

Tampa's Black Educational History Lessons

1. Oral History Interview Project

Objective: Students interview alumni, elders, or family members who attended historically Black schools.

Activity: Record audio or video, transcribe interviews, and present key takeaways.

Extension: Create a digital archive for your school or local museum.

2. Timeline of Education & Emancipation

Objective: Connect the founding of each school with broader historical events like the Emancipation Proclamation, Jim Crow laws, Brown v. Board, etc.

Activity: Collaborative timeline on paper or digital platform.

Skills: Critical thinking, chronological reasoning.

3. "If These Walls Could Talk" Creative Writing

Objective: Students write a short story or diary entry from the perspective of a student, teacher, or community member at one of the schools during a major historical moment.

Focus: Burnings, school openings, civil rights movement, desegregation.

Extension: Turn stories into a classroom book.

4. School Spotlight Poster Project

Objective: Students create posters highlighting one of the 11 historic Black schools.

Activity: Include founding year, important figures (e.g. Blanche Armwood), key events (e.g. arson of St. Peter Claver), school colors, photos, and slogans.

Format: Visual display or gallery walk.

5. School Legacy Documentary Shorts

Objective: Students create short documentaries (3–5 minutes) about one of the schools.

Includes: Interviews, photos, narration, music.

Tools: iMovie, Canva Video, or smartphone editing apps.

Hillsborough County's 11 Historically Black School

St. Peter Claver – Founded in 1894

First opened its doors on February 2, 1894, on Morgan Street within the bounds of downtown Tampa. Ten days later, on February 12, 1894, it was burned to the ground. The arsonist left a letter tacked to a tree, threatening further consequences. Two of the school's most notable students were Blanche Armwood and Butterfly McQueen.

Dunbar Elementary – Founded in 1900

Originally named West Tampa Negro School, It eventually expanded and relocated from Green St to Union St due to overcrowding. In 1932, it was renamed Paul Laurence Dunbar Negro School. It is named after a nationally known Black Poet from the 1890s

Lomax High School – Founded in 1916

Before it became Lomax it was called Gilchrist Institute and was built for white students only in 1907. However, As Black families moved into the community, the school was converted into Lomax High School in 1916. Named after Bishop T. H. Lomax one of the 7 founders of Fayetteville State University.

Booker T. Washington School – Founded in 1925

Originally opened as Blanche Street Negro School, it later became known as Booker T. Washington High School. Blanche Armwood who was the appointed Supervisor of Negro Schools and lead the charge in erecting Washington 100 years ago in 1925. One of its most notable principals was Howard W. Blake

George S. Middleton High School – Founded in 1934

Named after a local Black civic leader from the early 1900s. According to the Tampa Tribune, Middleton High School was the only complete Black senior high school in Florida at the time that it was built. The old Middleton is now the Ferrell Academy. 6 year later the Old Middleton was burned down twice—once in 1940 and again in 1968

George Washington Carver School – Founded in 1943

While Middleton was being rebuilt after the 1940 fire, some of the students were temporarily housed at MacFarlane Elementary School in West Tampa. When Middleton reopened and their students returned in 1943, it was determined that white students would not return and the school was renamed after George Washington Carver, a prominent scientist from the early 1900s.

E J Marshall High School – Founded in 1949

The school originated as Midway Academy, built in 1920 to serve grades 1–8. It later expanded into Plant City Negro Middle School and Plant City Negro High School. However, the community continued to call it “Midway,” the official name changed to Marshall High in 1949. Named after E.J. Marshall, the first Black trustee in Plant City.

John W. Lockhart Elementary – Founded in 1952

Originally named College Hill Negro Elementary. It opened to serve the Black community after the closure of Robles Pond Negro School. It was a 24 room school building that was built to help solve double sessions for black students in the neighborhood. In 1974, it was renamed John W. Lockhart in honor of its first principal.

Howard W. Blake High School – Founded in 1956

Originally located within the Stewart Middle School building. Opened in 1956 for Black students, offering both a general education program and vocational training. This was the request of the community after the closing of the Don Thompson Vocational School.

Marcellus D. Potter Elementary – Founded in 1960

Potter Elementary opened in 1960 and was named after Marcellus D. Potter who started The Tampa Bulletin in 1914. In 1959 C. Blythe Andrews bought the Tampa Bulletin and merged it with Florida Sentinel renaming his paper The Florida Sentinel Bulletin. And it is still in circulation to this day.

Nathan B. Young Middle School – Founded in 1964

Nathan B. Young was opened as a Junior High School holding 7th-9th grade students. It was and still sits next to Lockhart Elementary formally College Hill Elementary. When it was created it drew students from Dillard, Jennings, Phillip Shore and Booker T Washington. Named after Nathan B Young, a former Florida A&M University President. His daughter was also a teacher at Booker T Washington.