

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Banneker School  
Other names/site number Banneker District Headquarters; 2840 Lucas Avenue  
Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number <u>2840 Samuel Shepard Drive</u>	n/a	not for publication
City or town <u>St. Louis</u>	n/a	vicinity
State <u>Missouri</u> Code <u>MO</u> County <u>St. Louis (Independent City)</u> Code <u>510</u> Zip code <u>63103</u>		

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Toni M. Prawl AUG 21 2017  
Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Banneker School  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/ School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

VACANT/ Not in Use  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/ Modernistic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation: Concrete  
walls: Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: Not visible  
other: Wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

Banneker School  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: St. Louis Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1957-1970

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Shepard, Samuel T. (Jr.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Sanger, George W. / Architect

Banneker School  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri  
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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreeage of Property** 1.0

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.636760° -90.218790°      3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude:                      Longitude:                      Latitude:                      Longitude:

2 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude:                      Longitude:                      Latitude:                      Longitude:

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927    or    \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone      Easting                      Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone      Easting                      Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone      Easting                      Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone      Easting                      Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Andrea Herries and Debbie Sheals

organization Historic Preservation Consulting                      date June 21, 2017

street & number 29 South Ninth St. #210                      telephone 573-874-3779

city or town Columbia                      state MO                      zip code 65201

e-mail debsheals@gmail.com

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Banneker School

Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log:

Name of Property: Banneker School

City or Vicinity: St. Louis

County: St. Louis (independent city) State: Missouri

Photographer: Andrea Herries

Date

Photographed: Jan 2015 (1), May 2017 (2-23)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

### Room designation in the photo log matches those from the most recent available floor plans.

- 1 of 29. Façade. Camera facing southeast. Photo dates to January 2015, full view of façade. There have been no changes of note since this photo was taken. The older view is used here because there are no leaves on the trees to block the view.
- 2 of 29. Center facade, north wall. Camera facing south.
- 3 of 29. West play yard. Camera facing southwest.
- 4 of 29. Northwest corner and west yard. Camera facing southeast.
- 5 of 29. West wall. Camera facing east.
- 6 of 29. Back wall, south. Camera facing north.
- 7 of 29. East wall, east yard, north yard. Camera facing southwest.
- 8 of 29. East yard. Camera facing southeast.
- 9 of 29. Library entrance, east. Camera facing southwest.
- 10 of 29. Detail, facade. Camera southeast.
- 11 of 29. Detail, lower facade. Camera facing south.
- 12 of 29. Assembly room entrance. Camera facing south.
- 13 of 29. Detail, upper center facade. Camera facing south.
- 14 of 29. Main entrance, lower center facade. Camera facing south.
- 15 of 29. Entrance vestibule. Camera facing east.
- 16 of 29. First floor hallway and north stairs. Camera facing northeast.
- 17 of 29. First floor hallway. Camera facing east
- 18 of 29. First floor hallway with "Reading Center" sign and east mezzanine stairs. Camera facing southwest.
- 19 of 29. North mezzanine. Camera facing northwest.
- 20 of 29. Gymnasium. Camera facing east.
- 21 of 29. Assembly room. Camera facing south.
- 22 of 29. Assembly room. Camera facing north.
- 23 of 29. Principal's and reception offices, second floor. Camera facing north. See note in photo title, page 58.
- 24 of 29. Painted wall signs for "Offices, Doctor, Principal", second floor. Camera facing north.
- 25 of 29. Second floor classroom. Camera facing southwest.
- 26 of 29. Third floor hallway. Camera facing west.
- 27 of 29. Third floor classroom. Camera facing southeast.
- 28 of 29. Fourth floor classroom. Camera facing northwest.
- 29 of 29. Back staircase, west, fourth floor. Camera facing south.

Banneker School

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St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

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## Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

1. **Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Coordinates.** Accessed May 2017.
2. **Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth.** Accessed April 2017.
3. **Federal Works Agency/ Public Works Administration Plaque in first floor lobby.**
4. **First Floor Plan.** Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)
5. **Second Floor Plan.** Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)
6. **Historic Room Uses 1957 to 1970, second floor.** Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)
7. **Third Floor Plan.** Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)
8. **Fourth Floor Plan.** Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)
9. **1909 and 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Maps, with the former Stoddard School Buildings.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, St. Louis City Maps, 1909, 1932, 1951. Mid-Continent Public Library. Accessed April 28, 2017.  
<http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/image/view?state=mo&reelid=reel20&lcid=4858&imagename=00213&mapname=SaintLouis+1903-Dec.1951vol.2%2C1932-Nov.1950%2C+Sheet+31>
10. **Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map of Banneker School building, 1951.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, St. Louis City Maps, 1909, 1932, 1951. Mid-Continent Public Library. Accessed April 28, 2017.  
<http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/image/view?state=mo&reelid=reel20&lcid=4858&imagename=00213&mapname=SaintLouis+1903-Dec.1951vol.2%2C1932-Nov.1950%2C+Sheet+31>
11. **Locations for Banneker District Schools, St. Louis, MO.** Locations for Banneker District Schools, St. Louis, MO. Map by Andrea Herries. Base map source: "City of St. Louis Neighborhoods." Accessed Feb. 20 2015.  
<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/public-safety/neighborhood-stabilization-office/neighborhoods/neighborhood-maps.cfm>.
12. **Clippings from a 1961 St. Louis Newspaper article about the Banneker District.** "Emphasis on Schooling Pays Off in Slum Area." Available at St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch, Banneker School Vertical File.
13. **Letter from Samuel Shepard, Assistant Superintendent of Banneker District, to Banneker parents.** Shepard, Samuel, Jr. and C. W. Hunnicutt. "Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report." *Proceedings of the National Seminar Urban Elementary School Desegregation*. New York: Syracuse University and St. Louis: St. Louis Public Schools. July 1965 – May 1966.
14. **Photo Key. Exterior and First Floor.**
15. **Photo Key. Second, Third and Fourth Floors.**

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Banneker School
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Summary:** The Banneker School, at 2840 Samuel Shepard Drive, in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, is a four-story red brick building with a flat roof and a concrete foundation. It was built in 1940 to serve as a school and it continued in that use until 2005; it has been vacant since then. The building is located in a residential neighborhood northwest of downtown St. Louis. It occupies a level lot which is paved and fenced. The lot, which served as a playground when the school was in operation, is a contributing structure; the school building is a contributing building. They are the only resources on the property. The wide building has a symmetrical five-bay facade which faces generally north to Samuel Shepard Drive. It has a rectangular plan, with an emphasized central front entrance bay and simple Modernistic detailing. The entrance bay projects out from the front wall and is slightly taller than the main block of the building. The first floor of the entrance bay contains two sets of early double doors that are topped with a sign which reads BANNEKER SCHOOL. There are two additional front entrances, one on each end of the façade. The east entrance is topped with a sign that reads LIBRARY, and the west doorway is labeled ASSEMBLY. The front and back walls of the building are filled with wide window openings that are filled with groupings of double-hung wood windows. The short side walls have smaller window openings, with one or two sets of sashes each. The east side wall contains an original entranceway, which is centered in the first floor. The interior of the building utilizes a hierarchical layout of space, with the most public rooms located on the lower floors and classrooms on the upper floors. There is a large central hallway on each floor, and two interior staircases along the back wall that link all levels of the building. Ground floor gathering spaces include the original library and assembly room, each of which is served by one of the formal front entrances. The central front doors open to a formal stair hall that has a large staircase which leads to the second floor only. Administrative offices are located on the second floor, west of that staircase. The second floor also contains some classrooms, and the third and fourth floors are filled with classrooms. The building is highly intact. It has seen no additions or other changes of note to the original footprint or interior floor plan, and retains almost all original exterior doors and windows, as well as many early interior finishes.

**Elaboration:**

Setting

The Banneker School occupies an open level lot, in a residential section of the Midtown neighborhood of St. Louis. The school property covers almost half of a city block. It faces north to Samuel Shepard Drive, which was originally Lucas Avenue. The property is bordered by a small alley to the south, a private parking lot to the east, and T. F. Huntley Avenue to the west. (Figure 1.) It is edged with a modern black chain link fence; an older iron fence borders the front lawn. Mature trees, shrubbery and a small lawn are at the façade (north wall) of the building. (Photo 1.) The majority of the lot is paved, and there are no other resources on the property. The paved areas served as playground space when the school was in operation. No playground equipment is present, and only a few benches line the perimeter of the playground. (Photos 3 and 4, west side; Photo 8, east side.) Surrounding properties include a large number

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Banneker School
Name of Property St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

of newer two- and three-story apartment buildings and row houses to the north and west, and a modest commercial corridor a half block to the south, along Washington Avenue. Many of the lots to the east are vacant. (Figure 2.)

Exterior

Banneker School is a relatively simple building with few architectural embellishments. It has a symmetrical façade that is five bays wide, with red brick walls that are accented with cast stone detailing. (Photo 1.) The lower front and side walls feature rusticated brick work with six horizontal bands each, and there is a wide band of stone molding at the first floor line. Each corner of the building has a flat brick pier that is topped with stone caps, and the roofline is accented with matching stone coping. (Photo 4, 10.) There is a small datestone set into the foundation just west of the front door; it reads "ERECTED; A.D. 1939; GEO. W. SANGER ARCHITECT."

Numbering the bays of the façade from east to west, the first bay has a formal entranceway on the first floor, and wide banks of windows on the upper floors. A stone stoop with short stone side walls leads to the entranceway which has a single wood and glass door, with sidelights and a transom that are currently covered with painted security grating. The doorway is topped by a wood sign with lettering that matches the one over the front door. It reads LIBRARY (Photo 9). Each of the upper floors has a grouping of five double-hung windows. Those windows, and all or most other windows in the building, are early or original. The window sashes and frames throughout are intact, albeit in just fair to poor condition. All of the window lights are wider than they are tall, and each sash has ogee lugs.

The second front bay has three separate window openings on the first floor, all of which are covered with security grating. The center window in that group has three, 2/3 sashes, and the outside ones each have one, 2/3 sash. The upper floors of that bay are identical to those of the upper first bay.

The projecting center (third) bay of the façade is the most elaborately detailed part of the building. (Photo 1.) It features simple Modernistic detailing, and is faced with smooth stone panels from the first floor to the fourth. (Photo 2.) There is a wide recessed entranceway at the first floor that has two sets of double doors that are topped by tall six-light transoms. The transom bar above those doors has a flat, white-painted wood band which has the words BANNEKER SCHOOL spelled out in black raised wood letters. (Photo 14.) The second and third floors of the central bay each have a grouping of three, 4/6 double-hung windows. (Photo 13.) The fourth floor of that section has a trio of windows that are the same width as those below, but taller. Those windows have 4/4 sashes, and they are topped with four-light transoms. (Photo 13.) The windows of the upper floors are slightly recessed, and flanked by curved fluted stone trim. (Photo 2, 13.) A simple band of beveled stone blocks forms a stylized cornice above

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Banneker School
Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the front doorway, and there is a similar band of ornament above the fourth floor windows of the entrance bay. (Photos 13, 14.)

The fenestration patterns on the west side of the façade are very similar to those of the east. The fourth bay has three window openings on the first floor, and wide banks on the floors above. The windows on the first floor are the same size as those in the second bay, but they each have two sets of sashes that are separated by frame spandrels. (Photo 11.) That pattern is due to the presence of a small mezzanine space inside the building at that location. (See Figure 4, First Floor plan.) The fifth bay, at the west end of the building, is nearly identical to the first bay on the east end. It too has a prominent entranceway that is surrounded by glazing. The sign above that door reads ASSEMBLY. (Photo 12.) The upper floors are identical to those on the fourth bay.

Each of the short side walls has two flat brick piers, and rustication that matches that of the façade. The west side wall has three bays. (Photo 4, 5.) The lower two floors of that wall have two sets of 2/3 windows with ogee lugs, most of which are covered with security grating. On floors three and four of that wall, only the center bay has windows; they are comparable to those on the lower part of the wall.

The east side wall has a wide doorway centered on the first floor. The masonry opening is early or original, and the infill is newer. The double doors are surrounded by a transom and sidelights. (Photo 7.) The sidelights have five small vertical lights each, and there are two rows of larger lights above the doorway. There is one set of paired hung sashes centered at each of the upper floors of the east wall. Those on the second floor are 2/3s and floors three and four have 2/2 sashes. Each of the side walls also has a newer opening in the upper part of the wall that is filled with dark painted louvers, presumably to serve an HVAC system.

The back wall of the building has six bays. A large square chimney is centered on the back wall. (Photo 6.) Numbering the bays from west to east, or left to right, bays two and five consist of flat stair towers which project several inches from the plane of the wall. They also extend slightly above the main roofline. Each has an original single doorway with a newer flat panel door at the first floor shaded by flat concrete awnings. (Photos 6.) Vertical columns of windows above the doors are edged with flat stone trim. Those window openings are filled with glass block that is early or original. Brick and stone panels between those windows also appear to be original. The other bays on the back wall all have wide masonry openings that are filled with groupings of five windows on each of the upper floors that have 2/3 sashes, and most have smaller single windows on the first floor. All of those openings contain double-hung windows that are early or original.

Interior

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Banneker School
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The interior of the building has seen few changes to plan or finishes. Each floor is similarly arranged, with a wide central corridor that is flanked by rooms. The rooms are arranged so that gathering spaces and rooms likely to be used by the public and all of the grades are on lower floors, while grade specific classrooms and student-centered spaces are located on the upper floors.

The central front doors open to a small formal vestibule which has polished stone walls and a pair of bronze plaques that provide information about the building's construction. (Photo 15.) The plaques are both located just inside the front doors, on the west wall of the vestibule. One reads "FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY; PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION; JOHN M. CARMODY; FEDERAL WORKS ADMINISTRATOR; FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT; PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; BANNEKER SCHOOL 1940." (See Figure 3.) The other, which is mounted directly below the first one, names the members of the St. Louis Board of Education and includes the words "GEO. W. SANGER Architect; Commissioner of School Buildings; Contracts--1939."

That front vestibule leads to a larger stair hall with an open stair to the second floor. That stair, which links only the first and second floors, is one of three main staircases in the building. (See Figures 4, 5 and photo 16.) The other two, which connect all four floors, are located along the back wall. (Photos 6 and 29.) All three of those stairways have original structural glazed tile (SGT) walls, terrazzo treads and risers, and painted metal balustrades with wood handrails. Frame and stucco walls have been added to each floor between the back stairs and the hallways in modern times, presumably to meet fire codes. (The new walls are visible in photos 17, 18 and 26, and Figures 4 and 5.)

There are also three small enclosed single-run staircases; one leads to the basement and two that lead to small mezzanine rooms that are located above the large first floor restrooms. The basement contains a boiler room and other service areas. The mezzanines, which each consist of a single open room, have most recently housed special education programs. (Figure 4, and Photo 19. Recent room uses are based upon plans supplied by the school district.) A painted wall sign near the stairs to the east mezzanine indicates that it has also been used as a Reading Center; that sign appears to date to the period of significance. (Photo 18.) The mezzanine rooms have tile floors, walls of glazed tile and plaster that include chalkboards, and newer suspended ceiling systems.

The first floor has a wide east-west corridor, which accesses the front stair hall, plus a gymnasium, library and assembly room. (Photo 17.) The gymnasium is centered on the back wall, and the library occupies the northeast corner of that floor. (See Figure 4 and Photo 20.) The assembly room, which recently doubled as a cafeteria, occupies the west end of the building. There is a small stage at the south end of the assembly room that is early but may not be original, and a doorway to a small kitchen in the northeast corner of the room. (Figure 4 and

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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Photos 21, 22.) The assembly room and library have SGT and painted brick walls, and the library has plaster and gypboard wall finishes. All rooms have original dark varnished millwork.

The second floor has a mix of offices and classrooms. There are four early or original offices located west of the front staircase from the first floor. (Photo 23.) A suite of offices centered in the front of the building have most recently been used for the principal and secretary. A second suite of offices west of those rooms includes a "book room", a small restroom, and two offices that recently housed the school nurse and other staff. (Recent uses are based upon existing signage in the building and room labels on school district plans; see Figure 5.)

An older sign painted on the wall above the door to the second suite of offices reads OFFICES DOCTOR PRINCIPAL. (Figure 5 and Photo 24.) That wall sign appears to date to the time period when the school building served as the headquarters of the Banneker District, 1957-1970. The center suite of offices was most likely used by district supervisor Samuel T. Shepard, Jr. and his staff. (Figure 6.)

There are also two large rooms at the west end of the main hall that have most recently been used for Art and Science classes. Those two rooms are linked by an interior doorway, and there is an additional small restroom nearby; inviting speculation that they served as office and administrative support space in years past, possibly when the building served as district headquarters. The remainder of the second floor has four large classrooms, plus two smaller rooms that were created by dividing an original classroom in half a few decades ago. Three of those classrooms were recently used for kindergarten and one was the music room. (Figure 5.)

The plans of the third and fourth floors are nearly identical, with central corridors flanked by large classrooms, plus one multi-stall restroom on each floor. (Most recently for girls on the third and boys on the fourth.) (Photo 26.) There is an early or original faculty lounge on the third floor (Figure 7), in the front center section, and each floor also has a newer small office that was formed by walling off the west end of each hallway. (Figures 7 and 8.) One former classroom on the third floor was divided into two rooms with a frame center wall in the past few decades. All other rooms on the upper floors are original classrooms. The classrooms have plaster walls, and early doors and chalkboards. (Photos 25, 27, 28.) Most rooms have tile flooring, some of which may be original. Several classrooms have newer suspended ceiling systems, but they are close to the original ceiling heights and have had a minimal visual impact on the large rooms.

Integrity

The building has seen notably few changes over the years, inside or out. The only apparent exterior alteration that has taken place is the replacement of the exterior doors on the side and rear walls. There have been no additions or other alterations to the overall form or patterns of fenestration, and the building occupies its original large open lot. All original exterior masonry and architectural detailing is intact, and all or most windows and front entry doors date to the

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period of significance.

Interior alterations have also been minimal. Almost all original finishes and major plan elements are in place. All major circulation spaces are intact, including the formal front stair hall on the first floor, wide hallways on all floors, and all original staircases. The two largest staircases, located on the back wall, have been partially enclosed in modern times, but that has had an arguably minor impact. Only two of the twenty-four original classrooms have been subdivided, one on the second floor and one on the third. The classrooms retain early chalkboards and other finishes, and although many have newer suspended ceiling systems, the ceilings are still relatively high, and the volume of the rooms has not been noticeably diminished.

All three of the large ground floor gathering spaces are also intact, including the original exterior doorways in the assembly room and the library. The original office suites on the second are also in place. The room layouts of the offices are unaltered, and those rooms have seen only minor changes to finishes.

The Banneker School has never been used for anything except its intended purpose, and it clearly reflects its long years of service to the St. Louis Public School System.



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**Summary:**

The Banneker School, located at 2840 Samuel T. Shepard Drive, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, is locally significant under Criteria A and B, in the areas of Education, Social History, and Ethnic Heritage: Black. It is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: Black as the namesake and administrative headquarters of the Banneker District of the St. Louis Public School system, which served a predominately African American population. The Banneker District was the site of an innovative educational program that brought St. Louis Public Schools national acclaim in the 1950s and 60s. The building is significant under Criterion B, in the areas of Education and Social History, for its association with the distinguished professional career of Dr. Samuel T. Shepard, Jr., who headed the Banneker District from 1957-1970. Shepard established what came to be known as the Banneker Project when he became the district superintendent, and he soon rose to national fame for his work in the St. Louis Public School system. Described in one history of urban schools in America as "one of the most innovative and creative projects for urban poor students in the nation," the Banneker Project incorporated what was at the time a new emphasis on the role of social factors in the education of disadvantaged students.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-1960s Shepard and the Banneker Project were so well-respected that Shepard testified before Congress to assist legislators with the creation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Dr. Shepard was also honored with local and national awards throughout his career.<sup>2</sup> The awards focused on his unwavering and enthusiastic efforts to advance the educational welfare of all children, especially African American children. In 1970, the Banneker District was eliminated during a major reorganization of the St. Louis Public School System, and Shepard resigned his post. The period of significance for the property corresponds to Shepard's tenure as director of the district: 1957-1970. The Banneker School was one of twenty-two schools in the Banneker District, and it also housed the offices of Dr. Shepard and his staff throughout the period of significance. The Banneker School Building served as his primary place of conducting business between 1957 and 1970, and no other properties better represent his significant activities. It continued to serve African American elementary students into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The building has seen remarkably few changes over the years, and it looks today very much as it did when Dr. Shepard and his staff directed a nationally prominent educational program for disadvantaged students.

**Elaboration:**

The Banneker Elementary School is located in the northern part of the Midtown Neighborhood of St. Louis, Missouri. The Midtown neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city; initial development began ca. 1848 and by the early 1900s the area was known for its commercial businesses, medical facilities and lavish entertainment theatres.<sup>3</sup> Historically,

<sup>1</sup> Ray C. Rist, *The Urban School: A Factory for Failure*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> "Dr. Shepard Hailed as Educational Leader," *Park Forest South Star* 30 Nov. 1978, S32.

<sup>3</sup> Norbury L. Wayman, *History of St Louis Neighborhoods*, accessed Nov. 15, 2014, <https://stlouis-mo.gov/archive/neighborhood-histories-norbury-wayman/midtown/text18.htm>; Robert E. Hannon, ed., *St.*

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Midtown was bordered by Park and Chouteau Avenue on the south, Vandeventer to the west, 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the east and Delmar to the north. (Delmar runs two blocks north of the school. See Figure 1.) The original geographical area of Midtown was expanded in 1851 with the Stoddard Addition, which was annexed into the city by 1855. The nominated building occupies a lot which was originally the home of the Stoddard School, constructed in 1867, one of the first public schools in the Midtown neighborhood. The three-story brick Stoddard School was built to accommodate up to 700 white students. Enrollment grew as the neighborhood developed and in 1878, the school's capacity was doubled with the construction of a second building on the property, the Stoddard Annex.<sup>4</sup>

The old Stoddard School complex changed with the neighborhood, and by 1930 it had been converted to an African American school and renamed Banneker School. (Figure 9.) This was the second St. Louis school building to bear the name of Banneker Elementary School. The original Banneker Elementary School was located at Montgomery Street and Leffingwell Avenue in the 1890s; that school had originally been named "Colored School Number 5."<sup>5</sup> (That school building no longer exists.) The name Banneker honors Benjamin Banneker (1731-1804), an African American astronomer, mathematician, architect and writer. Benjamin Banneker is also known for his work with Pierre L'Enfant in developing the layout of Washington D.C., which included drawings that helped to complete the plan after L'Enfant had abandoned the project.<sup>6</sup>

### Construction of Banneker School

In the late 1930s the St. Louis Public School Board began plans to demolish the former Stoddard School buildings, which by then served some 1477 students.<sup>7</sup> A newspaper article about the decision to erect a new building noted that the school district had decided to partially fund the new school with a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant.<sup>8</sup>

The new building was constructed at a cost of approximately \$300,000.00. A St. Louis Post Dispatch article reported that plans for the new school were to be submitted by George Sanger, the St. Louis Public Schools Building Commissioner in 1939. The Banneker school would be four stories with twenty classrooms, a kindergarten, two playrooms, auditorium, and a library.

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*Louis: Its Neighborhoods and Neighbors, Landmarks and Milestones* (St. Louis: Buxton/ Skinner Printing 1987), 38-61.

<sup>4</sup> Wayman.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Wright, *Discovering African American St. Louis: A Guide to Historic Sites*, (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Press, 2002), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, 35; African American Heritage of St. Louis: A Guide, "St. Louis Public Schools Named for African Americans," Banneker School, accessed July 2014, <http://law.wustl.edu/staff/taylor/slpl/staa0056.htm#banneker>.

<sup>7</sup> "Stoddard School Being Torn Down," *St. Louis Globe Democrat* 28 Mar. 1939: n.p. Available at St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch, Banneker School vertical file.

<sup>8</sup> "New \$300,000 Negro School is Ordered," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* 21 May 1938: n.p.

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The school had an intended capacity of 1100.<sup>9</sup> (The new building is seen on the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Figure 10.)

Construction was partly funded by the PWA grant, with the remainder coming from a 1934 bond fund.<sup>10</sup> The PWA was one of the programs established as part of the New Deal under President Franklin D. Roosevelt to stimulate the economy and provide employment during the Great Depression.<sup>11</sup> A large number of the New Deal projects in Missouri benefitted public schools. According to a 1939 report by the Missouri State Superintendent of Schools, 285 schools were built or greatly enlarged with PWA funding, and another 156 were given assistance through the Works Projects Administration (WPA) between 1933 and 1939.<sup>12</sup> Those programs were ended shortly after that report was issued, as part of a major reorganization of the Federal government, known as the Reorganization Act of 1939. That legislation eliminated some New Deal programs altogether and combined others into the Federal Works Agency (FWA), a new agency which administered a number of comparable public works programs throughout the 1940s.<sup>13</sup> Although the present Banneker School building was initially funded with a PWA grant, by the time it was completed, the PWA had become part of the Federal Works Agency (FWA) which is why the bronze plaque in the lobby reads FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY. (Figure 3.)

### Desegregation of St. Louis Schools and Structuring of Banneker District

Although many New Deal projects resulted in greatly improved educational facilities for African American students, they were still separate schools and, as declared by the Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education Topeka* on May 17, 1954, separate was not equal.<sup>14</sup> In St. Louis, a plan for desegregation of the city public schools was devised by Phillip J. Hickey, superintendent of St. Louis City Public Schools.<sup>15</sup> Desegregation began at the college level and concluded with the district's 123 elementary schools.<sup>16</sup> The black students of Stowe Teachers College and white students of Harris Teachers and Junior College, both located in St. Louis City, were consolidated into the Harris-Stowe State College in September of 1954.<sup>17</sup> Special

<sup>9</sup> "New \$300,000 Negro School is Ordered"; *Eighty-sixth Annual Report, Board of Education of City of St. Louis, Missouri*, 78.

<sup>10</sup> "New \$300,000 Negro School is Ordered," *Eighty-sixth Annual Report, Board of Education*.

<sup>11</sup> Harold L. Ickes, "Public Works in the New Deal," *Architectural Forum* September 1933: 151-153.

<sup>12</sup> State of Missouri, *Ninetieth Report for the Public Schools of the State of Missouri. Jefferson City, MO, School Year Ending June 30, 1939*: 11.

<sup>13</sup> "Federal Works Agency," accessed 23 July 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal\\_Works\\_Agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Works_Agency).

<sup>14</sup> Jeffery E. Smith, "Preservation Plan for St. Louis," September 1995, Janus Applied History Group, St. Louis, MO, accessed August 2014, <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/preservation-plan/Part-I-Education.cfm>: 4/4-4/5.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel L. Schlafly, *28 Years on the St. Louis School Board 1953-1981*, (St. Louis, MO: Daniel L. Schlafly, 1995), 24-25.

<sup>16</sup> "Desegregation of the St. Louis Public Schools," (St. Louis Public Schools Instruction Department, September 1956, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO), 40, 42.

<sup>17</sup> Schlafly, 25.

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needs and technical schools also desegregated that fall, with the high schools following in February of 1955.<sup>18</sup>

Beginning in the fall of 1955, forty elementary schools for black students and eighty-three schools for white students were integrated. Most of those schools, including Banneker, were integrated in name only, as location was still the primary determinant for school assignment of the elementary grades.<sup>19</sup> Students attended schools closest to their homes and since city neighborhoods were racially divided, there were few changes in enrollment. Additionally, there is little evidence of bussing for any schools in the Banneker District during the period of significance.<sup>20</sup> As noted in the *St. Louis City Preservation Plan Context 6--Education*, the lack of integration resulted in "de facto segregation brought on by housing patterns. When housing is segregated, so too are the schools."<sup>21</sup>

Rules that weakened the economic stability of the city and helped to keep St. Louis racially divided were all set in place before the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision. Such issues included the 1876 Home Rule Charter, a population shift of whites from St. Louis City to St. Louis County which began around 1940, an influx of blacks from rural and southern regions, and a statewide school redistricting.<sup>22</sup>

The predominantly white population shift occurring between St. Louis City and St. Louis County was documented in a variety of publications. Daniel Schlafly reprinted numbers from the Bureau of the Census showing a population decrease of 404,000 in the city and an increase of 568,000 in the county between 1950 and 1980.<sup>23</sup> Ray Rist stated that between 1950 and 1970 the white population in the city dropped almost in half, to 376,000 while the African American population increased over 130,000, from around 160,000 to 291,000.<sup>24</sup> This population shift also affected school enrollment. A 1956 report issued by the St. Louis Public Schools Instruction Department reported that enrollment of African American elementary level and kindergarten students increased over two and half times between 1930 and 1955, and continued to grow.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Schlafly, 25.

<sup>19</sup> "Desegregation of the St. Louis Public Schools," 40-43; Smith, 4, 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools in the North and West 1962* (United States Commission on the Civil Rights 1962), Appendix C, "St. Louis General Elementary Schools" includes a map showing bussing routes for district schools, along with percentages of African American and White attendance at each school. That maps shows no bussing into or out of the Banneker District, and no additional evidence was found to indicate Banneker students were ever bussed during the period of significance.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffery Smith, 4.

<sup>22</sup> The 1876 Home Rule Charter locked in the city boundary that still exists today and significantly impacted tax base loss, Smith 2.

<sup>23</sup> Schlafly, 62.

<sup>24</sup> Rist, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Reported statistics from 1930 list 9,525 African American students enrolled in the elementary grades and 1,288 in kindergarten. In 1955, African American enrollment in the elementary was reported at an increase to 23,975 and kindergarten at 3,946, see "Desegregation of the St. Louis Public Schools," 43.

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Many of the original upper and middle class white families moved away from the Stoddard Addition, to be replaced with lower and middle class black families. A 1962 publication on civil rights in the United States contributes the racial population shift in St. Louis City to the razing and rebuilding of slums and low income housing projects "combined with a burgeoning Negro population and emigration of largely "middle-class" whites to shape startling growth of low income Negro ghettoization."<sup>26</sup> The Banneker District sat at one of the areas of this emerging population and was routinely referred to as serving what one newspaper article termed "students of low social and economic status."<sup>27</sup> The district was described in 1964 as "the real inner city, the core of the city, the slum area. For example, of the seven low-cost, high-rise projects in our city, five of them are located with the boundaries of the Banneker District."<sup>28</sup> (See Figure 11 for a map of St. Louis neighborhoods and the location of the schools in the Banneker District.)

St. Louis was not alone in experiencing a population change. The entire state was experiencing a shift which, in part, prompted the 64<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to pass the Missouri District Reorganization Law on July 17, 1948.<sup>29</sup> An initial study, following the enactment of the law, evaluated issues such as population count, school occupancy numbers, staff qualifications, facility age and condition, and segregation. Outcomes of the study caused a sixty-seven percent decrease in St. Louis districts, from 87 to 29, which resulted in six semi-independent, elementary sub-districts by ca. 1950, each of which had its own administrative staff.<sup>30</sup> Banneker School became the namesake and headquarters for one of the six new elementary districts, and also continued to serve as an elementary school for kindergarten through eighth grade students following the reorganization.<sup>31</sup>

Banneker School is located in the Midtown neighborhood, but the district extended to nine other current neighborhoods. The Banneker District encompassed twenty-two elementary and one

<sup>26</sup> *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools in the North and West 1962*, (United States Commission on the Civil Rights, 1962), 261-263. Massive immigration of African Americans from the South to the North and West along with an increase African American birth also contributed to the increasing population number.

<sup>27</sup> Hannon 38, 61; "Dr. Shepard Gets Guild Page One Award," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 5 Nov. 1960.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr., et. al., "How Should We Educate the Deprived Child: Occasional Paper Number Seven," Washington, D. C.: Council for Basic Education, 1965, accessed July 17, 2014, [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED022794.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED022794.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> State of Missouri, Section of Reorganization of School Districts, Missouri State Department of Education, comp. *Summary of School District Reorganization under Senate Bill No. 307 as of January 1, 1950*, (Jefferson City, MO: Missouri State Archives).

<sup>30</sup> State of Missouri, State Board of Education, comp. *Ten Years of School District Reorganization, 1958*, (Jefferson City, MO: Missouri State Archives), 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Printed Record of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis*, vol LXVII, (July 1960 to June 1961), 1960. A school enrollment and building survey completed in 1968 recorded student population by grade in the Banneker school, along with room count and identification of the Banneker building as District Office, see Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri School District Reorganization Files (Spainhower Study), 1968: 21B/6/2 Box 10.

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high school, with nearly 15,000 students.<sup>32</sup> As seen in Figure 11, Banneker School is somewhat central to all the district schools. The farthest western school was Marquette, at 4015 McPherson Avenue; Attucks, at 2135 Chouteau, sat at the southern boundary in the Downtown West neighborhood; Dessalines in Old North and Henry in Columbus Square were east, near Interstate 70 and the Mississippi River. The majority of the Banneker District schools were situated in the Carr Square and Jeff Vanderlou neighborhoods, which are adjacent to Midtown. (See Appendix A for Banneker District Schools listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) Fourteen of the twenty-two schools included in the district were in those two neighborhoods, as were multiple major public housing complexes, including Pruitt-Igoe.<sup>33</sup> The complexes, constructed by the St. Louis Housing Authority, reached their highest population density in the 1950s and are identified as another “decision reinforcing the racial segregation of the city.”<sup>34</sup>

The Banneker School building was well-suited to serve as the headquarters for the district. It was centrally located, and contained sufficient space to house the necessary additional staff. During the first years of district reorganization of the St. Louis Public Schools, enrollment was reduced at Banneker to provide more room for district administrative facilities. In 1950, the number of students attending Banneker school was reduced from 991 to 942, by reassigning almost 50 students to the newly opened Divoll Branch School at 2918 Dayton Street. Banneker principal, C.T. Hunter, reported that this move allowed enough room for the district “transition unit” to be housed in the Banneker building.<sup>35</sup> (That transition unit was most likely the new district administrators.) More room for staff may have also been needed in the 1960s, when the student population at Banneker School was around 800, a number substantially less than the 1100 students the building was originally designed to hold.<sup>36</sup>

The building was equipped with second-floor office suites that were close to the front staircase. (Figures 5, 6 and Photos 23, 24.) The office space was requisite; designation as district

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Shepard, Jr. et. al. "How Should We Educate the Deprived Child: Occasional Paper Number Seven." Washington, D. C.: Council for Basic Education, 1965, July 2014 <[files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED022794.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED022794.pdf)>.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Allen, “Before and After Pruitt Igoe, accessed May 28, 2015, <http://www.pruittigoenow.org/before-and-after>.

<sup>34</sup> Allen; “Preservation Plan for St. Louis Part1: Historic Contexts 8 –The African American Experience,” accessed 22 Jan. 2015, <http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/preservation-plan/Part-I-African-American-Experiences.cfm>.

<sup>35</sup> “Opening of Rooms,” dated August 23, 1950, Correspondence from C.T. Hunter, Principal of Banneker School to Fred Mees, Assistant Director of Education, St. Louis Board of Education, 911 Locust Street, St. Louis, MO, available at Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO in Spainhower Study files.

<sup>36</sup> *Printed Record of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis*, vol LXVII, (July 1960 to June 1961), 1960. A school enrollment and building survey completed in 1968 recorded 802 students in the Banneker school, along with room count and identification of the Banneker building as District Office, see Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri School District Reorganization Files (Spainhower Study), 1968: 21B/6/2 Box 10.

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headquarters meant that the elementary school staff would be sharing facilities with a number of district staffers. Historic records show that by the 1960s, the Banneker District had a director and three other staff members, and there were also four people in charge of Reading Clinics at the school.<sup>37</sup> It is likely that the original principal's office centered at the front of the second floor became the district office, while the school principal, school secretary and nurse used one or more of the offices in the adjacent suite. (See Figure 6, Photo 24.) Office assignment is surmised from older painted signs located on the tile and plaster walls in the Banneker building. The district may also have pressed early classrooms into service at times. Two large rooms at the west end of the second floor share a doorway in the dividing wall, which allows access to both rooms, and there is a single restroom nearby, which suggests that those rooms could have served as additional office space at some point. (They are labeled as "Possible Extra District Offices" in Figure 6.) Those rooms and all of the original office areas are intact. They retain early or original room size, some early wall finishes and chalk boards, as well as early trim and cabinetry.

### Samuel T. Shepard, Jr. PhD

In 1957, administration of the Banneker District was assigned to Samuel T. Shepard, Jr. PhD, a long-time St. Louis School District instructor and administrator. Shepard was an African American who graduated in 1924 from Lincoln High School, located at Tracy and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets, in Kansas City, Missouri and earned his teaching certificate from the University of Michigan in 1928.<sup>38</sup> He began his teaching career in Kansas City as an athletic coach and then moved to the St. Louis Public Schools in 1931 as an assistant supervisor of physical education.<sup>39</sup> Shepard was a longtime resident of St. Louis, and he lived with his wife, Lois, and two children at 4633 Maffitt Avenue in St. Louis during his time as superintendent of the Banneker District. That house is intact and remains in a residential neighborhood north of Banneker School.

While teaching he also returned to the University of Michigan for his Master in Education, which he completed in 1940. A 1970 *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* article about Shepard's history with the St. Louis Public School District noted that he served as the principal of a number of local schools, including Dumas, Penrose, Curtis, Carr and Jefferson, and in 1952 he became the Director of Elementary Education for St. Louis Public Schools. During this time he continued his

<sup>37</sup> 1968-1969 Application for Classification to the State Board of Education, February 1969, corrected copy (St. Louis Public Schools) Banneker Dist. Office, available at Missouri State Archives.

<sup>38</sup> Lincoln High School attended by Shepard was located at Tracy and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets in Kansas City, Missouri prior to demolition, see David J. Crockett, "Class of 1924 Meets Again at Lincoln High," *Kansas City Times* 29 Jun. 1974, 3.; University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library, accessed 15 Jan. 2015, <http://bentley.umich.edu/research/alumni>.

<sup>39</sup> "Biographical Sketches of St. Louisans," *St. Louis African-American Resources Book*, St. Louis, MO :116 ; Move to St. Louis in 1930 listed, see Robert Suits, "School Overhaul Prompted Banneker Head to Resign Post," *St. Louis Globe Democrat* 22 July, 1970.

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education, and received a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education in 1954.<sup>40</sup> All of his prior experience and education led to an assignment as Superintendent of the Banneker District, where he embarked on the most important period of his professional career.

The assignment gave Shepard an opportunity to help African American students as they joined an integrated school system. He worked to instill within the Banneker District students a positive attitude toward the value of education, strongly believing that education would help African American children earn a better life than what they currently endured, and help them adequately compete with more fortunate students. He discussed his views with a *Saturday Evening Post* Reporter a few years after he took over leadership of the Banneker District. According to that article, Shepard noted that "Negroes were behind for various reasons, when the U. S. Supreme Court ordered public schools desegregated in 1954. They must continue to demonstrate that their presence in a school, along with more fortunate children, will not lower academic standards."<sup>41</sup>

Shepard was well aware of the challenges faced by the approximately 15,000 students of the Banneker District schools.<sup>42</sup> He knew that many were living in overcrowded houses and apartments, often without working plumbing, hot water and heat, but firmly believed that such conditions should not limit their educational opportunities. As noted by the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1962, "Shepard's theme is that education provides the way out of poverty."<sup>43</sup> Shepard urged his principals and teachers to raise their expectations and to believe that the students in the Banneker District schools were capable of learning and performing at higher academic levels than in the years prior to Shepard's administration. He trained the teachers to execute programs geared to the development of a positive attitude about academic achievement.<sup>44</sup>

In 1957, Shepard originated a program titled "Operation Motivation", which came to be known as the Banneker Project.<sup>45</sup> As he told the group of fellow educators during an October 23, 1964 presentation to the Council for Basic Education in Washington D.C: "The heart and soul of our approach is hard work by all those in what I would call the Teaching-learning situation, meaning the principal, the teacher, the pupil and the parent, and secondly, an abiding faith that our pupils have the potential to learn."<sup>46</sup> In order to create an affirmative attitude in all staff and parents towards the learning and work capabilities of the children in the district, Shepard worked to

<sup>40</sup> Suits; University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library, accessed 15 Jan. 2015, <http://bentley.umich.edu/research/alumni> 15, Jan 2015.

<sup>41</sup> William K. Wyant Jr., "Reading: A Way Upward." Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post* of 14 April 1962, 305.

<sup>42</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate" 18.

<sup>43</sup> Wyant, 307.

<sup>44</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate" 19.

<sup>45</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate" 19; Theresa M. Rao, "Elementary Curriculum for the Disadvantaged Child in Selected Schools in Des Moines and St. Louis' Banneker District," (Masters of Science in Education diss., Drake University, 1970), 64.

<sup>46</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 18.



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change the attitudes of the principals and teachers. In the 1964 presentation in Washington D.C, Shepard stated that the administrators and principals of the district schools met every Thursday morning to develop understanding, empathy and sympathy for the situation of the students they were guiding. Teacher meetings were held each semester, at noon in the Banneker School building according to Shepard, to help the faculty implement the Banneker Project.<sup>47</sup>

For the students, the Banneker Project came with a motto, "Success in school is my most important business." For parents, the motto was "Success in school is my child's most important business."<sup>48</sup> The motto was written for parents also because they were considered a vital component in the successes of the children. His plan was to involve the parents of the children on a level that had not been achieved before. He took his message outside of the school by asking his teachers to conduct home visits. Here they would ask all parents to sign a "Parent's Pledge of Cooperation" which had the motto written at the top.<sup>49</sup> Twelve points were listed in the pledge committing parents to actions such as providing adequate study space at home, joining the PTA, and insisting that studying be conducted at home and not just at school.<sup>50</sup>

He had notable success involving parents, drawing crowds of several hundred at a time. He noted that "they come out in surprising numbers--300, 400, 500 people come out just to hear us talk about education and what it means to them and to their boys and girls. And we don't have any children on the program to draw the parents."<sup>51</sup> During those meetings, Shepard liked to use charts to show parents the academic levels that the children had been performing at in the past and to help track progress. He also spent a good deal of time with faculty of the schools within the district, again using charts to track progress and illustrate his points. (Figure 12.)

In the 1950s the St. Louis Public School District was placing its high school students in a three track system. In 1957-58 Shepard showed parents that the majority of the Banneker District students were equally divided into the lowest track and the middle track, and that only seven percent were placed in the top track.<sup>52</sup> The goal was to move the majority of the Banneker District students out of the lowest track and to help parents understand that efforts toward this goal needed to begin in the early years of elementary school. In order to get the help of the parents, he needed them to change their attitudes towards the schools and get them to realize the importance of education in the lives of their children.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate" 21-22.

<sup>48</sup> Wyant, 306.

<sup>49</sup> Wyant, 306.

<sup>50</sup> Eighty Ninth Congress, United States. "Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Education..." First Session, S. 370 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1965), 88.

<sup>51</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 18.

<sup>52</sup> "These Kids are Not Stupid," *Des Moines Register* 23 Nov. 1965: 4.

<sup>53</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 19.

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From these first initiatives additional programs were instituted, including Parents of Enrichment Pupils (PEP), "evening programs featuring successful Negroes known nationally and locally."<sup>54</sup> Additionally, support was received through measures such as a grant given by the St. Louis Board of Education, amounting to \$13,304, to a parent group from Banneker to "encourage a greater voice by parents in school affairs"<sup>55</sup>

Dr. Shepard stated in his 1964 address to the Council for Basic Education in Washington that "we have come up with perhaps twenty-five or fifty different approaches to help them [students of the Banneker District] overcome handicaps which they bring to school."<sup>56</sup> Success of the Banneker District came from the motivational programs instituted by Shepard and his staff. The "different approaches" Shepard referred to encompassed a wide variety of ideas, plans and resources. A school radio program titled "Mr. Achiever" gave daily incentives to students in many areas through positive slogans, contests, information about African American history, leadership incentives, manners, and themed projects such as a special booklet handed out by "Mr. Achiever" which focused on talking, listening, writing and reading.<sup>57</sup>

Field trips were also arranged to introduce the students to the world outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Students from the upper grades visited African Americans who were working in desirable professions.<sup>58</sup> Community sponsors were recruited to finance the seventh grade "Dine Out" program, which gave students the opportunity to learn and practice professional etiquette.<sup>59</sup> Family Outings Week helped the children discover important sites in St. Louis, and then write reports about them.<sup>60</sup>

The Banneker District schools used the curriculum taught in other St. Louis Public School districts, and they participated in programs created by the larger St. Louis Public School District, such as a program called Room of Twenty, and Reading Clinics. The Room of Twenty program emphasized curriculum in basic skills "for underachievers who get a second (or third) chance to work with a responsive teacher."<sup>61</sup> Reading Clinics, which were staffed by teachers who had exclusive assignments to the clinics, offered additional support outside of the regular classroom

<sup>54</sup> Mortimer Smith, ed., "Bulletin" *Washington DC: Council for Basic Education*, 12.10 (June 1958): 14-15.

<sup>55</sup> "Banneker Parent Unit Gets First School Board Grant," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 5 Sept. 1969. Available at St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch, Banneker School vertical file.

<sup>56</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 22.

<sup>57</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 22-23; Mortimer Smith, 14; Samuel Shepard Jr. and C. W. Hunnicutt, "Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report," *Proceedings of the National Seminar Urban Elementary School Desegregation*, New York: Syracuse University and St. Louis: St. Louis Public Schools, July 1965 – May 1966.

<sup>58</sup> Friggens, 83-84.

<sup>59</sup> Shepard, el. al. "How Should We Educate," 26.

<sup>60</sup> Mortimer Smith, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Mortimer Smith, 15.

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for reading skills during and after school.<sup>62</sup> Although most schools had just one Reading Clinic room, there were two at Banneker School; one was located in the library and the second was in the east mezzanine. The library at Banneker School was a branch of the St. Louis Public Library system, which may explain the extra clinic location.<sup>63</sup> That second clinic may have been located in the library for access to the program during and after school hours. Both of the Reading Clinic Rooms in the school are intact, and an early or original sign for the clinic in the east mezzanine is still in place on the wall of the first floor hallway.<sup>64</sup> (Figure 5, 6 and Photo 18.)

Additional programs created by Shepard and his staff include "Study-in" month, and a program for gifted children in nine of the Banneker District schools.<sup>65</sup> Study-in month focused on larger amounts of time given to studies and reading, ceremonies centered on renewal of annual library cards for each student, and special project such as Research Week, where children were encouraged to interview their parents about their level of education and its effectiveness in their adult lives.<sup>66</sup> He also worked to give families access to education materials and supplemental programs whenever possible. In 1960, for example, he learned that the school system planned to discard 6,000 used dictionaries that were being replaced with newer editions, and convinced the administration instead to sell them to low income families in his district for 25 cents each.<sup>67</sup> All of the programs were designed to give children access to information that would help them advance, seek challenges, understand that education offered hope and they had opportunities available to them if they worked hard.

### Banneker District Administration

Samuel T. Shepard Jr. oversaw the implementation of the Banneker Project from the offices in the Banneker School. He frequently visited all of the schools in the district, engaging staff and students alike, but the programs described above were created and executed by him and the administrative district staff who occupied the Banneker building on a daily basis. A listing of district staff members that was included in a late 1960s Board of Education document shows that Shepard had four staff members at that time: Irene Sanders, Katherine Saunders, and Caroline Stubblefield, who were all listed as supervisors, and Ernest Jones, listed as a director.<sup>68</sup> Jones enjoyed a long career with the St. Louis school district, he served as principal of several Banneker District Schools, was involved with the Room of Twenty program, and in

<sup>62</sup> "Desegregation of the St. Louis Public Schools." St. Louis Public Schools Instruction Department, September 1956. Available at Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO.

<sup>63</sup> St. Louis City Directory, 1958, 227. Although many public schools contained branch libraries, Banneker School was one of only two within the Banneker District.

<sup>64</sup> *Southwestern Bell Directory for Greater St. Louis*, 1959.

<sup>65</sup> Mortimer Smith, 14.

<sup>66</sup> Mortimer Smith, 15.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Friggens, "Is the Negro Equal in Intelligence and Ability?" *Readers Digest* March 1964: 83-84.

<sup>68</sup> *1968-1969 Application for Classification to the State Board of Education*, February 1969;

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1975 he became the first African American to head the entire school system in the City of St. Louis as the interim superintendent of schools.<sup>69</sup>

A review of St. Louis City directories of the 1950s and 60s show that all of those staff members had been promoted from within the district. All had served as classroom teachers and principals in various Banneker District schools before moving to the district office. Those directories also show that by 1965, the Banneker Project had become so well-known that it merited its own listing in the directory, in addition to listings for the principal, superintendent and reading clinics.<sup>70</sup>

Routine administrative activities in the district headquarters included staff meetings, planning, and oversight of the Banneker Project for all of the district schools. Shepard stated in his 1964 speech to the Council for Basic Education in Washington that the teachers and principals were regularly called to meetings at the Banneker school.<sup>71</sup> These meetings may have been held in the assembly room, which is located on the west side of the first floor. Documentation of the Project includes letters issued to parents which encouraged involvement from home; those letters were written by Shepard and printed on letterhead that included the address of the school, at 2840 Lucas Avenue. (Figure 13) When describing some of the many “different approaches” that he and the district administrators implemented throughout the district, Shepard said: “We work up these programs and take them into the 23 schools.”<sup>72</sup> The Banneker School building was the hub of the Banneker Project and the birthplace of many of Shepard’s most notable programs.

### National Trends in Education

Samuel T. Shepard’s work on the Banneker Project was based upon a developing national trend to recognize the effect of social conditions upon the learning ability of disadvantaged children of all races.<sup>73</sup> Research in understanding the process of development as related to the wider environment began in the 1930s, but really began to develop after World War II and continued to grow significantly in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>74</sup> Shepard had completed his doctoral work at the University of Michigan in 1954, and was likely well-versed in the studies and developing research examining these factors.

<sup>69</sup> “Jones, Ernest,” St. Louis City Directories, 1958, 1966, 1969; Samuel Shepard Jr., and C. W. Hunnicutt, “Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report” correspondence from Jones’ visit to Akron, Ohio; Wright, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Listing and phone number for “Banneker Community Project,” St. Louis White Pages, 38.

<sup>71</sup> Shepard, et. al. “How Should We Educate,” 22

<sup>72</sup> Shepard, et. al. “How Should We Educate,” 24.

<sup>73</sup> Harold Silver and Pamela Silver, *An Educational War on Poverty: American and British Policy Making 1960-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 30-31.

<sup>74</sup> Silver & Silver, 32-33.

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His philosophies and work in St. Louis reflected nationally prominent educational theories. As one study of the period noted, there was a theoretical shift in the 1950s and 1960s concerning education and poverty: "The discovery of poverty was being accompanied by a movement in the behavioral and social sciences to confront questions of the relationship between disadvantage and education, and their complex connections with the process of change taking place in the United States."<sup>75</sup>

Shepard and others also believed that "teaching to IQ," with low performance expectations for students with lower IQ scores, caused damaging results for African Americans and other minority groups.<sup>76</sup> Within the Banneker Project, Shepard trained his principals and teachers to "Quit teaching by IQ and the neighborhood where the child lives. Teach the child all you can teach him."<sup>77</sup> IQs in the 1950s and 1960s were often heavily relied upon as indicators of a person's aptitude for academic achievement. The 1968 publication of the "Council for Basic Education" reported that Shepard's Operation Motivation (also referred to as the Banneker Project) was based on two assumptions, the first being that IQ scores, as they were being used at that time, were not "truly indicative of either the capacity for or the likelihood of academic achievement of pupils."<sup>78</sup> Banneker did not want his district teachers to expect lower levels of academic, or behavioral, performance from students with lower IQs. That idea was in line with writings of the time from other scholars. For example, William Fowler wrote a paper in 1964 titled "*Educating the Culturally Disadvantaged: A Maturing Approach*" which discussed the arguments about the role IQ played in a child's ability to learn versus influences from the social environment. Fowler found Shepard's work with the Banneker Project important enough and applicable to his theories to examine and compare work from social scientists such as D.O. Hebb and Susan Grey, who began work in the 1940s and 1950s, to Shepard's program as it was operating in the 1960s.<sup>79</sup>

As head of the Banneker Project, Shepard gained national recognition for implementing a program that successfully addressed the issues raised by many of the nation's leading social scientists. Throughout the 1960s, the Banneker Project was listed in scholarly texts such as "Education the Culturally Disadvantaged: A Maturing Approach," by William A Fowler, and *An Educational War on Poverty: American and British Policy Making 1960-1980*, by Harold and Pamela Silver, as a program that applied the social theories centered on cultural deprivation to real life situations faced by children living the experiences. Silver and Silver's study recognized the Banneker Project as one three early national programs that were "experiments of various

<sup>75</sup> Silver & Silver, 39.

<sup>76</sup> William Fowler, "Educating the Culturally Disadvantaged: A Maturing Approach." U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare Office of Education, ca. 1964, 1-2, accessed July 2014, [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED020255.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED020255.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> Wyant, 307.

<sup>78</sup> Mortimer Smith, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Fowler, 3-4, 7.

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kinds on the ground."<sup>80</sup> His program was cited and reviewed by theorists and policy makers precisely because he wasn't just aware of the existing problems, but was an educational administrator who devised a plan to help alter the course of the children who suffered from those situations.

### Results

Locally, the Banneker Project met with success. Student attendance and test scores increased, and by 1962 Banneker's eighth grader were testing over a year higher in reading, nine months higher in math, and seventeen months higher in language. They met or surpassed national levels in reading and language.<sup>81</sup> By 1964 the percentage of Banneker district students in the top track had tripled, to twenty-two percent; sixty-seven percent were in the middle track and only eleven percent were in the third or lowest track.<sup>82</sup>

As word of his early success grew, Shepard began to draw the attention of more than educational professionals and theorists. In 1960, the *St. Louis Newspaper Guild* honored him with the "Page One Civic Award". This was an annual award bestowed upon a civic leader who had provided extraordinary community service in St. Louis, but whom had not been sufficiently recognized for their work.<sup>83</sup> He was the first African American to be so honored. National media coverage of Shepard and the Banneker District began in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These features appeared in everything from educational journals to *Time Magazine* and *Readers Digest*. In May of 1965, the University of Michigan bestowed him an honorary law degree and in 1966 the University of Missouri presented to him the "Citation for Distinguished Service to Education."<sup>84</sup>

A 1964 *Reader's Digest* article, which was condensed from a piece in *PTA News* of Chicago, included a description of the Banneker School building and a note about Shepard's belief in the power of education:

One morning I drove out to Dr. Shepard's office at Banneker Elementary School. At the bell, clean bright-looking youngsters marched down corridors whose walls were lined with colorful posters: 'READING IS THE KEY THAT OPENS ALL LOCKS' and 'THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU IN THE COMMUNITY--IF YOU'RE PREPARED....' We keep driving that home, Shepard said...I tell them that it's a new day; with education and preparation, Negroes can take their places with whites.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Silver & Silver 35. The other two programs were Demonstration Guidance Project in New York in 1956 and the Institute for Development in New York in 1958, see Silver & Silver 35, 37.

<sup>81</sup> Wyant, 305.

<sup>82</sup> "These Kids are Not Stupid."

<sup>83</sup> "Dr. Shepard Gets Guild Page One Award," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* 5 Nov. 1960: 3.

<sup>84</sup> University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library, "Proceedings of the Board of Regents 1965," 809 Accessed Feb. 5, 2015. <http://quod.libumich.edu/u/umregproc>; "Dr. Shepard Will Speak to Principals," *Terre Haute Tribune* [Terre Haute, IN] 29 Mar. 1969: 69.

<sup>85</sup> Friggens, 84.

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Shepard published a number of articles about the work of the Banneker District and began traveling to communities outside of St. Louis to speak about the Banneker Project. Shepard's Project was well respected and promoted in academic works with claims of its success. Silver and Silver stated that "The impact of single projects could be far-reaching, and none more so than that in the Banneker district of St. Louis, Missouri."<sup>86</sup> Other communities and school districts wanted to know why his project was successful.

In 1965 he helped plan and conduct a three-week summer institute for educators in conjunction with Syracuse University. A full week of the program, which was titled "Urban Elementary School Desegregation," was dedicated to the Banneker Project. A long summary report that was prepared following the conclusion of the institute includes a good deal of information about the Banneker Project. The report includes curriculum, information about the Mr. Achiever radio program, strategies on how to get parents involved, how to teach shy children, Shepard's ideology behind the program, and even instructions for the housekeeping of a classroom.<sup>87</sup>

The summer institute in New York was attended by representatives of 20 districts in 11 states.<sup>88</sup> A four day supplementary institute which took place in St. Louis during the 1965-66 school year was conducted through the Banneker District.<sup>89</sup> Banneker school served as the headquarters for that event. Thirty nine participants attended and spent time visiting classrooms of different Banneker District schools, visiting Reading Clinics, and taking part in afterschool workshops. They also heard a variety of lectures, and went sight-seeing around the neighborhoods of St. Louis.<sup>90</sup> Survey comments from the institute showed that the program was a success and offered praise for the Banneker Project and Dr. Shepard.<sup>91</sup> Statistics recorded in the summary report showed that well over 90 percent of the participants would attend the St. Louis institute again and felt the program should be offered to others.<sup>92</sup> The following related comments for the St. Louis session were printed in the summary report: "The institute is of great value in stressing the intangibles (attitude, motivation, leadership, backgrounds in deprivation)," and "I agree with the philosophy of the administrators of the Banneker School district in regard to education. Everywhere I visited I saw evidence of success, satisfaction, enthusiasm, and cooperation."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Silver & Silver, 63.

<sup>87</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr., and C. W. Hunnicutt, "Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report." New York: Syracuse University, July 1965 – May 1966.

<sup>88</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr. and Hunnicutt, 7.

<sup>89</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr. and Hunnicutt, 7.

<sup>90</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr. and Hunnicutt, 12.

<sup>91</sup> For information gathered from survey results listing seminars and programs conducted during the St. Louis seminar see Samuel Shepard Jr.et.al. Appendix N, 60-66.

<sup>92</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr. and Hunnicutt, 61.

<sup>93</sup> Samuel Shepard Jr. and Hunnicutt, 63.

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The Banneker Project was also promoted to other school districts by Earnest Jones, who worked with Shepard in the Banneker district offices.<sup>94</sup> Letters, itineraries and newspaper clippings included in the "Urban Elementary School Desegregation" summary report describe Jones' involvement and trips to both Syracuse and the public school district in Akron, Ohio in 1966. Akron had sent representatives to the workshops in Syracuse and St. Louis in 1965. Jones visited Akron to share information about the Banneker Project, and observe techniques in team teaching and counseling that Akron was using with elementary students from its predominately African American inner-city schools.<sup>95</sup>

National attention for Shepard and the Banneker Plan continued to grow through the 1960s as more and more districts asked him to speak and conduct workshops in hopes that his ideas would work to resolve their similar issues of educational achievement and desegregation. In 1965 he visited Des Moines, Iowa, 1965 Kansas City, Missouri, 1966 San Mateo, California Missouri, 1969 Terre Haute, Indiana, 1970, Jefferson City Missouri.<sup>96</sup>

Shepard's work also caught the eye of high-level elected officials. In 1965 the Banneker Project was one of ten national school programs presented to the Subcommittee on Education, during hearings for the development of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The Banneker Project was the only program from Missouri in that group. In his testimony, Shepard described the philosophy and results of the Banneker program, and closed by saying: "Best of all, the entire community is now interested in its children."<sup>97</sup> The bill was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society movement of the 1960s. Johnson's Great Society movement was part of the War on Poverty, which called for changes, in part, within the American government to reduce poverty and expand educational opportunities.

Several of the speeches Johnson gave during this period echo Shepard's message about the importance of education; for example: "The Great Society...rests on abundance and liberty for all....But that is just the beginning. The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents..." and "We are going to *learn* our way

<sup>94</sup> 1968-1969 Application for Classification to the State Board of Education, Banneker District office.

<sup>95</sup> "Schools Giving Deprived Area Pupil Better Chance," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 23, Mar. 1966: 70, available in Samuel Shepard Jr., and C. W. Hunnicutt, "Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report." New York: Syracuse University, July 1965 – May 1966.

<sup>96</sup> "These Kids are Not Stupid.," "E.P.A. School Workshop Scheduled" *Times* (San Mateo, CA), 21 Sept. 1966: 44, accessed 7 Feb. 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/52540309>; "Dr. Shepard Will Speak to Principals," *Terre Haute Tribune* (Terre Haute, IN), 29 Mar. 1969: 69; "Final LU Workshop Set," *Jefferson City Post-Tribune* (Jefferson City, MO), 9 July 1970: 3, accessed 7 Feb. 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/52540309>.

<sup>97</sup> Eighty Ninth Congress, United States, "Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Education..." First Session, S. 370. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1965.



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out of poverty."<sup>98</sup> It is likely that the two men met while Shepard was in Washington; Shepard's obituary noted that he was invited to the White House by President Johnson.<sup>99</sup>

Congress, school districts, administrators and teachers from around the country invited Shepard to speak about the Banneker Project because they felt he could teach them how to resolve issues they all faced – helping the culturally disadvantaged child. To this end, in May of 1965 the University of Michigan awarded Shepard an honorary Doctor of Law. The Regents Proceedings included a brief and powerful statement concerning his mission:

Samuel Shepard, Jr., Bachelor of Science in Education, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy, all at the University of Michigan; humanitarian educator in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. We warmly admire those civil rights leaders who have quickened the public conscience and are even now bringing about further advances in our national laws and mores. We esteem as highly those other leaders who labor to prepare persons not yet ready for the opportunities being opened up thereby. As teacher, coach, principal, and now school administrator, in a district serving chiefly a deprived Negro community, Dr. Shepard has lifted almost beyond belief the level of accomplishment among students under his charge, and has correspondingly enhanced their morale and spirit. This University...is honored to confer on him now the degree of Doctor of Laws.<sup>100</sup>

### End of the Banneker District

A few years after Shepard's testimony for the Education Act, an article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* noted that the Banneker district had been studied by educators throughout the nation, but said that the U. S. Civil Right Commission had found that test scores were slipping, in the Banneker district as well as other black school districts with comparable programs.<sup>101</sup> The Commission did not fault the programs, but blamed the lower scores at least in part upon the lack of access to integrated schools. The Banneker district had clearly seen little integration or economic improvement over the years--it was described in a 1970 article as having a "ghetto population that is 99.3% Negro."<sup>102</sup> Shepard was quoted in the article as well, saying that he agreed with those findings and that he had no doubt that black students would be better off in integrated schools. Although he saw purpose in integrating the district, Dr. Shepard sighted success of the program as it had operated under his direction in the 1950s and 1960s. He had

<sup>98</sup> Silver & Silver, 70-73, excerpts reprinted from *The New Republic* (1964) *America Tomorrow: Creating the Great Society*, (New York, Signet).

<sup>99</sup> Lori Lessner, "Noted Educator Samuel Shepard Jr., 88," *Chicago Tribune* 30 May 1996, accessed 30 Oct. 2014, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-05-30/news/9605300289\\_1\\_mr-shepard-elementary-schools-black-school-educators](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-05-30/news/9605300289_1_mr-shepard-elementary-schools-black-school-educators).

<sup>100</sup> "Proceedings of the Board of Regents 1965," accessed 5 Feb. 2015, <http://quod.libumich.edu/u/umregproc/809>.

<sup>101</sup> Jacob Wolf, "Academic Gains Not Sustained in Banneker Project, U. S. Says." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 26 Feb. 1967.

<sup>102</sup> "Former Banneker District Head Takes East Chicago Heights Post."

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always promoted the program as a motivational tool and reported that “the children have been more interested in school, have been better behaved, and have had better attendance, that teachers have been working harder, and there has been excellent cooperation from parents.”<sup>103</sup>

Shepard served as the head of the Banneker District until 1970, when the St. Louis Public School general administration announced a redistricting plan which called for the addition of 6000 new students, another high school and ten new elementary schools to the Banneker District.<sup>104</sup> Shepard resigned before the redistricting took effect, saying that that the addition of so many more students would be counterproductive to the work of the Banneker Project and what had been built over the past 13 years. He felt that it would be impossible for him to maintain personal contact with students in such a large district.<sup>105</sup> He took a job soon after as the Superintendent of Schools in East Chicago Illinois, where he spent the rest of his career, retiring in 1979.<sup>106</sup>

Dr. Shepard continued his work with public policy, and he continued to receive honors as an educational leader. In December of 1970 he served as a chair for “The Right to Read” panel at the White House Conference on Children.<sup>107</sup> He was also honored in 1978 by the National Alliance of Black School Educators as a leader in American education. Around 1984, Shepard's commitment to the children of the Banneker district was honored by the city of St. Louis, when the name of the street in front of the Banneker Elementary School was changed from Lucas Avenue to Samuel T. Shepard Drive.

The Banneker School building remained in use as a neighborhood school after redistricting until 2005, when it joined the ranks of St. Louis public schools that were being decommissioned. News of the closing was met with dismay by many neighborhood residents. A newspaper article about the closing of the school included an interview with former Banneker student Gary Hester, who lived two blocks away, in the house he grew up in:

His daughter Marcia, 10, just completed fourth grade there. ‘I loved to brag on the family tradition,’ Hester said, ‘I was hoping she could finish there just like I did. I’ll feel a terrible sense of loss for us, and the neighborhood, if they close Banneker. That school has one of the richest traditions in the whole system.’<sup>108</sup>

Integration eluded the school to its final days; when it closed in 2005, a full fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, 100% of the students there were African American.

<sup>103</sup> Rao, 65.

<sup>104</sup> "Former Banneker District Head Takes East Chicago Heights Post."

<sup>105</sup> Suits, 22.

<sup>106</sup> Lessner, n.p.

<sup>107</sup> "Panel Chairman Named," *Pittsburgh Courier* 19 Sept. 1970: 11. 9 Feb. 2015  
[www.newspapers.com/image/39194020](http://www.newspapers.com/image/39194020).

<sup>108</sup> "Plan to Close Banneker Elementary Saddens Its Neighbors," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 27 June 2004: C12.

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Significance**

Samuel T. Shepard Jr. PhD rose to national prominence for his educational leadership during his tenure as Superintendent of the Banneker District between 1957 and 1970, in St. Louis (Independent City) Missouri. During these years, Shepard developed the Banneker Project, a motivational and educational program implemented within twenty-two district schools. The project strove to help children under his direction, most of whom were African Americans living in poverty, understand that education could provide hope for a better future.

The Banneker School served as headquarters for the Banneker District and the center of planning for Shepard's Banneker Project throughout the period of significance; 1957 to 1970. The Banneker building was his primary place of conducting business and it is the strongest link to his significant activities. The only other building he was associated with during this period was his house, at 4633 Maffitt Avenue in St. Louis. The house is still standing, but does not have the strong connections to his professional career exhibited by the Banneker School building.

Centrally located in the district, the Banneker School building provided area families with a community anchor. It was also the location from which Shepard achieved national renown in the field of education. During that time, reporters toured the school with him and he planned and arranged numerous programs such as the Urban Elementary School Desegregation Seminar in 1965-66; a yearlong program conducted in partnership with the Syracuse Institute which hosted educators at both Syracuse and Banneker School. Through such initiatives, Shepard's influence and ideas stretched beyond St. Louis. He was invited to multiple school districts around the country and selected to speak before Congress in 1965 about the Banneker Project.

That work allowed him to impact the social history of the children of Banneker District and the nation. National Register Bulletin 16A states that social history involves "the history of efforts to promote the welfare of society; the history of society and the lifeways of its social groups."<sup>109</sup> The Banneker Plan and the tireless efforts Shepard put forth to help children, parents, educators and policy makers be aware of the limiting conditions of education of the African American child deeply engaged him in the lifeways of this group and displayed his efforts to promote their welfare.

Dr. Shepard served as a dedicated and engaging example of a high achieving African American professional for the children of his schools. He also gained the respect and honor of families, educators and policy makers around the country, as seen through his many speaking engagements, awards and newspaper articles written about his work. This building remained in service even after Shepard's departure; neighborhood children attended classes there for 65

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (National Park Service), 41.

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years. The Banneker School building looks today very much as it did when the PTA Magazine reporter made note of the "bright-looking youngsters" who filled the halls in 1964.

Appendix A

## Banneker District Schools Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Carr School, 1419 Carr Street. Listed December 13, 2000.

Franklin School, 814 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street. Listed March 4, 2005.

Pruitt School, 1212 N. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. National Register Nomination submitted to Missouri State Historic Preservation Office in June of 2017.

An architectural and Historic Inventory Survey was conducted for the St. Louis Public schools in 1988 by the Landmarks Association of St. Louis. Information about multiple Banneker District Schools is available in this survey report.

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Banneker School
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Banneker School
Name of Property
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Banneker School
Name of Property
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Banneker School
Name of Property
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**Verbal Boundary Description**

C.B. 994 Samuel Shepard Dr. 380 FT 3 IN x 134 FT 8 IN,  
Stoddard ADDN, BLOCK 29 LOTS 2 to 34

**Boundary Justification**

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the building.

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Figure 1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Coordinates. Accessed May 2017.



Banneker School

2840 Samuel Shepard Dr., St. Louis, MO 63103 Latitude: 38.636760° Longitude: -90.218790°



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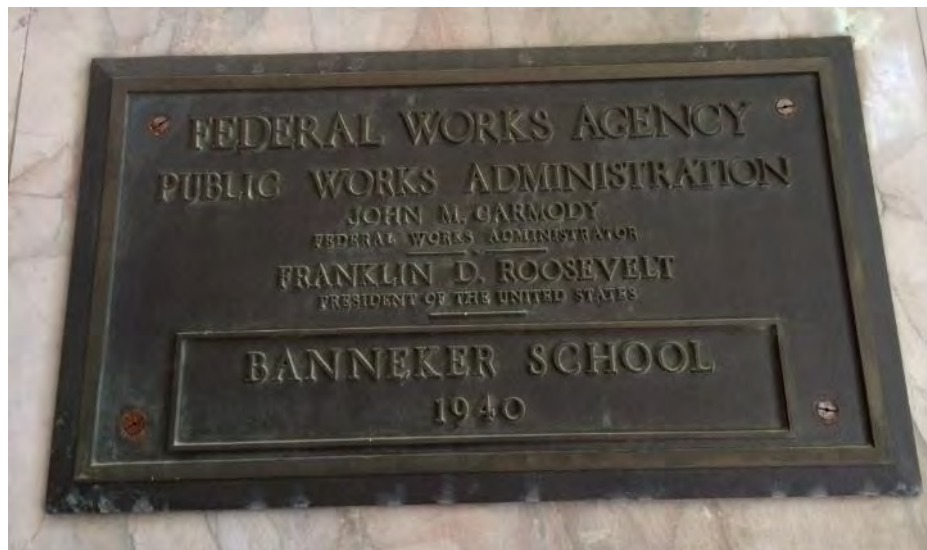
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Figure 2. Aerial photo map of the area, from Google Earth. Accessed April 2017.



Figure 3. Federal Works Agency/ Public Works Administration Plaque in first floor lobby.



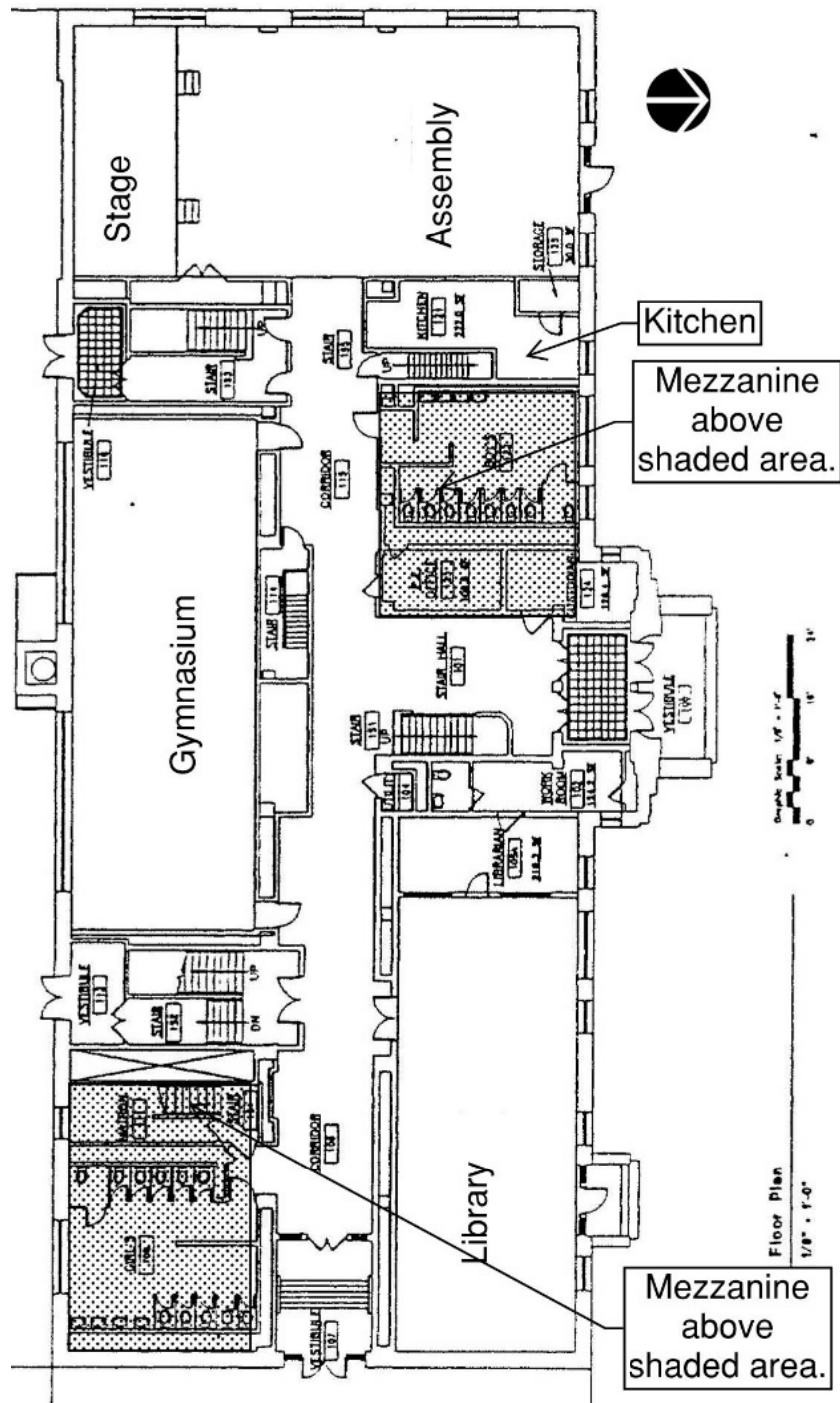
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Banneker School
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**Figure 4. First Floor Plan.**

Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)





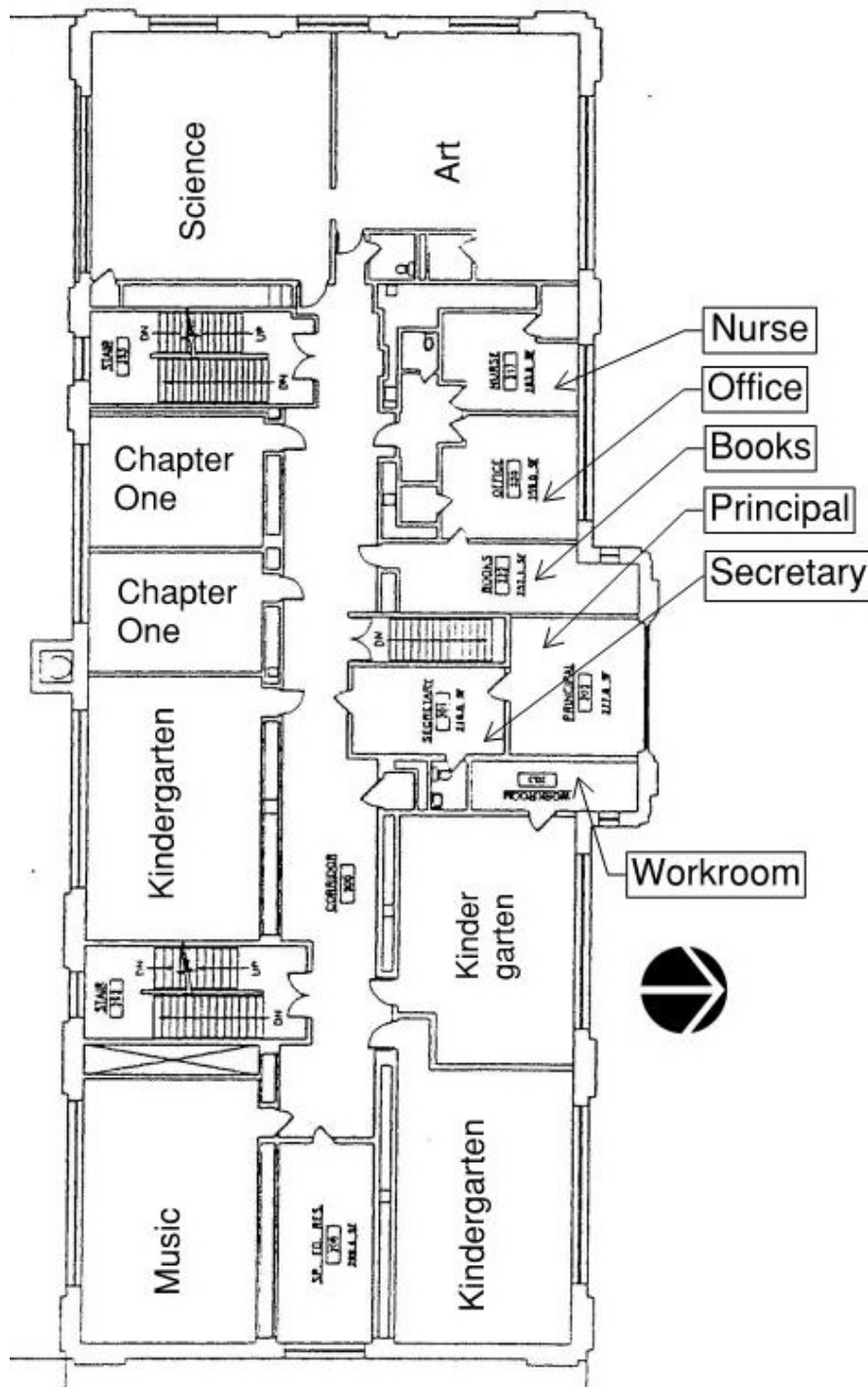
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Figure 5. Second Floor Plan

Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)



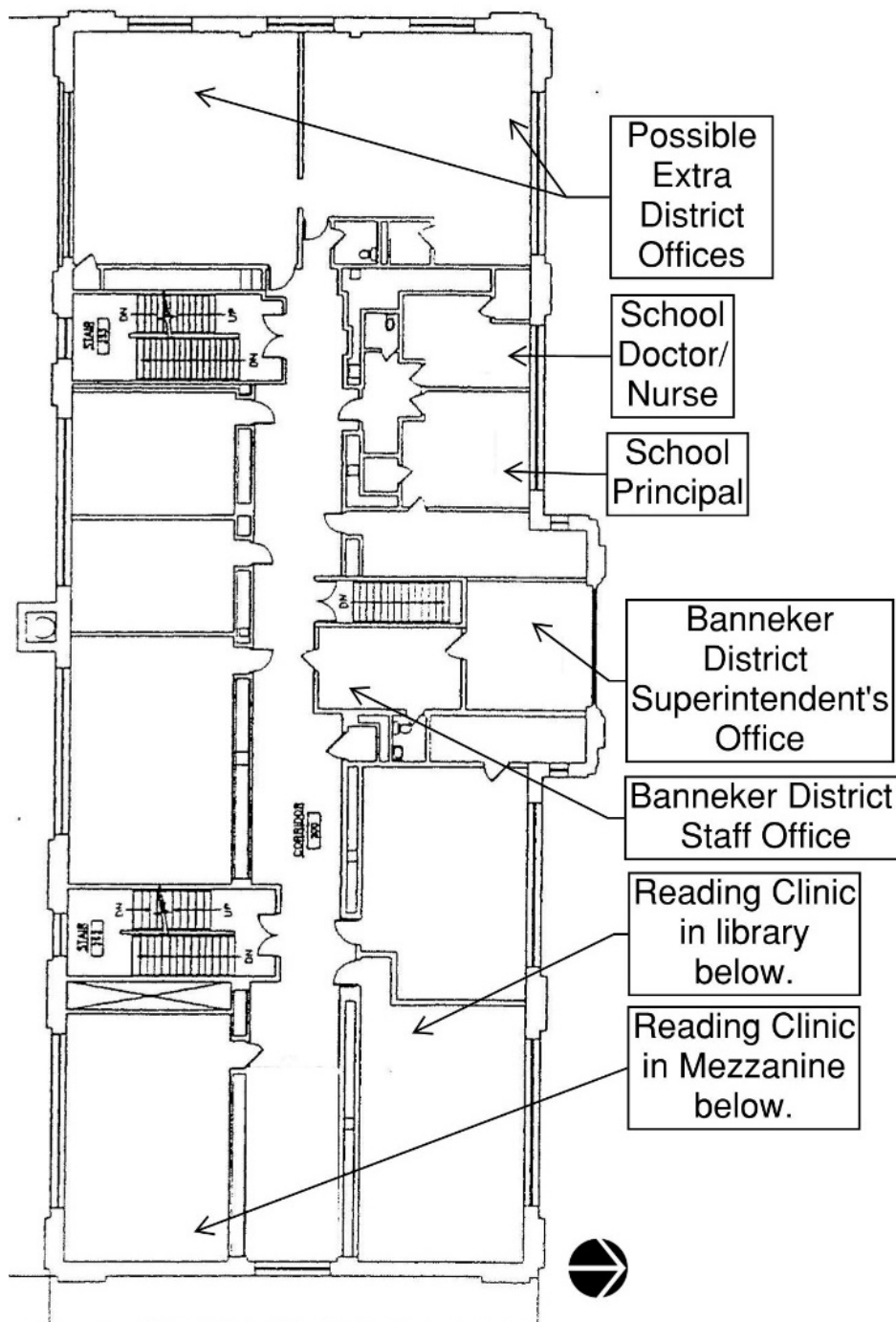
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Figure 6. Historic Room Uses 1957 to 1970, Second Floor Plan. Unmarked rooms were classrooms.

Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)



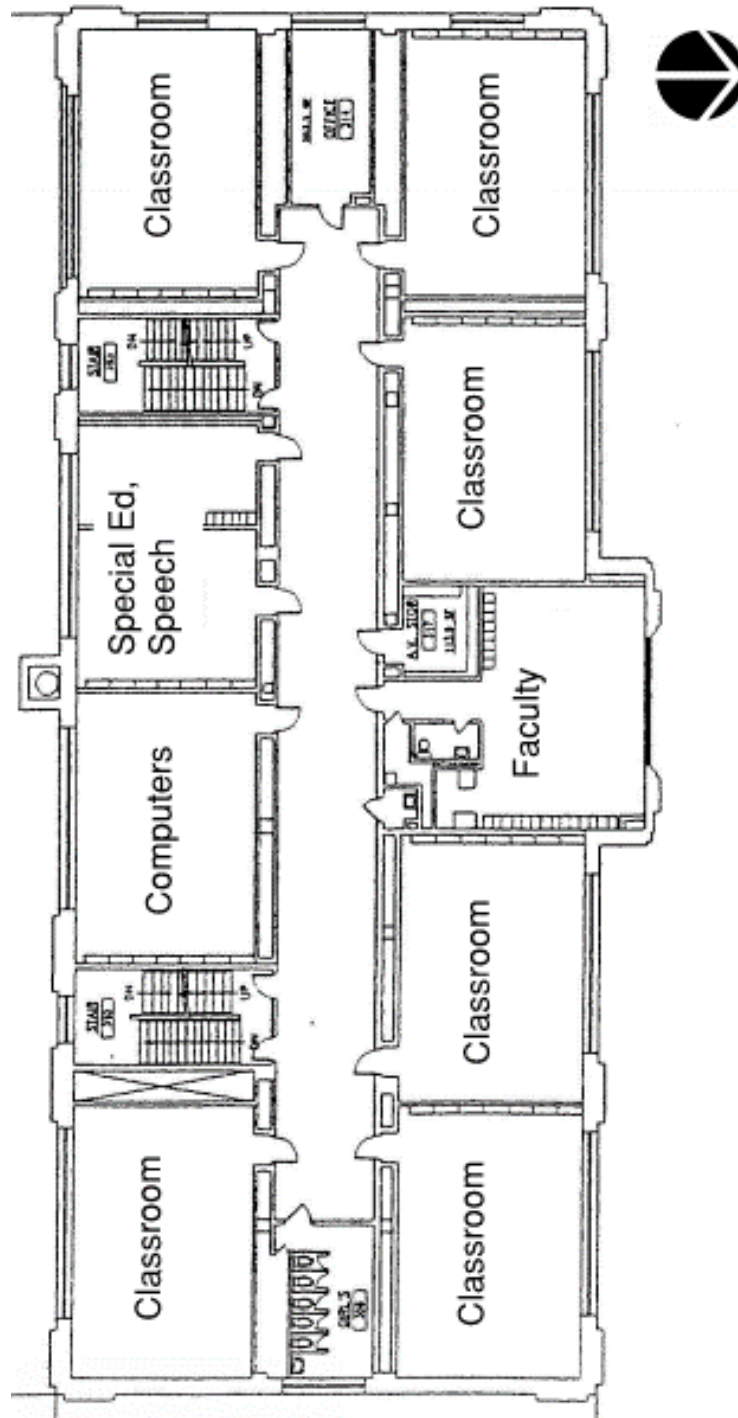
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Banneker School
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Name of Property
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County and State
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 7. Third Floor Plan

Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)



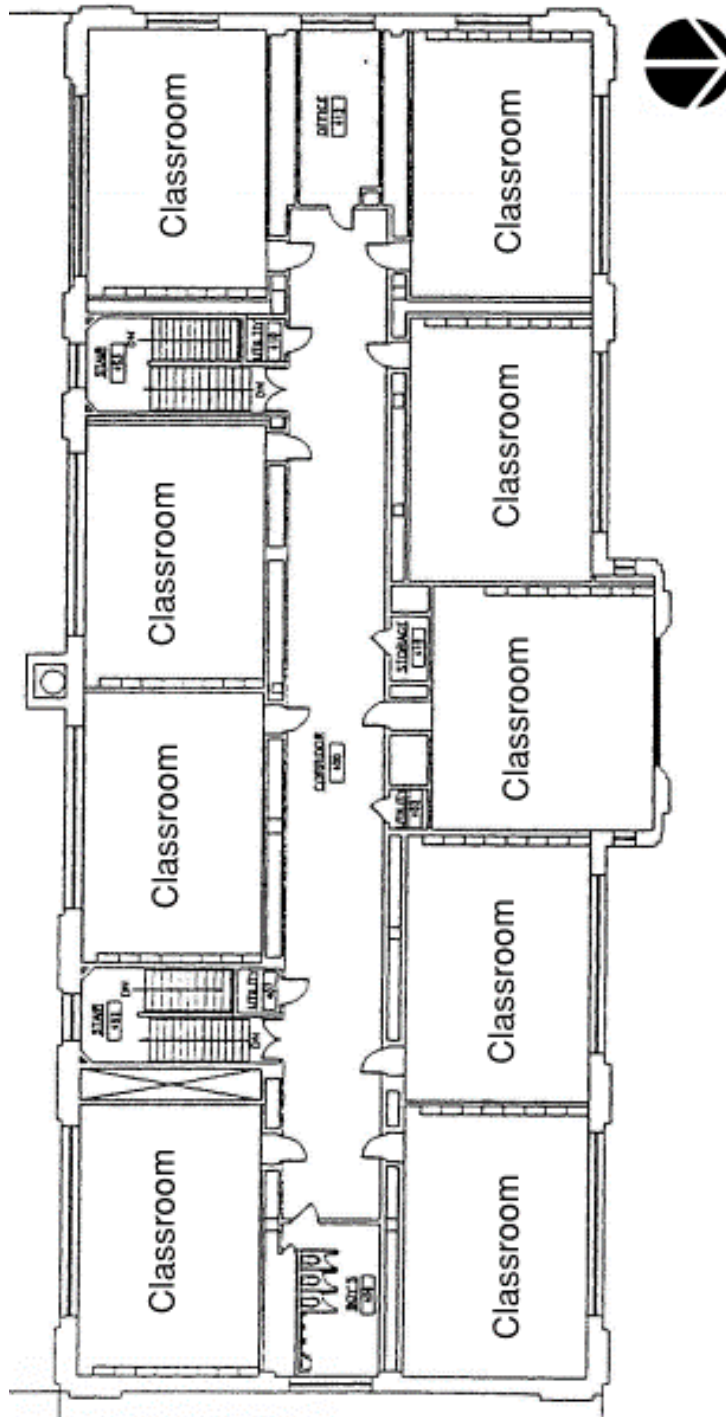
National Register of Historic Places  
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Banneker School
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Name of Property
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County and State
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Figure 8. Fourth Floor Plan.

Plans drawn ca. 2000, for St. Louis Public Schools. Unless otherwise noted, room labels reflect uses as of 2005. (Plans courtesy St. Louis Public Schools; room labels clarified and notes added by Deb Sheals 2017.)





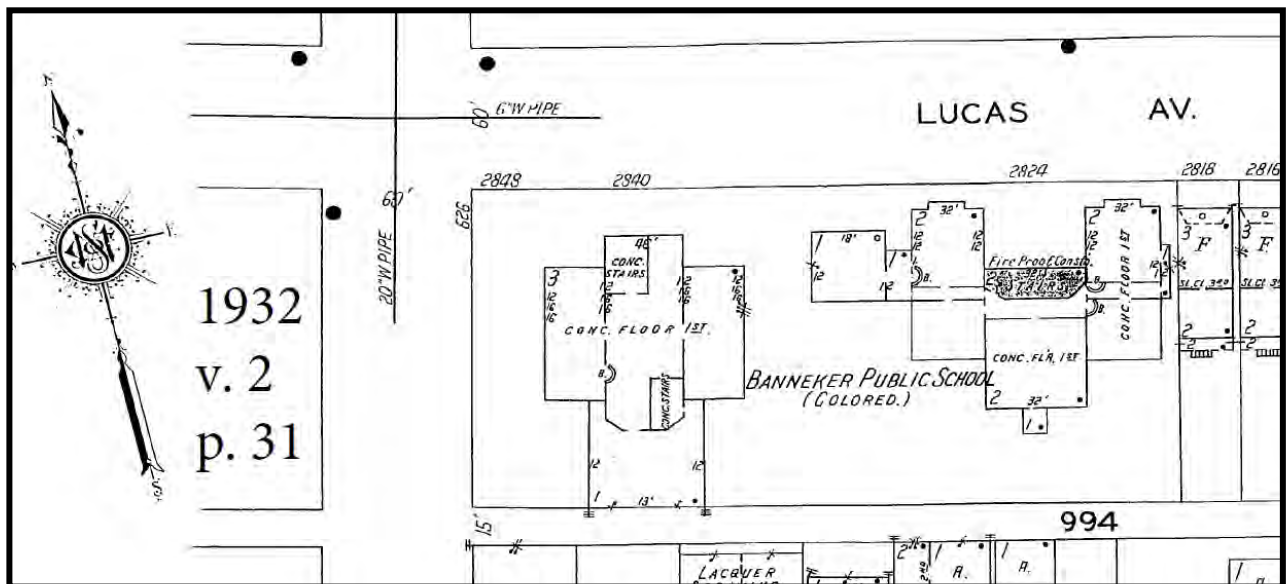
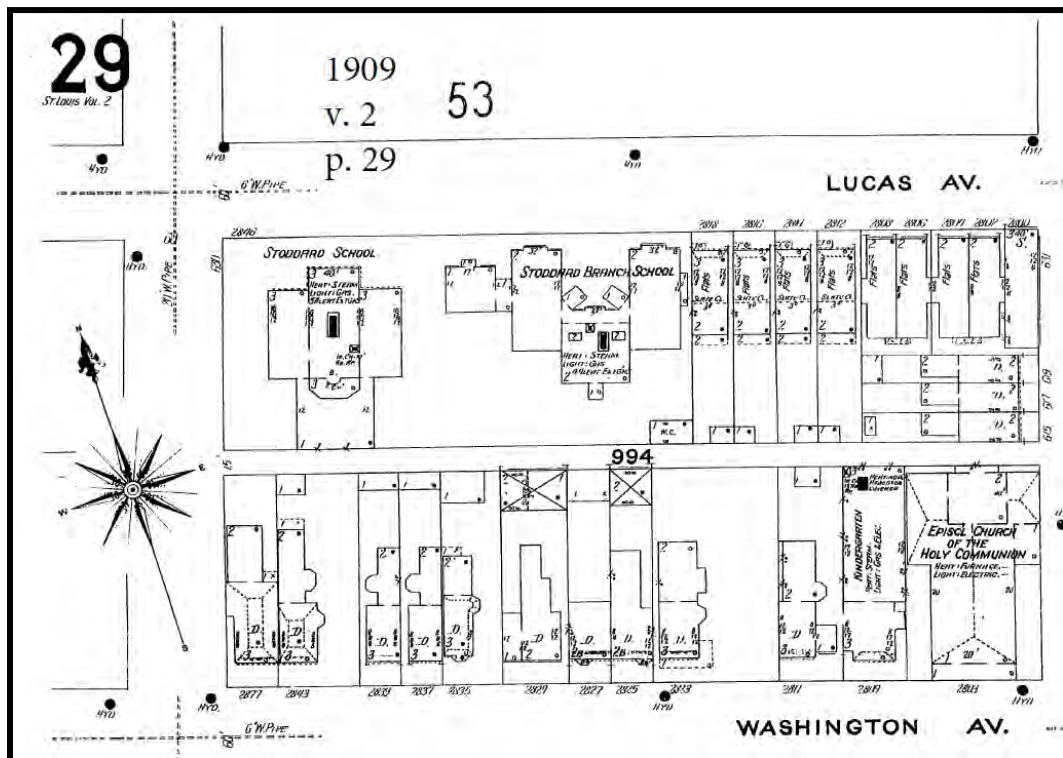
National Register of Historic Places  
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Banneker School
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Figure 9. 1909 and 1932 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Maps, with the former Stoddard School Buildings. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, St. Louis City Maps, 1909, 1932, 1951. Mid-Continent Public Library. Accessed April 28, 2017.

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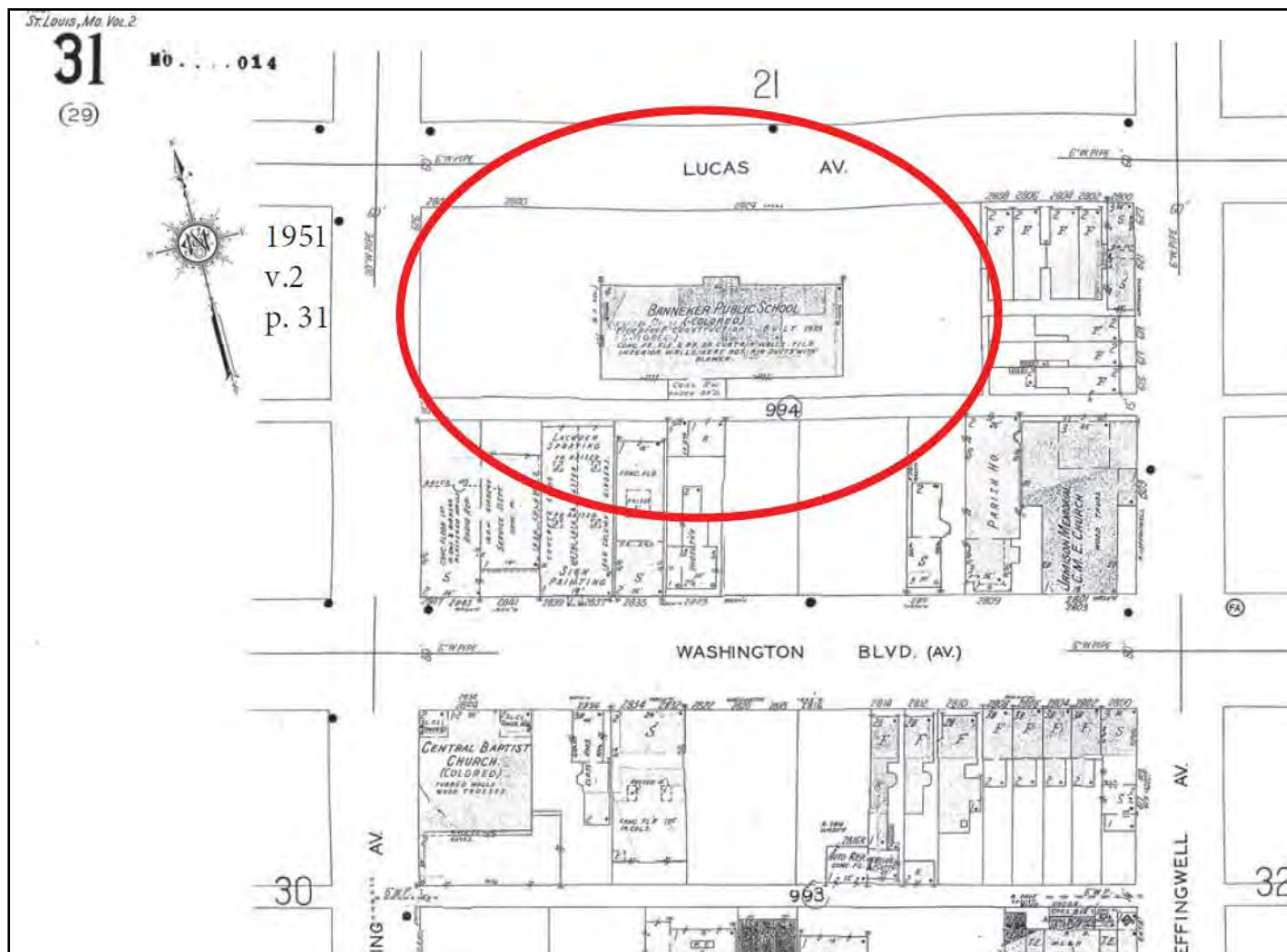


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Banneker School
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 10. Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map of the present Building, 1951. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, St. Louis City Maps, 1909, 1932, 1951. Mid-Continent Public Library. Accessed April 28, 2017. <http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/image/view?state=mo&reelid=reel20&lcid=4858&imagenam e=00213&mapname=SaintLouis+1903-Dec.1951vol.2%2C1932-Nov.1950%2C+Sheet+31>

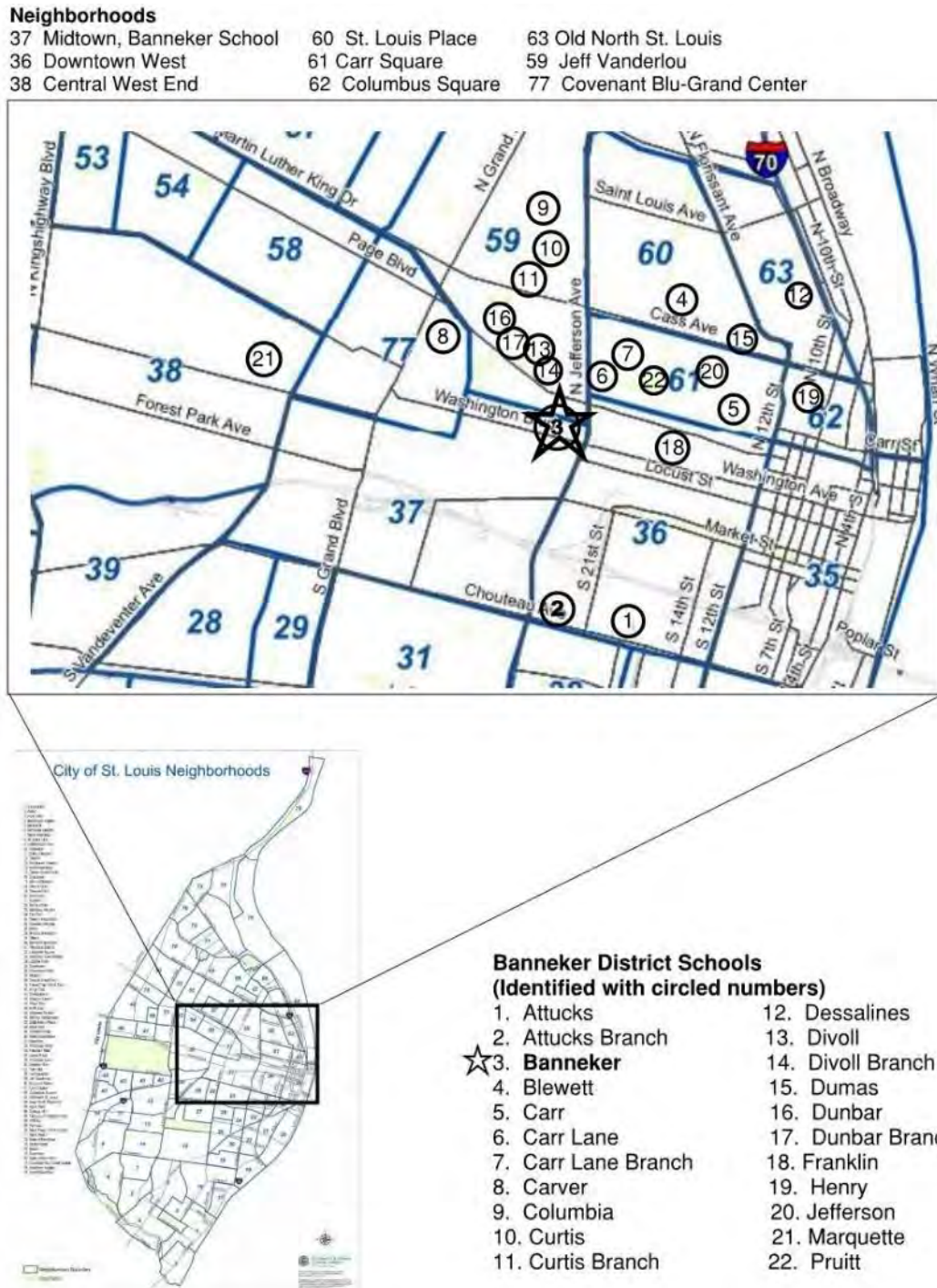


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Figure 11. Locations for Banneker District Schools, with neighborhoods in St. Louis, MO. Map by Andrea Herries. Base map source: "City of St. Louis Neighborhoods." Accessed Feb. 20 2015. <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/public-safety/neighborhood-stabilization-office/neighborhoods/neighborhood-maps.cfm>.



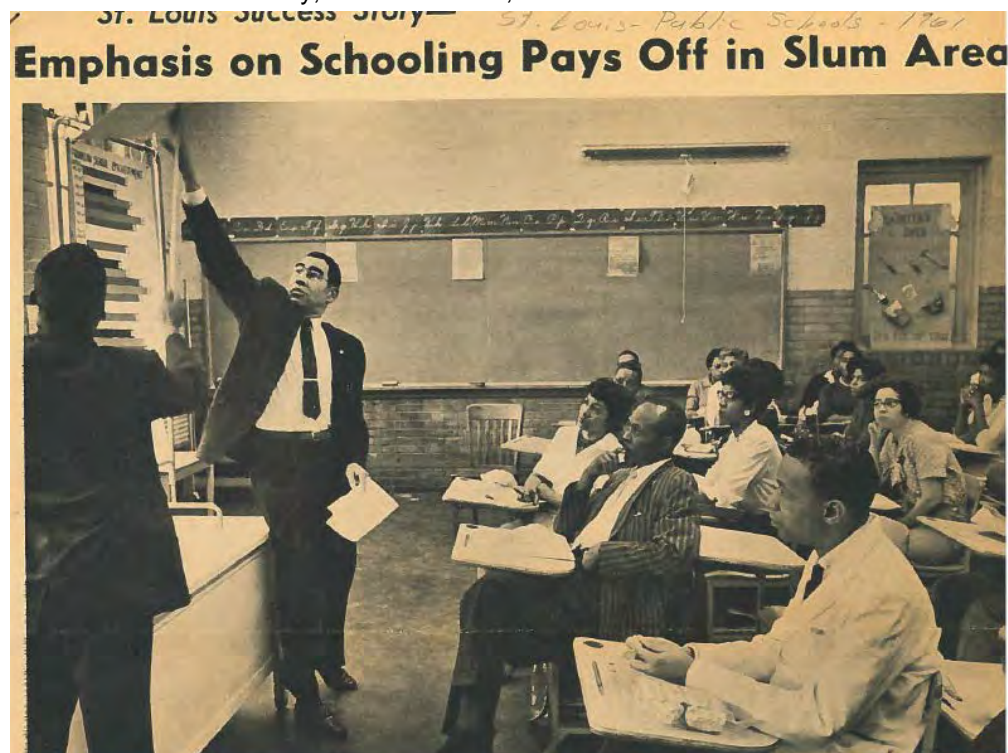


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Banneker School
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Figure 12. Clippings from a 1961 St. Louis Newspaper article about the Banneker District. "Emphasis on Schooling Pays Off in Slum Area." Top: Shepard lecturing to Franklin School Faculty. Bottom: Students of the same school, which was part of the Banneker District. Available at St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch, Banneker School Vertical File.

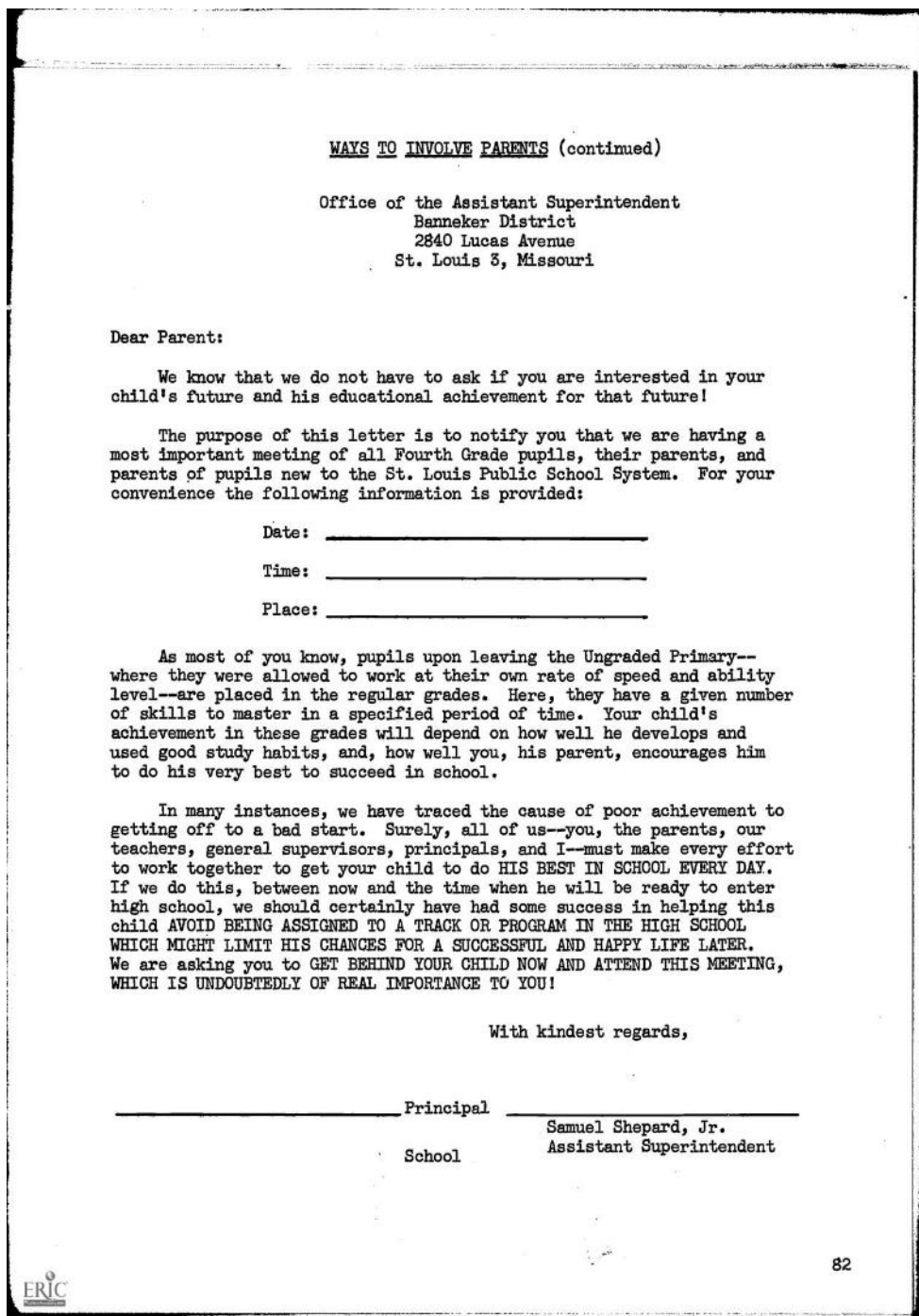


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Banneker School
Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 13. Letter from Samuel Shepard, Assistant Superintendent of Banneker District to Banneker parents. Shepard, Samuel, Jr. and C. W. Hunnicutt. "Urban Elementary School Desegregation, Summary Report." *Proceedings of the National Seminar Urban Elementary School Desegregation*. New York: Syracuse University and St. Louis: St. Louis Public Schools. July 1965 – May 1966.

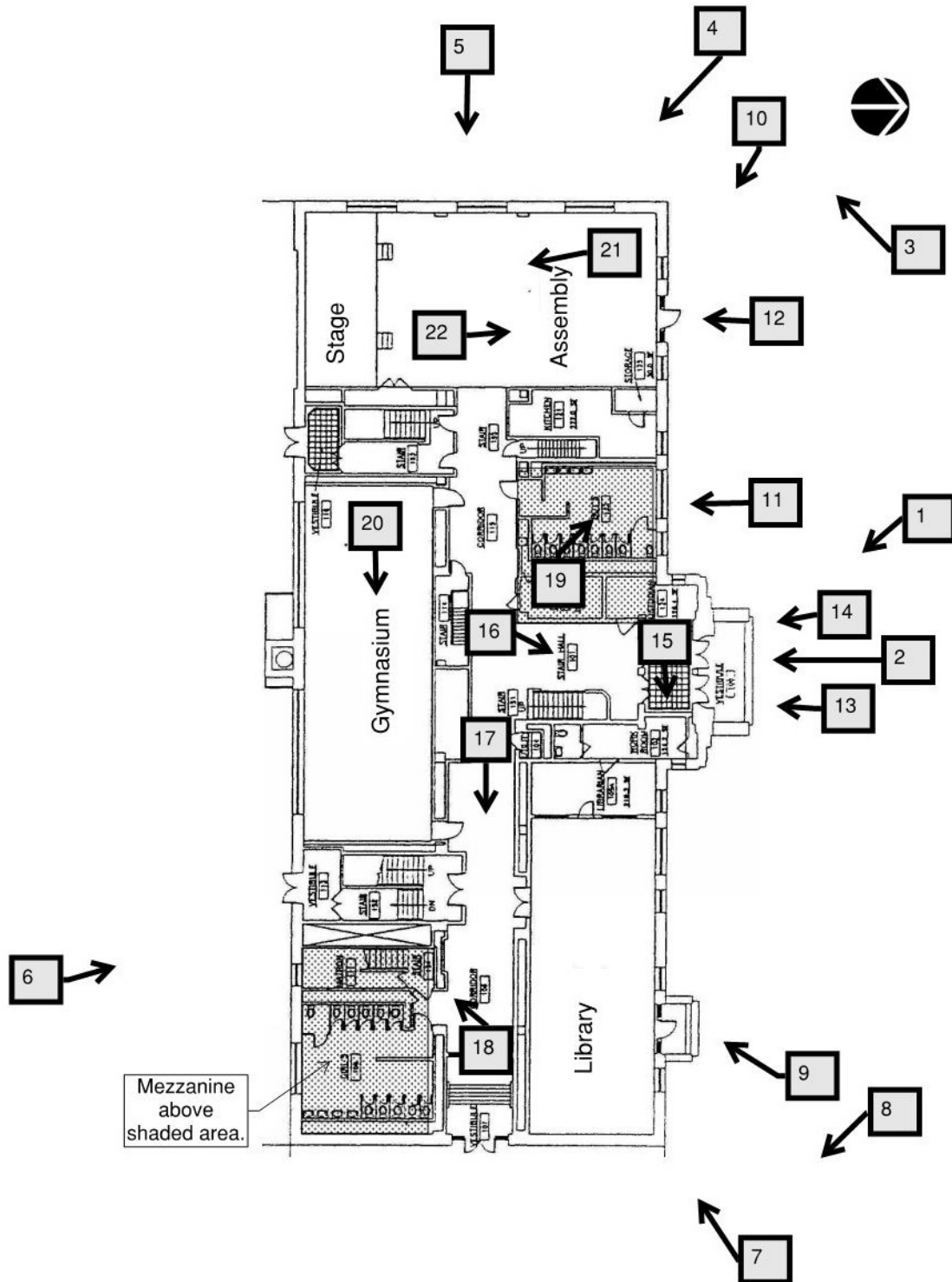


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Figure 14. Photo Key  
Exterior and First Floor

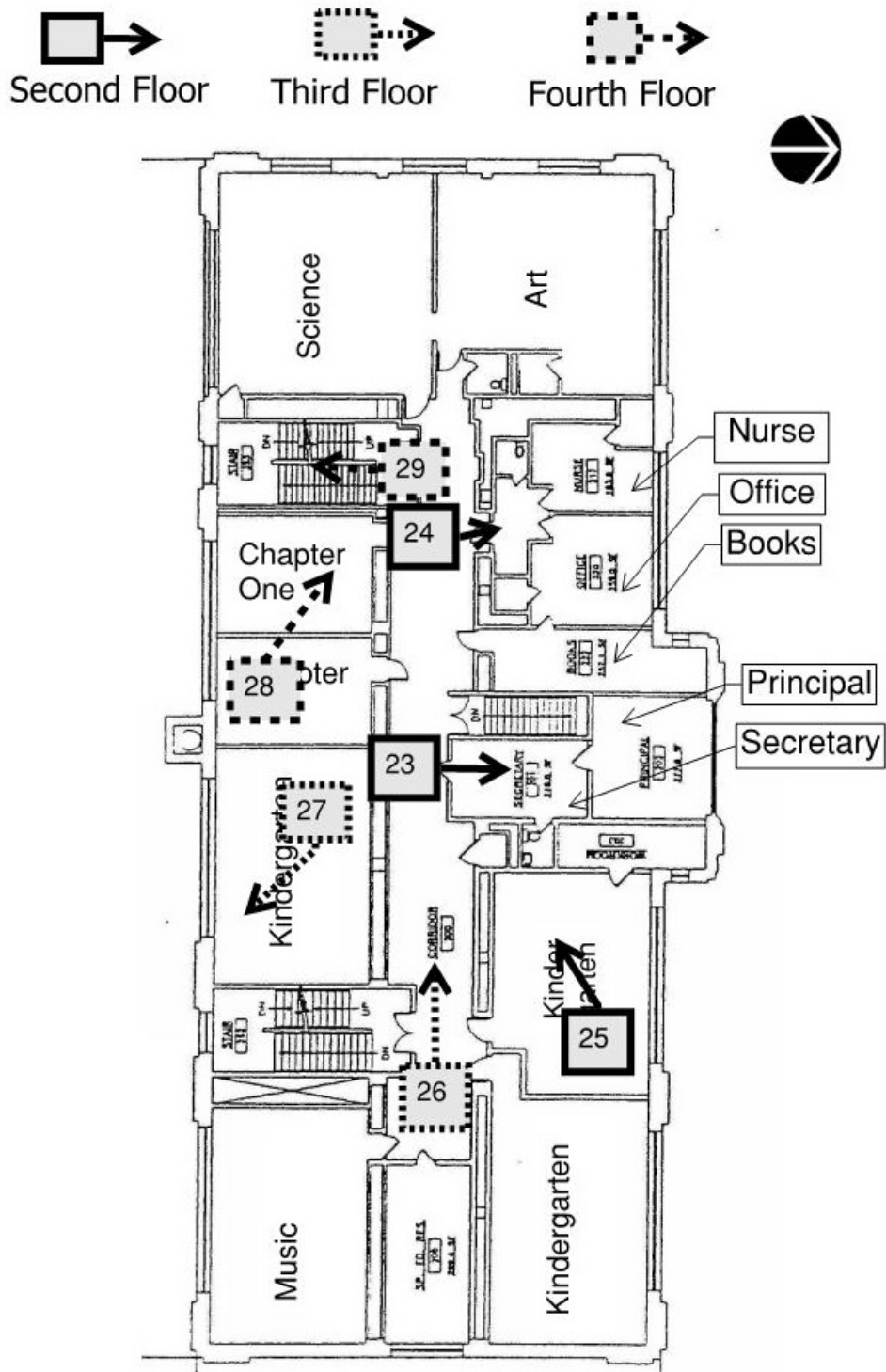


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Figure 15. Photo Key. Second, Third and Fourth Floors.





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Banneker School
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Name of Property
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N/A
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1 of 29. Façade. Camera facing southeast. Photo dates to January 2015, full view of façade. There have been no changes of note since this photo was taken. The older view is used here because there are no leaves on the trees to block the view.



2 of 29. Center facade, north wall. Camera facing south.





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Banneker School
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Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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County and State
N/A
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3 of 29. West play yard. Camera facing southwest.



4 of 29. Northwest corner and west play yard. Camera facing southeast.



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Banneker School

Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

5 of 29. West wall. Camera facing east.



6 of 29. Back wall, south. Camera facing north.





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Banneker School
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Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

7 of 29. East wall, east yard, north yard. Camera facing southwest.



8 of 29. East yard. Camera facing southeast.



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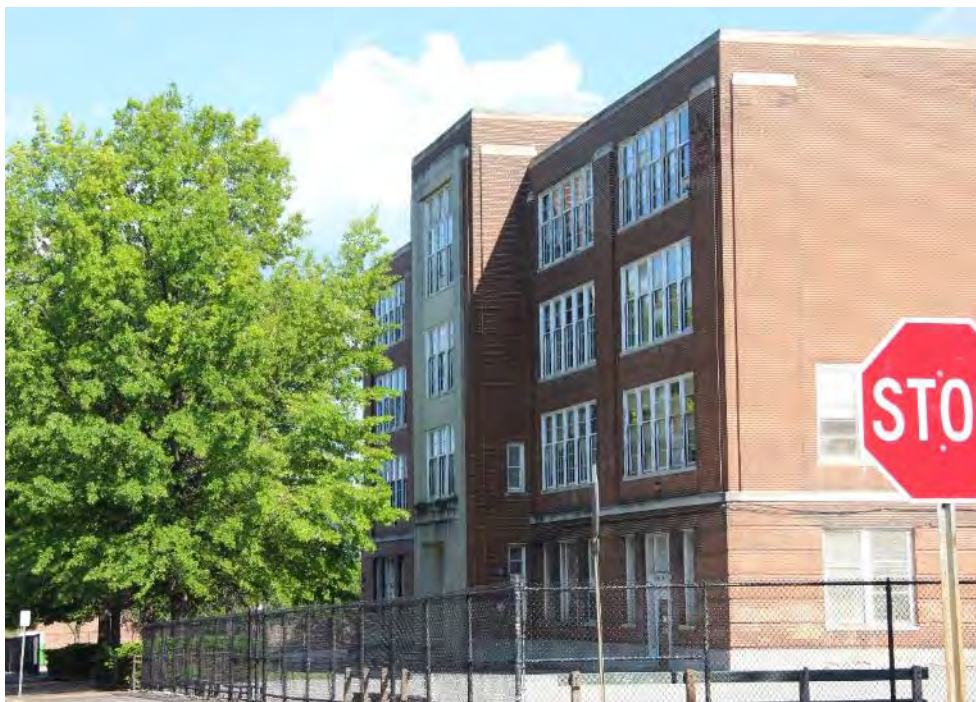
Section number Photos Page 50

Banneker School
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Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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N/A
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

9 of 29. Library entrance, east. Camera facing southwest.



10 of 29. Detail, facade. Camera southeast.





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Banneker School
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Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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County and State
N/A
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11 of 29. Detail, lower facade. Camera facing south.



12 of 29. Assembly room entrance. Camera facing south.



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Banneker School
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Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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County and State
N/A
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13 of 29. Detail, upper center facade. Camera facing south.



14 of 29. Main entrance, lower center facade. Camera facing south.





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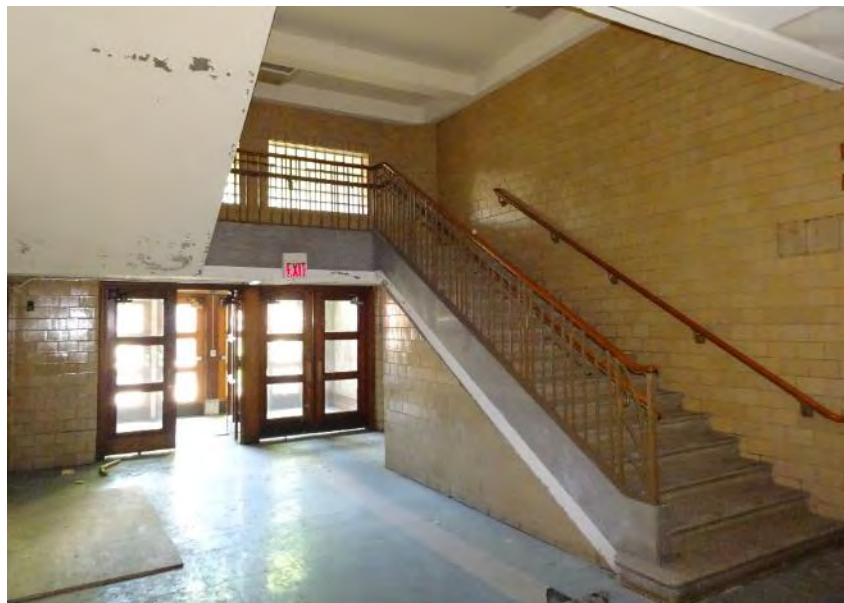
Section number Photos Page 53

Banneker School
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Name of Property
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15 of 29 Entrance vestibule. Camera facing east.



16 of 29 First floor hallway and north stairs. Camera facing northeast.



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Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

17 of 29 First floor hallway. Camera facing east.



18 of 29 First floor hallway with "Reading Center" sign and east mezzanine stairs. Camera facing southwest.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 55

Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

19 of 29 North mezzanine. Camera facing northwest.



20 of 29 Gymnasium. Camera facing east.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 56

Banneker School

Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

21 of 29 Assembly room. Camera facing south.



22 of 29 Assembly room. Camera facing north.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 57

Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

23 of 29 Principal's and reception offices. Camera facing north. The space in the back of the photo is the principal's office. The doorway in the right side of the photo leads to a small restroom, presumably for staff use only.



24 of 29 Painted wall signs for "Offices, Doctor, Principal. Camera facing north.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 58

Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

25 of 29 Second floor classroom. Camera facing southwest.



26 of 29 Third floor hallway. Camera facing west.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 59

Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

27 of 29 Third floor classroom. Camera facing southeast.



28 of 29 Fourth floor classroom. Camera facing northwest.

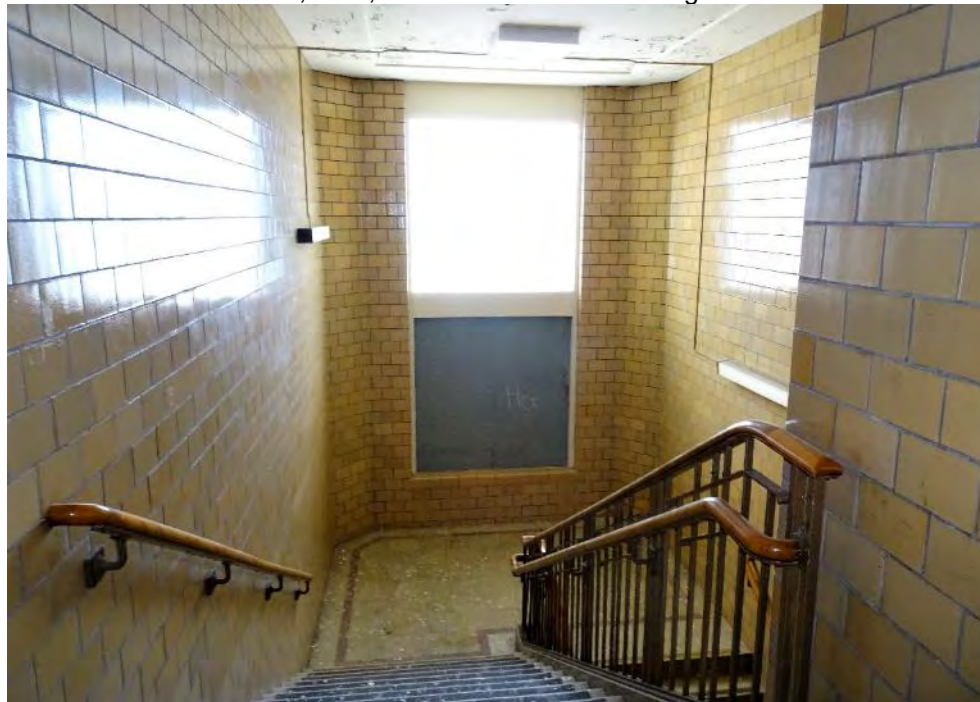


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 60

Banneker School
-----
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
-----
County and State
N/A
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

29 of 29 Back staircase, west, fourth floor. Camera facing south.











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9

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OFFICES  
DOCTOR, PRINCIPAL,









EXIT

311











