



December 10th marks the 95th anniversary of the South Huntington Union Free School District. Back on December 10, 1924, the residents of South Huntington Common School District 12 and West Hills Common School District 13 voted to consolidate the two districts—and the South Huntington Union Free School District was established.

A question asked many times throughout the years is why a Union Free School District? The District has bargaining units representing various staff associations, and there has been confusion with the title of the District. However, one has nothing to do with the other. A union free school district is formed from one or more common school districts consolidate to operate a high school program, which common school districts cannot do. The School Law 36th Edition states: “First authorized by legislation in 1853, union free school districts are administered by a school board of between three and nine members. The number of board members of a union free school district may be increased or decreased as set forth into law (§§ 1702, 1703).”

The “History of Growth of South Huntington Schools” prepared by Mrs. Dorothea S. Hatter, a secretary of the K-6 Central Elementary School, compiled a report in 1964 that provides a wealth of information regarding the District’s humble beginnings from a “sparsely inhabited, quiet, countrified area with woods, ponds, potato farms and two ‘little schools’ to a bustling community complete with a South Huntington Library, a movie theatre, a fire house, a bowling alley, magnificent shopping centers (one with an enclosed mall). . .” that speaks to the massive growth of the District during the 1950s and 1960s.

Also provided is an update of the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's that was prepared in anticipation of the District's 75th anniversary in 1999. Both historical pieces are now posted on our website for your viewing pleasure.

At our forthcoming Board meeting on December 11, 2019, at our Maplewood Intermediate School at 7:30 p.m., the Board of Education will speak to the District's vibrant history and will commemorate the occasion with a musical presentation and a celebratory cake with an appreciation of the progress made in these 95 years. We urge our residents and staff to attend this meeting and join in the reminiscing of our South Huntington learning community.

Plans have been made to provide pictures and newspaper articles relative to the District's history on the website that will add to this historical accounting.



Below are some fun facts about our South Huntington Union Free School District:

- The first PTA established in 1925 raised money to purchase lantern slides, a motion picture projector, a mimeograph machine and athletic equipment—they also provided milk and cod-liver oil for undernourished children!
- The number of graduates in 1931 was 15! The number of graduates in 1955 was 77! The number of graduates in 1965 was 635!
- The original Central School was built in 1927 on New York Avenue (now an office building situated behind the Staples store) and cost \$325,000. It opened in 1928.
- Through the years 1927 to 1952 with the District's growth, various means were used to provide needed classroom space—the basements at Depot Road and West Hills Schools were used—space was rented in a building on Birchwood Drive, now the Apex Rehabilitation Center, as well as a room in the original Gloria Dei Church on East 18th Street. Rooms were also used in the Cold Spring Harbor School for the kindergarten students!

- In 1954, through the efforts of an outstanding campaign, a new junior/senior high school (Walt Whitman) plus three new elementary schools were approved by District voters for a total cost of \$5,637,000.
- The West Hills Elementary School closed at the conclusion of the 1974/75 school year, and two years later was converted into the District's administrative offices.
- With the 1992/93 school year, the grade configuration of K-2 primary centers, Grades 3-5 intermediate schools, and Grades 6-8 at Stimson Middle School were implemented. In the fall of 1995, the "School Use Committee" determined that due to the student growth at the middle school, the sixth-grade annex to Stimson would be placed at the Silas Wood School.
- Modular units were added to Birchwood and Maplewood in the 1998/99 school year, and similar additions to Oakwood and Countrywood in the fall of 2000.

Please take the opportunity to read about our history, and should you have questions or comments, feel free to direct them to the District Clerk, Laura McLean, at lmclean@shufsd.org or by calling, 631-812-3071.