, a new school was named for Maude C. Pye, who had served as a teacher and principal at Wheatley School and, when it closed, had served as principal of Capel School. Mr. Pierce B. Brunson was named principal and the Maude C. Pye School opened in September 1965.

The survey conducted by the State Department of Education on November 17 and 18, 1960 also found that a new girls' high school was needed to serve the areas of North Macon, East Macon, Shurlington, and Riverside Drive. The McEvoy and Willingham Schools had temporarily relieved the crowded conditions at Miller and Lanier. With the new influx of population to Bibb County, a new high school was needed. It was decided this new school for girls should be in the eastern section of the county. Lasseter High School was to be located on Upper River Road on property already owned by the Board of Education. The Upper River Road School for Girls was named for Mr. H.S. Lasseter, former principal of Miller Senior High School. Miss Ann Henry, a teacher at Miller Senior and principal of Bruce Elementary School, was selected to serve as the first principal. Lasseter High School opened in fall 1965. It served girls in grades 8-12.

This survey also found that a new high school for boys was needed in East Macon to relieve the overcrowded conditions at Lanier Junior and Senior High Schools. A site was secured on Upper River Road for the building. It would be adjacent to the property on which Lasseter High School was being built. Mark Smith High School on Upper River Road was completed in May 1965. The school was named the Mark Smith High School for Boys in honor of Dr. Mark Smith, who was Superintendent of Schools from 1941 until the time of his death in 1958. The first principal of Mark Smith was Mr. Ed Cagle, the former principal of Alexander IV School. The official opening of the school was in September 1965.

The increase in the African American high school student population in South Macon became so large that Ballard-Hudson Senior could not adequately serve the community. Because it was not feasible to make any new additions to Ballard-Hudson Senior High School, a new site on Anthony Road was selected for a new Ballard-Hudson Junior High School. Ballard-Hudson Junior High School was completed in May 1965 and inspected and accepted in July 1965. The new building opened in September 1965. The school was built as a junior high school, but it could only accommodate the eighth-grade boys and girls and part of the ninth-grade students. Mr. R.J. Williams served as the first principal.

The survey presented to the Board of Education at its meeting on December 8, 1960, also requested that a new junior high school for girls be constructed in the general area of McEvoy High School. McEvoy Junior High opened in September 1965. Mr. B.C. Adams, assistant principal at McEvoy Senior, became its first principal and female students transferred from McEvoy Senior.

In January 1965, a school built in the Glen Cove area was named for McKibben Lane, who had been a member of the Board of Education. In May 1966, Miss Francis Oliver was named principal of McKibben Lane Elementary School and the school opened in September 1966.

The survey that had been presented to the Board of Education in December 1960 stated a new junior high school for boys was to be constructed in the general area of Willingham High School. The Willingham Junior High School was completed in June 1966 after many delays. Willingham Junior opened in September 1966, with an enrollment of 586 students. Mr. William Bell served as its first principal. The building of this school greatly reduced the over-crowded conditions at Willingham Senior High.

A 15-acre tract of land in the Groveland Park area was purchased to be used for a new elementary school. This school would relieve overcrowded conditions at Barden, Rice, and Morgan. In January 1965, the unfinished school was named Minnie Burghard Elementary School. Miss Burghard was one of the early educators in Bibb County, serving from 1886 to 1932. In April 1967, Mr. Dan Bolt was named principal. The school officially opened on August 30, 1967.

Another new building was intended to relieve the overcrowded conditions at Appling Senior High School. Appling Junior High School opened in September 1967 with Mr. William Dunn, former assistant at Appling Senior High, as principal. The location of Appling Junior High was just across Shurling Drive from Appling Senior.

Based on a survey of needs in the county, it was determined that an elementary school should be constructed in the West Anthony Road area. On June 8, 1967, the school was named for Matilda McKenny Hartley, who taught in the district from 1923 to 1965. In April 1968, Mr. Jackson Sheftall was named principal. Hartley Elementary opened in September 1968.

The Board approved the purchase of 15 acres in Porterfield Estates, for the purpose of constructing an elementary school to relieve overcrowding at Heard School. The school was named for James Hyde Porter, who served as a member of the Board of Education from 1935 to 1949. In April 1968, Mr. Harry Trawick was named principal. James H. Porter Elementary School opened in September 1968.

In 1967-68, the Bibb County School District moved from a dual system to a unitary system based on the "freedom of choice movement." The Freedom of Choice movement focused on allowing African American families to choose where their children went to school in the same way white families did. This movement was especially prominent in areas with segregated education systems.

In 1969-70, the Board of Education moved from a self-perpetuating board to an elected board.

After the integration and co-ed movements of the 1960s and 1970s, a Federal Court Order was handed down to the states in 1970 requiring the integration of races and genders within public schools. In response to this order, Lanier High for Boys (Lanier A), Lanier High for Girls (Lanier B), A.L. Miller Senior High for Girls (Miller B), and Miller Junior High (Miller A) merged under Central High School. Appling Senior High (Appling B), Appling Junior High (Appling A), Lasseter High School for Girls, and the Mark Smith High School for Boys merged under the name Northeast High School. Ballard-Hudson Senior (Ballard B), Ballard-Hudson Junior (Ballard A), McEvoy High School for Girls (McEvoy B), McEvoy Junior High (McEvoy A), Willingham High School for Boys (Willingham B), and Willingham Junior High (Willingham A) merged under the name Southwest High School. Eventually, during the 1970s, the Appling, Ballard-Hudson, and Miller buildings became separate junior high schools, serving grades 8 and 9, until their conversion into "middle schools," serving grades 6-8.

Fifteen acres of land purchased at the corner of Wesleyan Drive and Springdale Road had to be considered for a new elementary school, although this land had been purchased for a high school site. It was officially named Springdale Elementary School by a special committee in 1970. It was also decided in 1970 that Springdale would be used as a model school to test innovations. It was completed and opened in 1971.

In the late 1970s, a compromise agreement and plan to fully integrate elementary schools, formally known as a consent decree, was signed. This agreement was signed on September 5, 1978.

Due to the continued growth of Southwest High School, which at the time was reported to have reached the highest student population in the country at greater than 4,000 students, Southeast High School opened for the 1988-89 school year. Housed in a new building on the Ballard-Hudson site at 1070 Anthony Road, Southeast High School had its first graduating class in 1990

In 1982, new buildings for Union School and Williams School were constructed.

From 1990 to 1996, four schools were built in Bibb County. Brookdale Elementary School was constructed on Brookdale Avenue in 1991. Sonny Carter Elementary School, named for Manley Lanier "Sonny" Carter, Jr., the American chemist, physician, professional soccer player, naval officer and aviator, test pilot and NASA astronaut from Macon, was built on Zebulon Road in 1994. Westside High School and Weaver Middle School were constructed on Heath Road and opened in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

In 1999, the first ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), a one percent sales tax to be collected for a 5-year period, was approved by Bibb County voters for \$139 million and, with additional state and local capital outlay funds, 10 schools were constructed. In the case of Alexander II and Vineville, the historic school buildings were reconstructed. Included in the construction projects were seven major building renovations, 112 classrooms added to existing schools, 9 new gymnasiums, and a central kitchen.

The building for the Vineville School was reconstructed and reopened in 2002 as Vineville Elementary School and Academy of the Arts. This same year, two new elementary schools opened, Heritage Elementary and Skyview Elementary.

In 2003, the Mayland M. Burdell School and Henry A. Hunt School were closed and reopened in August 2003 under the consolidated name of Burdell-Hunt Elementary School at the Burdell location.

This same year, a joint-campus middle school and high school opened in the Rutland zone and the schools were named Rutland Middle School and Rutland High School.

Southeast High School closed in 2004, with the student population from that school largely served by Southwest and Rutland.

In 2004, the original Rosa Taylor Elementary School building was demolished and a new school under the same name was constructed on the same site.

It was decided by the Board of Education the combined campus design of the Rutland schools was favorable and another new campus was planned for Forsyth Road. Howard Middle School was completed and opened in 2004, but its high school counterpart would not open until later.

In November 2004, the Bibb County Board of Education gained independent control of its finances for the first time with the majority support of voters and the support of the Bibb County Commissioners.

Alexander II was reconstructed and reopened as the Alexander II Math and Science Magnet School in July 2005.

The B.S. Ingram and Maude C. Pye schools were closed and consolidated under the name Ingram-Pye Elementary School, which opened at the Pye location in July 2005.

A second ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) was approved by Bibb County voters for \$165 million in fall 2005. New schools and facilities funded by this ESPLOST, which generated \$174,969,000 million, included Northwoods Academy, Ingram-Pye Elementary, Ballard-Hudson Middle, Central High, Howard High, and Southwest High.

The buildings for Bruce and Burghard were reconstructed and reopened in July 2006.

Howard High School, attached to Howard Middle School, officially opened in July 2008.

Alexander IV Elementary School, which had housed Elam Alexander Academy students in the GNETS (Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support) program, closed in 2008. Its building was declared surplus by the Board in 2013 and was sold. In 2022, the Ridge Avenue building reopened as the Alexander IV Senior Living Center.

Northwoods Academy, hosting a specialty education preschool program, opened on Pierce Avenue in July 2009 on the site of the old T.D. Tinsley School.

The W.S. Hutchings Career Center High School opened on Riverside Drive in July 2009. Several years later, Hutchings transitioned into a college and career academy program with a CTAE (Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education) focus. This program would eventually move to Anthony Road.

In fall 2009, the new Central High School, which was demolished and rebuilt, opened on the same site on Napier Avenue. Central had begun offering courses in 1992 in preparation for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) curriculum, with the first exams given in May 1996. The school began the program as a county-wide magnet program under the guidance of principal Leontine Espy and IB coordinator Elizabeth Hinesley.

Also in fall 2009, the new Southwest High School opened on Williamson Road.

A third ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) was approved by Bibb County voters with collections beginning in 2011, which generated \$176,129,000 million. New schools and facilities

funded by this ESPLOST included Heard Elementary, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, Veterans Elementary, and the Bloomfield Middle/Southfield Elementary conversion.

The John W. Burke Elementary School was renovated and became Elam Alexander Academy at Burke in July 2011, a program hosting students and staff from the GNETS (Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support) program.

In 2014, the Board of Education approved a local charter school application for the Academy for Classical Education (ACE). ACE opened under the Bibb County School District's guidance in July 2014. ACE's governance board opted to apply for state charter approval and became an independent organization and left the district in summer 2019.

Another local charter school application was approved by the Board of Education, and Macon Charter Academy opened in fall 2015 for grades K-8; however, it closed a year later in fall 2016.

One of the old Ballard-Hudson buildings on Anthony Road was remodeled and renovated to accommodate the re-opening of the W.S. Hutchings College and Career Academy program in July 2015.

Due to shifting population and enrollment needs, the Board voted to convert Bloomfield Middle School into Southfield Elementary School. Jessie Rice and Minnie Burghard Elementary schools were closed and combined to create Southfield Elementary. Students from Bloomfield Middle were transferred to Ballard-Hudson, after Bloomfield Middle and Ballard-Hudson Middle consolidated. Southfield Elementary officially opened in August 2015.

SOAR Academy, an alternative education opportunity program, opened in the Burghard building upon its closure as an elementary school in 2015, but later moved to the district's former W.S. Hutchings building located on Riverside Drive.

In January 2016, Heard Elementary School, which had been demolished and reconstructed, reopened on the same site.

The Metta T. Danforth Elementary School, which had been renamed as King-Danforth Elementary School, was combined with Walter P. Jones Elementary School in East Macon and reopened at the old Appling A Middle School site in August 2016 under the name Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School.

Also in 2016, a new elementary school opened under the name Veterans Elementary School. The W.T. Morgan Elementary School was demolished, and Veterans was built on this site. Agnes Barden Elementary School and W.T. Morgan Elementary School were closed. Students from these schools were consolidated and transferred to Veterans Elementary.

A fourth ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) was approved by Bibb County voters with collections beginning in 2016. New schools and facilities funded by this ESPLOST included a new Northeast High School and Appling Middle complex, a new John R. Lewis Elementary School, and a new Transportation and Campus Police facility.

In August 2019, the new Northeast High School opened on Upper River Road, where it had been demolished and rebuilt. A new Peter G. Appling Middle School, intended to replace the middle school on Shurling Drive, was built on the same Upper River Road complex as Northeast High and opened in August 2020.

The existing Joseph B. Riley Elementary was demolished. A new building was constructed on this site and opened in August 2020 as the John Robert Lewis Elementary School. Students from Riley Elementary and Brookdale Elementary, which had closed in June 2020, consolidated and attended the new John R. Lewis Elementary School.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused a nationwide shutdown in spring 2020, virtual schooling options became more popular. The VIP Academy, Bibb County's first entirely virtual K-12 program, opened in 2020. The Board later voted to approve the VIP Academy's transition from a virtual program to a virtual school. It opened as a virtual school in July 2021.

Also in 2021, collections began for a fifth ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) approved by voters. With the shift toward virtual education and new instructional platforms, funding from the ESPLOST was used to implement a districtwide one-to-one technology initiative. Under this initiative, each student in the district is equipped with an electronic device.

In fall 2021, the district celebrated openings of auditoriums at Westside High School and Rutland High School. With the completion of these projects, each of the six high schools in Bibb County was equipped with its own auditorium.

In 150 years, the Bibb County School District grew from operating with six schools, 43 teachers, and 1,516 students in its first year of 1872 to operating with 38 schools and programs, about 1,500 teachers, and about 21,500 students in 2022.

Following this history is a complete list of all Bibb County School District Superintendents from the beginning of the district in 1872 to present and a list of operating schools in the Bibb County School District as of 2022.

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