

Typical One Room Schoolhouse

*Hollis School
Built 1856
(Randolph Street)*

Photo Courtesy V. Leslie Hebert



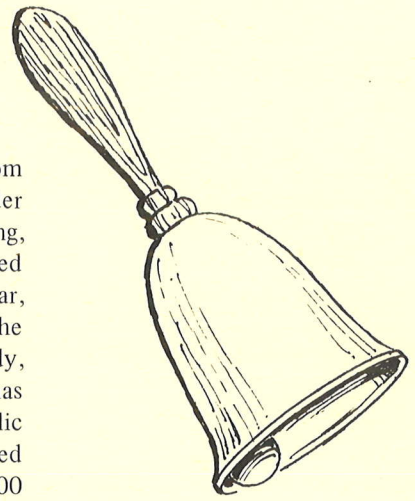
A Brief History of the Weymouth Public Schools

As the second oldest settlement on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, Weymouth stretches back 350 years in history, often serving as a model or example to other townships as they sprang up across the Colony. In education too, Weymouth was the emulated pioneer. Three-hundred and fifty years have passed, during which time Weymouth has proudly and continuously built upon its educational traditions and future.

Although the first one-hundred and fifty years of Weymouth's history are extremely sketchy, it is assumed that the township complied with the vote by the Colony of Massachusetts Bay on November 11, 1647, to appoint one person within a town of fifty householders to teach all children to read and write, whose salary "shall be paid by the parents or masters or by the inhabitants in general." The first reference to Weymouth's involvement in public education appears in a town record, dated March 10, 1651, and identifies a town vote to pay 10 pounds for six months of schooling for Weymouth children. During succeeding years, references in town meeting reports trace the emergence of the educational system which has become the Weymouth Public Schools today: earliest vote to furnish a school room (1678), a house purchased for the schoolmaster's use (1680), a schoolhouse built (1681), a curriculum to teach all children and servants to read, write, and "cast" accounts (1684), five teachers hired for growing student enrollment (1700), a new schoolhouse built so that education could be conducted in each of the two town parishes (1723), two grammar and two English schools kept for 6 months of the year (1790), first permanent School Committee established (1797), school districts (8) established (1799), and the first regularly employed superintendent of schools (1862).

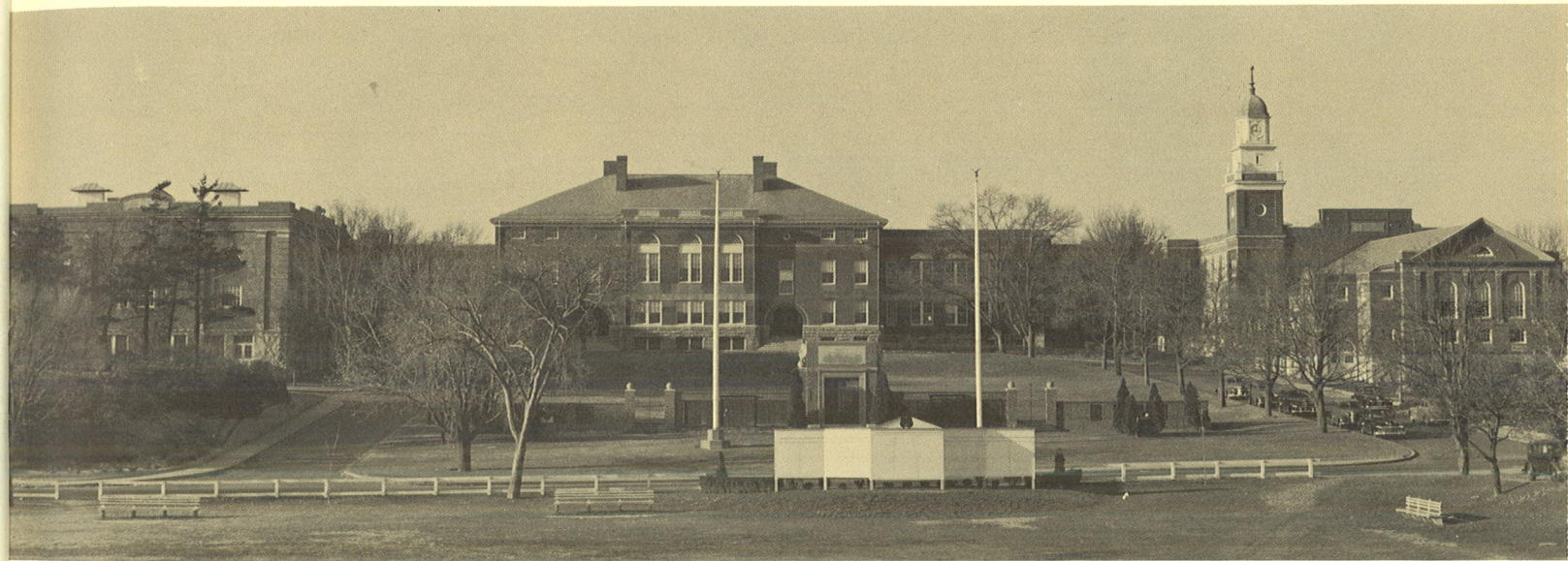
Although many things in the Weymouth educational system have changed dramatically with the times, certain similarities do exist. In the Eighteen-sixties, Weymouth maintained two high schools: North High and South High. From time to time, however, North High classes were held in Town Hall from 1856 to 1859. Enrollment increased and, rather than provide additional classroom space, many children were refused admission because of lack of space. Beginning with 1860, North High was held in a building still used for education — the John Adams Elementary School. In 1897 a new high school was built for \$50,000 to house an enrollment of 240. This building continued to play a vital role in the education of Weymouth children until September of 1971 when fire destroyed East Junior High School. At the time of Weymouth's Tri-Centennial celebration, enrollment had climbed to 560 and double sessions were in effect until a new addition to the school could be completed. The addition cost \$300,000, and a very familiar comment can be found in a 1923 history book: "A comparison between the original appropriation and the later one is inevitable; but the old days, when the dollar purchased much . . . seem to be gone forever."

The curriculum taught in Weymouth Schools is now very different from that offered to students in 1853 when high school was first established under Joseph Dow; he taught fifty-four students arithmetic, algebra, bookkeeping, anatomy, physiology, Watts on "The Mind," natural philosophy, United States and general history, French, Latin, geography, English grammar, parsing, composition, reading, spelling, public speaking, and penmanship. The 1972 high school curriculum consists of approximately 180 courses of study, not including many broad areas of vocational training. Enrollment too has changed. In this century alone, the number of children receiving public education has risen from 240 to almost 14,000. These students are housed in 28 well-equipped buildings and serviced by a staff of approximately 800 professionally trained teachers.



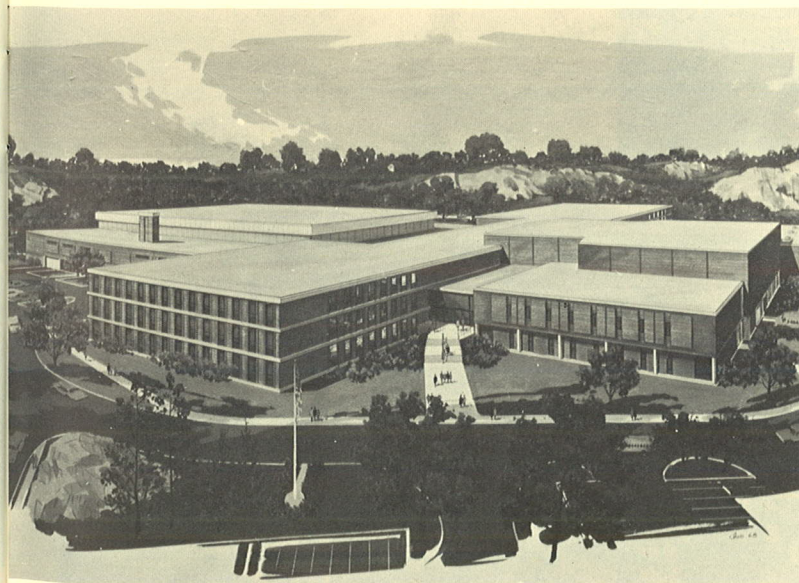
Weymouth High School

Photo Courtesy Francis E. Whipple



South High School 1970

Photo Courtesy Frank C. Bates III



North High School 1963

Photo Courtesy Francis E. Whipple

