Other Area Schools

At the turn of the 20th century there were over 15 schools in the West End and four school districts: Washington, Wells, Bowdoin, and Wendell Phillips. There were even portable school houses at 55 Poplar Street and 91 Somerset Street to serve the growing immigrant population. Districts frequently overlapped. Some schools served two districts, while the Peter Faneuil School served three: Washington, Wells, and Phillips.

The school system continued to grow in the 1910’s. In 1916 the Wells Annex opened at 41 Blossom Street to teach grade 5 and special English classes. Chambers Street alone was the location of four school buildings: St. Andrew’s House School at 38 Chambers; the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church at 27 Chambers Street which taught grade 3 and students with disabilities; an Industrial School for Boys; and an elementary school at 103 Chambers Street which served the Washington District and taught special classes in sewing and cookery.

St. Andrew’s House School, in the former St. Andrews Trinity Church building, was the site of the first settlement house in the West End. An elementary school serving the Washington and Wells districts, kindergartens through fifth grade were taught there in 1911. By 1916 the school only taught through third grade. The Chambers Street Industrial School for boys dated as far back as 1894, preceding both the Elizabeth Peabody House and the West End House. The school taught manners, elocution, art, music and physical activities under the motto “to do good and to make others happy”. Pauline Agassze Shaw sponsored the kindergarten at the Chambers Street Industrial School.

The need for West End schools reflected a wider growth in the city. In 1911 the City of Boston published a Manual of the Public Schools listing Day Schools for elementary and high school students. Day Industrial Schools often organized by sex, Summer High Schools, and evening Schools. Joe Lee, known for his vocal stance against Urban Renewal and famous for starting Community Boating, was a member of the school committee at the time.