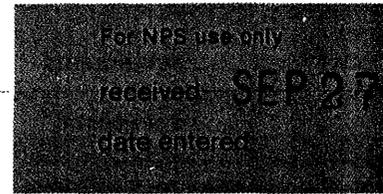


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Boise Public Schools Thematic Resource
and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number See individual inventory sheets N/A not for publication
city, town Boise N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~
state Idaho code 16 county Ada code 01

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> group		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See individual inventory sheets.
street & number N/A
city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ada County Courthouse
street & number 650 Main Street
city, town Boise state Idaho 83702

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1972 federal state county local
depository for survey records Idaho State Historical Society
city, town Boise state Idaho

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Boise Public Schools thematic group is a group of nine school sites in the Independent School District of Boise City. All of the buildings of the thematic group are part of the present Boise School District, although three were built in adjacent districts which were later annexed to the city school system. The thematic group includes all the extant school buildings not already in the National Register constructed between 1894 and 1937 which are within the current school district boundaries.

A number of architectural styles are represented in the thematic group, and several aspects of the evolution of school architecture can be traced in the buildings. The classical styles seem to have had the greatest influence upon the buildings of the thematic group, ranging in degree from the entrance details at Roosevelt School to the entirely Neo-Classical design of Boise High School. Art deco finds representation in several buildings as well, the result of Works Progress Administration projects. Modest Tudor Revival and Mission Revival elements are found on Garfield and Longfellow schools respectively. Cole School retains rounded windows and decorative stonework of modest Queen Anne origins, although similar features on Whittier School have been obliterated in favor of a relatively successful Moderne treatment.

All of the buildings of the thematic group are of brick or brick and stucco construction and are two or two and a half stories in height, with the exception of the one-story Pierce Park and Whitney schools. All of the buildings serve their original purposes except for Whittier, which is now the district Administration Building. Every building with the exception of Longfellow has accepted additions. Some of these are executed in the original style of the building and others make no effort at compatibility (particularly those additions built after World War II). In no case does the addition mask or obliterate the original building, although in a few cases the original section represents only a small portion of the present school. Alterations to facade and roofline have also been made over the years, but in general these are seen as minor and evolutionary rather than as intrusive, since they have been the results of changing curricular and instructional needs and of more stringent safety codes.

The buildings record in their changing plans, growing size, and developing functions a shift in educational philosophy and needs of the community which they serve. The growth of the city is mirrored in the size of the buildings, their locations, and their additions. Technological and design innovations are reflected in building materials, layout, and construction methods. The solid utilitarian, unadorned nature of the buildings is a direct result of community attitudes about education. The schools were built to serve a basic function in the community; they were not intended to be showplaces or reflections of the latest architectural or educational fad. As such basic structures, they are extremely successful.

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The Boise Public Schools thematic group nomination is based on a minimal-level survey of all extant school buildings within the present boundaries of the Boise School District. During that survey a preliminary determination was made of each buildings' significance. Buildings judged individually significant or considered borderline were revisited in an intensive-level survey that included investigation of the building itself, deeds, fire maps, city directories, school district records, and newspapers. Those buildings finally chosen for inclusion in the thematic group were judged on the basis of their age; their integrity of massing, fenestration, exterior materials, and architectural details; and their representation of the development of educational philosophy in the nation and the growth of neighborhoods in Boise. Buildings with alterations and additions were included in the group when those changes reflected the evolution of education; modern additions were allowed when they did not mask and were clearly distinguishable from the historical core of the building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1894-1937 **Builder/Architect** See individual inventory sheets

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Boise Public Schools thematic group is a nomination based on the historical theme of the development of education in Boise and the changes in school architecture which mirror the evolution of the role of public education in the years 1894-1940. The buildings of the thematic group also reflect the developing needs of Boise and its surrounding communities as well as the broader influences of changing architectural styles. Of the nine buildings in the nomination, all but seven were designed by the two major architectural firms in Boise during the period: Tourtellotte and Hummel and Wayland & Fennell. As such, the schools of the thematic group serve as a consistent record of advanced school construction in the southwestern part of the state.

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The period covered by the Boise Public Schools thematic group is 1894 to 1940, the years during which Boise matured from a somewhat isolated town of 2300 to a modern city of 26,000. The early struggle to replace one-room public schools with a graded system was finally rewarded in 1881 with the grant of a charter to the Independent School District of Boise City. In 1882, a graded school, Central (not extant), was built and became the source of great civic pride: it symbolized prosperity, progress, and solidity and served to establish Boise, in the minds of its citizens, as an educational and cultural center for the region.

The educational philosophy of the day centered on strict discipline; a methodology of lecture, recitation, memorization, and copy work; and a curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic. This orientation was characterized by the ideas that learning was hard work--not necessarily pleasant and rarely fun--and that the purpose of the schoolhouse was to provide utilitarian quarters for these necessary activities. An eighth-grade education was considered adequate for many, and only a small proportion of students went on to high school.

Whittier School (1894) (now the school district Administration Building) is the oldest building in the thematic group and the second school in the Boise district, built to accommodate students from the rapidly growing North End of the city. The building as first constructed represented the box-type schoolhouse common throughout the country at the time. The structure was a two-story brick building with central stairwell and corridors separating the large (39' x 26') classrooms. As was the rule in both rural and urban schools, the sole source of illumination in the classrooms was tall windows on two walls, providing harsh cross-lighting. Toilet facilities were housed in a shed behind the school and a furnace in the basement heated the rooms above through vertical flues, although woodstoves in each of the rooms may have been used at first. The basic concerns of school design were sanitation, ventilation, heating, and lighting. It was not thought necessary to make provisions for indoor plumbing, a principal's office, recitation or study rooms, library, gymnasium, auditorium, or teachers' room. Children arriving early at school were sheltered by a small one-story porch, and the playground was bare of recreational equipment.

Boise saw continued growth in the 1890s. Whittier was added to, Lincoln School (not extant) was built in 1896, and by 1900 three more schools (not extant) were built in the city and in the adjacent school districts. These structures were very similar to Whittier in design and were derived from the same educational principles, values, and functions.

After 1900 a number of influences developed which were to have a great effect on the design and function of the school buildings. The city of Boise experienced a population boom of 191% between 1900 and 1910. The teachings of John Dewey were spreading throughout the nation and had gained in popularity in Boise also. The curriculum was expanded to include music, domestic science, and manual training, and teaching methods were gradually changed to reflect the belief that children learn by doing as well as by listening and reading; physical exercise came to be

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considered an essential part of the school day. Acceptance of these new ideas resulted in immediate need for specialized classrooms, playrooms or exercise areas, facilities for music, display areas for models, and libraries. In addition, increased concern for the safety of children and teachers was reflected in a shift to the use of more fireproof materials and construction methods. The old central stairwell was discarded in favor of double stairs and exits at either end of the building.

Only two schools remain from these years of growth and change, Longfellow and Cole, although seven others were built then and additions were made to two. Chronologically, Cole School belongs with the newer grouping, but in terms of design and function it is more closely related to the four-room, box-type school of the earlier era. Only the relatively small size of the classrooms (32' x 23') ties it to the more forward-looking schools which were now becoming the accepted form.

Longfellow School is the single surviving example which really reflects the new direction taken by school architecture at this time. The large size (sixteen rooms) is an indication that the school trustees had finally abandoned the short-sighted practice of building four-room schools, which invariably needed additional classrooms within a few years, and shows that the continued growth of Boise was now accepted as fact. In addition, Longfellow was built with classrooms for manual training, reflecting the expanding curriculum, and also had a library/recitation room and indoor plumbing with drinking fountains on all floors and toilet facilities in the basement. A separate principal's office and storage room indicate the increased responsibility of the building administrator in a growing school system. Spacious halls were used as playrooms and for drill when the weather was bad, showing that the concept of physical exercise as part of the school program was recognized. New safety measures include brick construction of interior partitions, fireproof materials for stairs and exits, and stairwells placed at both ends of the building, rather than centrally, as in the older type of school. Large windows provide unilateral lighting in all rooms and wall area between the windows has been reduced, giving more light and decreasing the shadows cast into the classroom by bright sun. These measures were modern improvements, calculated to ease eyestrain and improve classroom atmosphere--a consideration relatively unimportant in the earlier schools. The smaller classroom size of 32' x 23' was well established and would prevail for the next three decades.

The advances made in the construction of Longfellow School were carried on in two schools built in 1911 and 1913, Washington and Lowell schools respectively. They are very similar in design to Longfellow and have incorporated many of its improvements; the major difference is that they are built on the unit plan, which allowed the buildings to accept additions without compromising the original structure. The earlier schools had been designed in such a way that additions could be built only at great expense, a fact which resulted in the wasteful practice of constructing separate buildings adjacent to the original ones when crowding became a problem.

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The growth of the city and expanded curriculum had an effect on the high school as well as on the grade schools. In 1901 the district undertook construction of a new high school building to replace the old Central School, which was no longer adequate for the new purposes. Unfortunately, the new Romanesque Revival structure was poorly designed, badly built, and in no way suited for its intended purposes. Within a few years of its construction plans were made to replace the new high school on a gradual basis. A Neo-Classical east wing was built in 1909, a matching west wing was added in 1912, and in 1920 the unsatisfactory central section was torn down and replaced by a new, grandly pedimented Neo-Classical unit.

The new high school, when completed, contained the specialized rooms needed for courses in drafting, office skills, manual training, and domestic science, science laboratories, library, large auditorium (also used for community functions), and areas for physical exercise. There also was a Classical style Manual Arts Building, which provided classroom space while the old central section was being torn down and rebuilt. The classrooms had electric lights, a forward-looking feature not found in the grade schools for a number of years.

During this period, two small schools were built in rural districts bordering on the Boise School District. Pierce Park School (1911) retained the old four-room concept but in other ways was advanced in design; it was built with a flat roof, a feature not found in the city schools until 1918, and the building is all on one floor, a matter still hotly debated at the time Roosevelt School was built eight years later. The original plan may have been to build a second story on the school, as was sometimes the practice, but this was never done and Pierce Park stands as the first one-story school in the present district. Collister School (1912) was also originally a four-room school, with two classrooms upstairs and two down. What distinguishes Collister in the fact that the unit plan of construction was applied to the traditional box-type schoolhouse of an earlier period.

The second decade of the twentieth century saw growth continue at a slower rate; between 1913 and 1920 only one grade school, Roosevelt, was built. During this period curriculum continued to expand and the schools were taking on an enlarged role in the community. When Roosevelt was built it contained a small gymnasium and an auditorium, innovations in the elementary schools in Boise. In addition, the issue of the one-story building was very much in the foreground at the time of Roosevelt's construction. The traditional two-story version prevailed, although the flat roof had by this time become an accepted feature. Although Roosevelt was built with electric lights in the classrooms, the large banks of windows remain, a stylistic feature which was slow to change. At this time, however, electricity was still the exception rather than the rule, and many of the older schools would not have classroom lights for another decade.

The rate of population growth in Boise had greatly decreased by the 1920s and the three schools constructed during this decade were all built to replace, wholly or

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in part, old schools of the early box type. Whitney School (1926) was the first one-story school built by the Boise District (Pierce Park was built before annexation of the rural district to the city school system), and this innovation was not repeated until nearly twenty-five years later. The large banks of windows which dominate the facade were still a feature, although electric lights were installed in the classrooms. The utilitarian nature of the design does not provide for a library, auditorium, or other amenities which had been incorporated in Roosevelt a few years before. Garfield School, however, reinstated these features when it was built in 1929 with an assembly room, teachers' room, and electric lights in the classrooms, the last allowing a slight reduction in the size of windows relative to the wall surface.

Franklin School, built as a high school, shares many of the features described in the schools built between 1919 and 1930. The plan called for classrooms, library, study hall, home economics room, and science and commercial rooms. As with most of the schools, it provided for the basic needs, according to the views of the day, without adding unnecessary frills.

The years of the Depression brought a number of WPA projects to Idaho, including dams, irrigations systems, and schools. These benefits, in which Idaho shared rather generously, are recorded in the presence of three buildings and two additions constructed during the decade before the Second World War. Boise Junior High School (now North Junior High) was the culmination of a long effort to meet the changing expectations of the community. An eighth-grade education was no longer considered adequate and a transitional curriculum was needed between grade and high school. Boise Junior High School was designed to accommodate these needs, with library, science labs, music room, band room, domestic science room, and gymnasium/auditorium.

At this time, Boise High School was also in need of a gymnasium, and the WPA provided one, as it did for Cole School. The federal program also was responsible for an addition to Whitney School which added a lunch room, playroom, and stage as well as classrooms. Cole School also gained a lunchroom and a meal program, staffed with WPA labor, reflecting the hard times and expanded social role of the schools. With these projects, the growth of the school district halted until after the war, when increases in the school-age population forced the district into a period of explosive expansion. The postwar schools are, however, of a different architectural generation, and a clear break is seen in the appearance of the buildings as well as in the function and role of the schools in the community.

As the school buildings reflect the changing socio-economic and educational environment, they also mirror the evolving architectural tastes of the times in which they were built. The earliest schools displayed the vertical massing, steeply pitched roofs, and ornamental brick-work of the nineteenth-century styles. Mansard roofs, Gothic windows, Romanesque arches, and Queen Anne ornament were present on various Boise schools, and even the most modest of the rural schools could boast curved relieving arches, ornamental cupolas, and decorative shingling

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in the gable ends. Longfellow School is the surviving example which records the gradual shift to a more horizontal massing, lower-pitch roof with hipped-roof dormers, and use of classical detail, showing a classicizing influence.

Washington, Lowell, and Longfellow schools all display the broad bracketed eaves and hipped roofs with dormers which are features often found in the box-type houses of the period. The trend away from ornamentation, detail, and visual complication is also noted in these schools, although those elements remain in muted form. By 1908, when the Neo-Classical east wing of the high school was built, the Classical styles had begun to influence the traditional styles of school architecture by introducing rectangular massing, classical detail, and a flat roofline. This tradition is continued in the west wing and central unit of the high school as well, and in somewhat standardized form in Roosevelt, Whitney, the high school Manual Arts Building, and Franklin. Garfield School also shares the general proportions of the classically influenced buildings but is dressed up with a Tudor Revival motif.

The last stage of development in the stylistic evolution in the buildings of the Thematic Group is the art deco buildings of the WPA projects. Boise Junior High School and the Boise High School Gymnasium are the outstanding examples of this form, with their decorative cement panels, stepped parapet trim, and metal-frame windows. Somewhat ironically, Whittier School, the oldest building in the thematic group, now is grouped with the moderne/art deco tradition of the 1930s because of its remodeling immediately after the war. It is included in the group not only because chronologically the structure is in the period, but also--and more importantly--because it represents the evolution of a building from the earliest box-type, vertically massed schoolhouse to the most contemporary of the styles included in the nomination. In a sense Whittier begins and ends the nomination, in terms of both style and chronology.

Another aspect of the significance of the Boise Public Schools thematic group is that of association with the two principal architectural firms of Boise during the period of significance: Wayland & Fennel (previously Campbell & Wayland) and Tourtellotte and Hummel. These architects were responsible for the design of twelve of the fifteen buildings in the nomination, as well as for all of the schools in the district built during the period of significance that are no longer extant. The evolution of their work is reflected in the school buildings and is paralleled in their other commissions for residences, hospitals, city halls, and commercial buildings around the state. Of note also is the fact that the architectural firms which have descended directly from these two original companies are still active in Boise* and have been responsible for the design of many more schools up to and including the two most recent, Amity (1978) and Liberty (construction to begin in August 1982).

The buildings of the thematic group embody the shifting needs of the city of Boise, evolving educational philosophies and practices, and changing tastes of the community. It is worth noting that school buildings have a symbolic role in the

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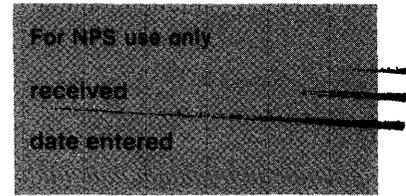
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community; they reflect the community to itself and to outsiders. In this respect, architectural style seems, in the case of the Boise schools, to have taken a secondary place to the role of representing solidity, continuity, and a practical approach to the mission of educating the children of Boise. The school buildings are utilitarian to a high degree and reflect the values of a community in which pioneer virtues of hard work, common sense, and self-sufficiency predominated. The citizens of Boise were less concerned with stylistic references and fashionable detail than in the solidity, practicality, and thrift of the design. As a result, the schools are simple, straightforward solutions to the problem of providing adequate space for the education of children and are truly a reflection of the community.

*Tourtellotte and Hummel is now Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A.; Wayland & Fennel was predecessor to Cline Smull Hamill Quintieri Associates.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Boise Public Schools Thematic Resources
State Idaho

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Garfield School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 2. | Lowell School | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 3. | Roosevelt School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 4. | Cole School and Gymnasium | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 5. | Whitney School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 6. | Pierce Park School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 7. | Collister School | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Linda McClelland 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 8. | Longfellow School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 9. | Franklin School | Entered in the
National Register | for
Keeper | <u>Deloris Byers 11/8/82</u> |
| | | | Attest | _____ |
| 10. | | | Keeper | _____ |
| | | | Attest | _____ |