

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**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.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Antioch SchoolOther names/site number: L.W. Wales Center and Parsonage; DHR ID# 057-5052

Name of related multiple property listing:

Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (64500875; DHR ID# 012-5041)

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

2. LocationStreet & number: 183 Antioch RoadCity or town: Susan State: Virginia County: MathewsNot For Publication: Vicinity: **3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
DateVirginia Department of Historic 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

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

RELIGION/religious facility

SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

WORK IN PROGRESS

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Rosenwald School

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: WOOD: Weatherboard

Roof: METAL: Aluminum

Other: BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and non-contributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Antioch School is located in Mathews County, Virginia, in the unincorporated community of Susan, and sits on approximately 2.50 acres on the east side of Antioch Road. Constructed in 1927, it is a two-teacher plan school built under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund and of a type described in the Multiple Documentation Form Rosenwald Schools of Virginia (012-5041). Built in the Craftsman architectural style, the one-story, frame school has a concrete block foundation, weatherboard siding, and side-gable, pressed aluminum roof. Centered on the façade is a projecting, front-gable bay featuring a centered group of four, nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows. The projecting bay is flanked by recessed entries. A pair of smaller windows, with nine-over-nine, double-hung sash, are to the side of each entry. The character-defining exterior architectural details retain a high degree of historic integrity. Much of the original interior plan and architectural features survive, although some have been covered with non-historic materials. The site also contains a noncontributing c. 1980 garage to the south of the school.

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Setting

A mowed lawn surrounds the site, with scattered plantings. Facing west, the primary building is set on a fairly level grade. There is evidence of a single-lane, semi-circular, dirt driveway that leads from Antioch Road to the west of the school. Two small, low black rectangular wood signs are situated at either end of the driveway, with "Entrance" painted in white letters on the northernmost sign and "Exit" painted in white letters on the southernmost sign. In between the driveway entrance to Antioch Road, there is a painted-white wood sign with painted-black metal scrollwork along the top with "Antioch Baptist Church L. W. Wales Center and Parsonage est. 1927" painted in black letters. A smaller brown rectangular sign is attached to the top with the number 183 painted in white. A smaller and lower painted white wood post is situated in front of the sign. A round painted-brown marker is attached to the post with the words "1607 Mathews 2007 Pearl of the Chesapeake" in black letters. An oyster shell with a pearl is painted on the front of the sign. A partially collapsed wood privacy fence runs to the north and south of the school building. A wooden utility pole is situated to the north, and overhead utility lines run from the pole to the school. A tree line is visible to the north, south, and east, and various construction debris is scattered throughout the backyard.

School (ca. 1927) – Contributing building

The Antioch School was constructed according to the plan for the "Two Teacher Community School, To Face East or West Only", and incorporated "Floor Plan No. 20," as was specified in the 1924 publication, *Community School Plans*, a publication of the Rosenwald Fund (see Figure 1 at the end of Section 8). This publication was an expansion of the earlier 1915 pamphlet, *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*, produced by two African American architecture professors at Tuskegee Institute and published by the Rosenwald Fund. *Community School Plans* were developed under the direction of Rosenwald Fund director Samuel L. Smith and included detailed drawings for schools that were to have anywhere between one to seven teachers. Separate plans were produced for each prototype, dictated by whether the school would be oriented north-south or east-west, with the goal of capturing the most natural light available. As described in the MPD *Rosenwald Schools in Virginia*, "The most recognizable architectural feature of Rosenwald schools was large banks of windows, an important feature in an era where rural schools seldom had the benefit of electricity. Samuel Smith's plans specified room size and height, blackboard and desk placement, paint colors, and window shades, all in order to make the most of available light. Smith insisted that windows be placed so that light came only from the student's left and included alternative plans depending on the orientation of the school."

The c. 1927, one-story, five-bay, side-gable, wood-frame school is clad in painted-beige wood weatherboard and rests on a concrete-block foundation with one central-interior stretcher-bond brick chimney. This design is consistent with the *Community School*. The siding has been removed around the entry doors on the façade, exposing the wood framing. The center bay

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projects under a front-gable with a metal mercury vapor light attached to the gable end. The roof is covered in pressed aluminum with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. Paired, sash, double-hung, 9/9, wood-frame windows are typical on the façade. Paired, sash, double-hung, 1/1, wood-frame windows are typical on the side (north) elevation. On the rear (east) elevation, there are two banks of six, sash, double-hung, 9/9, wood-frame windows. No windows are visible on the side (south) elevation. All of these windows, except for the 1/1, wood-frame windows on the side (north) elevation, are replacement windows that were installed in 2022. The windows on the north elevation were not part of the original construction and were installed when the interior work on the parsonage was completed. There are two entrances on the façade. The northernmost entrance is a single-leaf, six-panel wood door covered by a metal storm door. There is a one-bay, concrete-block stoop with a painted-white three-rail wood railing. One concrete-block step with a painted-white two-rail wood railing leads from the stoop to the front yard. The southernmost entrance is a single-leaf, 18-panel wood door. There is a one-bay, concrete-block stoop. One concrete-block step leads from the stoop to the front yard. There are ghost marks above either entrance indicating an awning, which was mentioned in a circa 2014 survey of the building. There was an accessible ramp on the façade; however, it was demolished in 2024.

Interior

The southernmost entrance on the façade leads into a small entryway. The entryway has Berber carpet on the floor, plasterboard walls, and a painted plasterboard ceiling. A rubber mat covers part of the carpeting. The lighting in the room consists of a single glass globe light fixture attached to the ceiling. Light switches are situated to the north of the entrance door. A double-leaf opening opposite the entrance door leads into the main room.

The northernmost entrance on the façade leads into a small entryway. The entryway has a black and white rolled linoleum floor, painted white plasterboard walls, and a painted white plasterboard ceiling. A double-leaf opening opposite the entrance door leads into the main room.

The main room has a brown Berber carpet on the floor and painted white plasterboard walls with wood wainscot on the lower half and a section of painted green plasterboard near the ceiling. The plasterboard has been removed around the windows on the east elevation, exposing the wood framing. The ceiling is a drop ceiling covered with pressed tin tiles. The main room was originally two rooms, and the center interior wall separating the rooms has been removed. The northern portion of the now single room has a gray Berber carpet. Two sets of single-leaf, wood doors are situated on the western wall of the room. These doors lead to restroom facilities in the northern portion of the building and a storage area in the southern portion of the building.

The restroom has a black and white rolled linoleum floor with painted white plasterboard walls and a painted white plasterboard ceiling. There are portions of painted green plasterboard near the ceiling. Most of the plasterboard has been removed. The room was originally two separate restroom facilities, one for men and one for women. However, the interior wall separating the two has been removed. There is one white porcelain toilet and a silver towel bar attached to the

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eastern wall. A sink is attached to the western wall, and various fixtures, including toilets and urinals, are scattered in the center of the room. An electrical panel is visible on the northern wall.

The storage room has an exposed subfloor with rolled linoleum covering a portion of the floor. Most of the plasterboard that originally covered the walls have been removed, exposing the wood framing. The plasterboard that does remain is painted white on the lower portion of the walls, with a section painted green near the ceiling. The ceiling is a drop ceiling covered with pressed tin tiles. Electric baseboard heating units are visible along the bottom of the northern and southern walls. A metal water heater is situated in the corner, and in the opposite corner is a stove and oven. Exposed wires are visible throughout the room. This room was also originally two rooms, and the interior wall has been removed. Single-leaf, wood doors are located on the west wall.

Garage (ca. 1980) – Non-contributing building

To the south of the school, there is a circa 1980, one-story, one-bay, wood-frame garage clad in painted white vinyl siding and resting on a concrete-block foundation. The roof is covered in asphalt shingles. No windows are visible on the garage. The entrance on the façade is a roll-up metal garage door.

Integrity Assessment

While the historic integrity of the building has been compromised by the alteration of some of the character-defining features, such as the removal of interior walls and finishes and the replacement of the original windows and doors, the building continues to maintain the historic integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association. Further, the windows and siding have been replaced with materials that match the original in design, size, and materials.

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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.)

- ☒ 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1927-1948

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Samuel (architect)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes the level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Education for Virginia's African American population was first provided on a separate and unequal basis starting in 1869-1870. As described in the Rosenwald Schools of Virginia (012-5014) Multiple Property Documentation Form, under which the Antioch School is being nominated, due to inequitable funding, the earliest public schools built for African American students after the Civil War were taught in old or inadequate buildings. In the second decade of the twentieth century, African Americans were assisted in their educational endeavors by the philanthropic efforts of a northern foundation. In 1917, Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears Roebuck and Company, established the Julius Rosenwald Fund as a way to improve education for African Americans. Rosenwald was influenced by the work of Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute and that institution directed the efforts of the Fund until 1920 when a separate office was established in Nashville. The Foundation provided matching funds and school building plans. In Virginia, 367 schools in 79 localities were assisted with Rosenwald funds. Fifty percent of those constructed in Virginia were, like the Antioch School, of the two-teacher type. In the American South, 5,358 Rosenwald Schools were constructed, improving classroom conditions for over 648,000 African American students, and providing educational opportunities for generations. Rosenwald schools often became sites for community pageants, exhibits, theatricals and other community activities and they often set the standard for the surrounding area with regard to architecture, sanitation and maintenance. Rosenwald schools in Virginia and the American South are the tangible reminders of the Fund's initiatives for the advancement of African American education during the first half of the twentieth century. Within this historic context, the Antioch School is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Education and is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance starts with the date of construction, 1927 and continues through 1948, when the school closed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Antioch School meets the criteria for registration set out in the Rosenwald Schools in Virginia (012-5041) Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form. It was built during the period between 1917-1932 using funds provided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The school's floor plan, workmanship and materials are typical of Rosenwald Schools and the Antioch School maintains a high degree of architectural integrity as well as its historic rural setting. The Antioch School is an example of a subtype #2 school, as explicated in the MPD. Such schools were constructed after 1920 according to standardized plans created by architect Samuel Smith. In 1924, the Rosenwald Fund published a booklet, Community School Plans, in which examples of one- and two-room schools, as well as teachers' residences and privies, were provided. The Antioch School was constructed according to Floor Plan No. 20, a two-room school constructed on an east-west axis to maximize natural light (see Figure 1 at the end of this section). The

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smaller, more modest standardized designs typically had a slight Craftsman or Colonial Revival stylistic influence; the Antioch School's detailing is an example of the Craftsman style. On the interior, the Antioch School featured the industrial room, cloak rooms, and classrooms specified in the standardized plans. As an intact example of a Rosenwald school, the Antioch School has significance under Criterion A in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage: African American, as its historic context is within the parameters set forth in the Rosenwald Schools of Virginia (012-5014) MPD. The Antioch School also is a significant example of a standardized Rosenwald school plan, thus meeting Criterion C in the area of Architecture as explained in the MPD.

The Antioch School meets the registration requirements specified in the MPD, as a frame school building with modest architectural details, retaining its original location and rural setting, and having a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The school's integrity of association and feeling is bolstered by the property's rural setting. All of these aspects are expanded upon in the following narrative.

Criterion A - Education

In Virginia, public education was included in the 1869 updated constitution to provide a universal but segregated educational system. Before 1869, children were taught through private or religious schools, and education was not available to all the Commonwealth's children, especially those of African American descent. At the start of the Civil War, schools for slaves fleeing from plantations opened in Hampton, Yorktown, Norfolk, and Fort Monroe. Slaves were eager to learn and to provide an education for their children by establishing schools, believing education was a pathway to success (Hanbury Consulting 2021, VDHR 2004, Cook, Brown and Harpole 2014).

When the Civil War ended, African American education fell to the Freedman's Bureau. Their initial plan was to sell, or rent seized or abandoned property to provide funding for the education of newly freed African Americans. However, the Bureau was underfunded from the beginning, and much of its educational mission was reduced to encouraging African American communities to raise their own money to buy land. The Bureau provided building materials, teachers, and rent, when possible (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

With the updated constitution in place, the General Assembly created its uniform system of free public education, which was overseen by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Commonwealth's Board of Education. This Board appointed local superintendents to serve the various areas. The Mathews County position went vacant for the first year (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

In 1869, local women in Mathews County urged four men from the community to advocate for an African American school in the community of Susan. These men included John Hudgins, John Turner, John Singleton, and Robert Forrest. The men built a log cabin on a quarter-acre lot donated by Lucy White, a Caucasian member of the community. This structure became a school

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for African American children in Susan and a church for women in the community (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

During the turn of the 20th century, Julius Rosenwald met Booker T. Washington for the first time. Rosenwald became a trustee for the Tuskegee Institute a year later, but before that, he wanted to raise funding for them. So, he met with Washington since he wanted to enable institutions to help people escape poverty (VDHR 2004).

Before their meeting, Washington wanted to benefit rural education, and in 1904, he met with John D. Rodgers of the Standard Oil Company. He met him through the General Education Board, of which John D. Rockefeller was a member. Washington asked Rodgers to support the construction of rural African American schools, and he agreed. In 1904, the Standard Oil Company funded three Alabama schools, and between 1904 and 1909, the Company built 46 additional schools in the state. John D. Rodgers passed away in 1909, and the Company stopped funding the school program (VDHR 2004, Thurley-Adams 1997, Werner 1939).

After meeting with Rosenwald, Washington convinced him to start the program again, and in 1912, Rosenwald funded six more rural Alabama schools. He also donated \$25,000 in additional funding to match the building of other African American schools (VDHR 2004, Hoffschwelle, 1998).

Just before the end of World War I, in 1917, Julius Rosenwald, then president of Sears, Roebuck, & Co., established the Julius Rosenwald Fund to improve African American education in the United States. This fund, partly supported by local tax revenues and private contributions, paid for over 5,000 schools to be built in 15 southern states, including Virginia, with three in Mathews County (VDHR 2004, Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

The Rosenwald School Building Fund constituted an important approach for African American education during the first half of the 20th century. From 1917 to 1937, the Julius Rosenwald Fund contributed to the construction of 5,358 elementary schools, teachers' homes, and industrial

buildings in 15 southern states. In Virginia, the Fund built 664 schools and 18 teachers' homes, and vocational buildings. This accounts for approximately 83% of Virginia counties having at least one Rosenwald School. The remaining school buildings reflect one of the most prolific school building projects undertaken. They also symbolize the African Americans' struggle for educational opportunities in a segregated South (VDHR 2007, Stiffler 2025). The Rosenwald Fund established three schools in Mathews County, including the Antioch School. Of those, only Antioch remains standing. The other two have been demolished. In the neighboring county of Gloucester, six Rosenwald schools were built and only one remains standing. Middlesex County, like Mathews County, had two Rosenwald schools. Two of those remain standing today (Stiffler 2025).

As part of this fund, African American State Building Agents were hired to inspect and supervise the construction of schools and teachers' homes in their respective states. There were also rules

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regarding funding, which were established at a State Supervisors of Negro Rural Schools meeting in Washington, D.C., in August 1917. These rules noted that Julius Rosenwald provided the money, and the building sites became the property of the public-school authorities. The funds were to supplement local money, material, and labor and were to be used to build one and two-teacher schools. To receive funding, local school districts needed to provide matching funds, although the money provided by the fund was not to exceed \$400 for one-teacher schools and \$500 for two-teacher schools. Each funded school had to contain two toilets, desks, blackboards, heaters, and plenty of room for playgrounds (VDHR 2004).

At Antioch, church members donated two acres across the street from Antioch Baptist Church for a school building. Rosenwald paid \$700. Former pastor Reverend L. W. Wales led a project to match those funds. His first campaign raised over \$1,000. The total cost of the school was \$4,700. In addition to the Rosenwald contribution, the African Americans in the community raised \$3,500, and the community donated the remaining \$500 (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

Wales was born to slaves near Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1860. After the Civil War, his family relocated to Gordonsville, Virginia, where he attended school. In 1881, he attended the Richmond Theological Seminary, now Virginia Union University. He graduated in 1885 and went on to become pastor of several churches over the next 25 years. In 1886, he was elected principal of Williamsburg Public School No. 2 for five years. During that time, Wales became very dissatisfied with the condition of African American public education. While in Williamsburg, he led a campaign for a high school and purchased land for the new building. However, the land was taken from the trustees and resold. Shortly thereafter, Wales left Williamsburg and eventually made his way to Mathews County and the Antioch campaign (Wales 1910).

Rosenwald school buildings in Virginia fall into two distinct subtypes based on their physical and associative characteristics: Subtype 1) school buildings constructed from 1917 to 1920 under the supervision of Tuskegee Institute according to plans and specifications created by R. R. Taylor, Director of Mechanical Industries and W. A. Hazel, Division of Architecture, Tuskegee Institute, and Subtype 2) schools built from 1920 to 1932 under the supervision of the Rosenwald office in Nashville according to designs and specifications prepared by Samuel L. Smith (VDHR 2007).

After the establishment of the Southern office in Nashville in 1920, Samuel L. Smith published a series of pamphlets outlining a variety of floor plans and specifications for use by communities interested in constructing a Rosenwald school. The pamphlets also contained information related to site selection, landscaping, and a general overview of an ideal Rosenwald school campus (VDHR 2007).

Fisk University archives contain the original Rosenwald school data, suggesting that the two-teacher school was constructed between 1926 and 1927 (Figure 1). Antioch School was a two-teacher school. It contained two classrooms, one kitchen, and one vocational area. Two teachers

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were hired to teach grades 1 – 7. After 7th grade, the students were sent to Thomas Hunter school, another Rosenwald school in the area (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

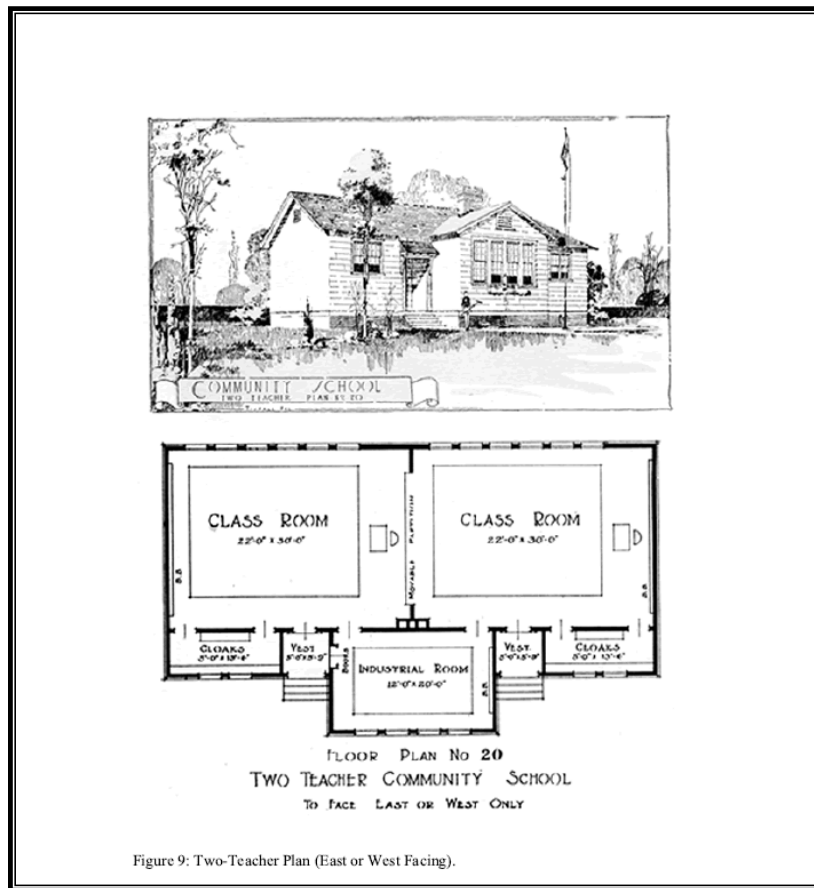


Figure 9: Two-Teacher Plan (East or West Facing).

Figure 1. Two-Teacher Plan (East or West Facing).

Criterion A – African American Ethnic Heritage

By 1876, approximately one-third of Mathews County students ages 5 to 21 were African American, which accounted for about 388 students out of 1,138. However, the monthly enrollment

average was 286, and the daily attendance averaged only 210. (Walker 1876). By 1891, 526 out of 1,018 African American students were enrolled in Mathews County. These numbers equaled approximately 52% of the eligible African American student population. While the enrollment had almost doubled in a decade, only three new African American schools had been added for a total capacity of 522 (O'Bannon 1891). Given these numbers, it was clear that by the turn of the 20th century, while white schools continued to improve, African American schools only improved with external financial support (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

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In the early 1900s, Booker T. Washington and his staff at Tuskegee Institute developed an ambitious program of private-public partnership to improve African American rural schooling. Initially, Washington confined the school building program to communities around Tuskegee, Alabama, but eventually he expanded his ideas to include communities throughout the South (VDHR 2007).

When Julius Rosenwald decided to join Washington and supply matching grants to rural communities for building African American elementary schools, it was evident that African American public schools were suffering. Poverty and localism were seen as overriding factors in African American education. By the first decade of the 20th century, the typical African American school was nothing more than a deteriorating log cabin, shack, or dilapidated church building filled with children for only three or four months out of the year. Often, the teacher had only slightly more knowledge than the students. Washington soon realized that rural African American communities needed qualified teachers and quality school buildings. In 1905, with money from Anna T. Jeanes, Washington established the Jeanes fund, which provided for the employment of qualified teachers to work in these rural schools, particularly those in the African American communities (VDHR 2007).

Washington quickly came to realize that he could not continue the program on his own. To improve educational facilities, Washington then turned to Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, a trustee of the Tuskegee Institute. With Rosenwald's backing, Washington launched one of the most ambitious school building programs ever undertaken in the United States (VDHR 2007, Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014). With a guarantee from Rosenwald to supply a third of the necessary funds, Washington implemented a program where communities would raise a third of the funds, and the state would contribute the remaining money. Although Rosenwald and Washington hoped that members of the white community would also contribute funds to the school building construction, it became apparent that white residents rarely contributed substantial amounts for the school building (VDHR 2007).

An integral component of Washington and Rosenwald's educational philosophy was industrial education. To make sure leading industrial knowledge was passed on, every Rosenwald school included an industrial room. The Rosenwald Fund never challenged segregation but rather provided eighth-grade education, including "industrial" classes in farming and home economics. Rosenwald schools educated students to be good farmers and housewives (VDHR 2007).

The Rosenwald School Building Fund represented a landmark in the history of African American education. As a result of the Fund's initiatives, more African American children went to school longer. They also benefited from better-trained teachers in well-constructed and equipped schools. Rosenwald money helped stimulate increases in public tax money for African American education, and Rosenwald schools eventually served as community centers where not only students but also their parents learned better methods of agriculture, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition (VDHR 2007).

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From 1913 to 1937, the Rosenwald School Building Fund constructed schools in 833 counties in 15 Southern states exclusively for African Americans. By the time the last of the schools had been constructed, the Rosenwald Fund had provided money to improve educational conditions for over 648,000 African American students. It also provided generations of African Americans with better educational opportunities (VDHR 2007).

In addition to the educational benefits, Rosenwald schools also became active community centers for rural African Americans. As Samuel L. Smith, Director of the Southern Office, noted, "the best modern school is one which is designed to serve the entire community for twelve months in the year." (VDHR 2007). In these community centers, the Jeanes Supervisors taught better agricultural methods, established homemakers' clubs, and held home product exhibits. Jeanes teachers and supervisors also started home garden and boys' agricultural clubs, worked for school and community improvement, and taught basic skills such as sewing and cooking. The Rosenwald schools became the site of musicals, theater productions, pageants, and industrial exhibits. The schools often set the standard for the neighborhood regarding architecture, sanitation, and maintenance (VDHR 2007).

Mathews County received three grants from the Rosenwald Foundation. In 1923, a school opened in Hudgins for \$3,500. Rosenwald provided \$700, the County provided \$1,200, and the local African American community provided the remaining \$1,600. The school was a two-teacher school and became the first of its kind for African Americans in the County. That school is no longer standing. In 1926, the County secured funding for Antioch School and Thomas Hunter School. The Antioch School operated as a school from 1927 to 1948. With desegregation occurring throughout the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, Rosenwald Schools began to deteriorate. Many of them were either repurposed or simply closed. In the early 1950s, Antioch Baptist Church used the building as a fellowship/dining hall. The church added a dining hall to its worship building in 1977, and the school building then became a space for youth activities (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014, Stiffler 2025).

In the late 1980s, Pastor Angelo Chatmon made plans to renovate the school building. He wanted to convert half of the building to a pastoral apartment and use the rest of the building as a church library/museum. The building was officially renamed the L. W. Wales Center, and late church trustee Georgienne B. Laws organized an African American history exhibit that opened in the building in 1997. Reverend Alvan B. James became the museum director, and he served in that position until he died in 1999. After Reverend James death, late church clerk V. Cavell Johnson took the lead in collecting and documenting artifacts and history for the museum. She also guided the team that organized and conducted museum tours, particularly during Black History Month for local students and the community (Johnson, 2026). The museum is now maintained by Antioch Baptist Church members (Cook, Brown, and Harpole 2014).

Criterion C – Architecture

The Julius Rosenwald School Building Fund (Fund) contributed money toward the construction of 5,358 school buildings in 833 counties in 15 southern states. This building program has been

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called one of the most ambitious school building programs ever undertaken. In addition to the considerable number of schools the Fund helped create, the Rosenwald schools reflected innovations in educational architectural design and set the standard for school construction for the 20th century.

One of the greatest contributions of the Julius Rosenwald Fund was the development of floor plans and specifications for a variety of schools. These plans and specifications ensured every community had a quality school. The designs commissioned by the Rosenwald School Building fund revolutionized rural school architecture. They included various plans using an east/west orientation for the best use of natural lighting, the introduction of industrial and cloak rooms, and specifications for details such as window shades, sanitary privies, heating stoves, and even the most beneficial interior paint palettes. The folding doors recommended for use between classrooms allowed the school to be used for other purposes, such as local community centers and meeting places (VDHR 2007).

As a student of schoolhouse design and construction, Samuel L. Smith, Director of the Southern Office, was a student of schoolhouse design and construction. Using his own education, he developed a series of plans incorporating these innovations and techniques for educational facilities. Smith published his designs one at a time in four-page pamphlets. These pamphlets became so popular that in 1924, he published an entire booklet entitled *Community School Plans*. The booklet proved equally popular, and Smith reissued it three times. Whites as well as African Americans used the booklet for schoolhouse construction. Smith also included designs for "teacherages," or teachers' homes, and specifications and recommendations on siting, painting, and landscaping (VDHR 2007).

Smith was particularly concerned with the use of natural light. Therefore, he sited his building plans on an east-west orientation. His plans also called for tall, double-hung, sash windows. In addition, he suggested various paint colors, seating arrangements, window treatments, and blackboard placement, all to capture the natural lighting. An integral part of the school design was the incorporation of an "industrial room," following the educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Smith also included an auditorium or connecting rooms with movable partitions to help facilitate the spaces as an all-purpose community room (VDHR 2007).

By 1928, one in five rural schools for African American students in the South was a Rosenwald school. These schools housed one-third of the region's rural African American schoolchildren and teachers. By the 1930s, thousands of old shack schoolhouses had been replaced with new, larger structures constructed from modern standardized plans, mostly from Smith's booklet. These buildings set the standard for schoolhouse architecture and design. They also influenced the construction, architecture, and maintenance of other structures in rural areas and nearby communities (VDHR 2007).

Antioch School
Name of Property

Mathews County, Virginia
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Cook, Dr. Elizabeth, David A. Brown, and Thane Harpole
2014 *Mathews County African-American Education Multiple Property Documentation. Available at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources archives, Richmond, Virginia.*

Hanbury Consulting, Inc.
2021 *Preliminary Information Form for Former Key Road School.* Available at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources archives, Richmond, Virginia.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S.
1995 *Rosenwald School Conference: Resource Guide.* Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

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2026 Personal communication with author via email on June 4, 2026.

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1990 *National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation.* Available online at <http://www.nps.gov>

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1891 *20th Annual School Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.* Richmond, Virginia.

Stiffler, Charlie
2025 The Geography of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia. Available online at <http://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories>

Thurley-Adams, Alicestyne.
1997 *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932.* Frankfort: The Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2004 *Rosenwald Schools in Virginia National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form.* Available at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources archives, Richmond, Virginia.

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2007 *Rosenwald Schools in Virginia*. Available at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources archives, Richmond, Virginia.

Wales, Rev. L. W.

1910 *Autobiographical Sketch of the Life and Labors of Rev. L. W. Wales*, D. D. Williamsburg, Virginia.

Walker, R. F.

1876 *6th Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*. Richmond, Virginia.

Werner, M. R.

1939 *Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian*. Harper and Brothers, New York, New York.

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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 057-5052

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.50

Antioch School
Name of Property

Mathews County, Virginia
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.363056 Longitude: -76.315118

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated boundary corresponds to Mathews County tax parcel number 39 A 156, as depicted on the attached Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary encompasses all land and resources historically associated with the Antioch School.

Antioch School
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County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dawn M. Muir and Carol Tyrer
organization: Circa~ Cultural Resource Management, LLC
street & number: 453 McLaws Circle, Suite 3
city or town: Williamsburg state: VA zip code: 23185
e-mail: dawn@circacrm.com
telephone: 757-880-4187
date: April 13, 2026

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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: Antioch School

City or Vicinity: Susan

County: Mathews

State: Virginia

Photographer: Carol Tyrer

Antioch School
Name of Property

Mathews County, Virginia
County and State

Date Photographed: March 31, 2026

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

1 of 39.

1. View of School, façade and front yard, and Garage, façade, looking east.
2. View of School, façade and front yard, looking east.
3. View of School, façade and side elevation, and Garage, façade, looking east.
4. View of School, façade, looking east.
5. View of School, façade and Garage, façade, looking east.
6. View of School, façade, looking east.
7. View of School, façade, looking east.
8. View of School, façade, looking east.
9. View of School, façade and side elevation, and Garage, façade, looking northeast.
10. View of School, façade and side elevation, looking southeast.
11. View of School, rear elevation, looking west.
12. View of School, side and rear elevation, looking southwest.
13. View of School, rear elevation, looking southwest.
14. View of School, side and rear elevation and Garage, rear elevation, looking northwest.
15. View of School, side elevation and Garage, façade and side elevation, looking southeast.
16. View of School, side elevation and Garage façade, looking east.
17. View of School, side elevation and Garage, façade and side elevation, looking northeast.
18. View of Garage, rear elevation, looking west.
19. View of School, interior, southern entrance, looking west.
20. View of School, interior, northern entrance, looking west.
21. View of School, interior, northern entrance, looking east.
22. View of School, interior, main room, looking north.
23. View of School, interior, main room, looking north.
24. View of School, interior, main room, looking east.
25. View of School, interior, main room, looking south.
26. View of School, interior, main room, looking south.
27. View of School, interior, main room, looking south.
28. View of School, interior, main room, looking north.
29. View of School, interior, main room and restroom, looking west.
30. View of School, interior, restroom, looking south.
31. View of School, interior, restroom, looking west.
32. View of School, interior, restroom, looking north.
33. View of School, interior, restroom, looking west.
34. View of School, interior, restroom, looking northwest.

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35. View of School, interior, restroom, looking south.
36. View of School, interior, restroom, looking west.
37. View of School, interior, storage room, looking south.
38. View of School, interior, storage room, looking north.
39. View of School, interior, storage room, looking west.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels, with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

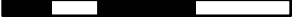
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

LOCATION MAP

Antioch School
Mathews County, VA
DHR ID# 057-5052

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
37.363056, -76.315118

 Nominated Boundary

0 100 200 300
 Feet



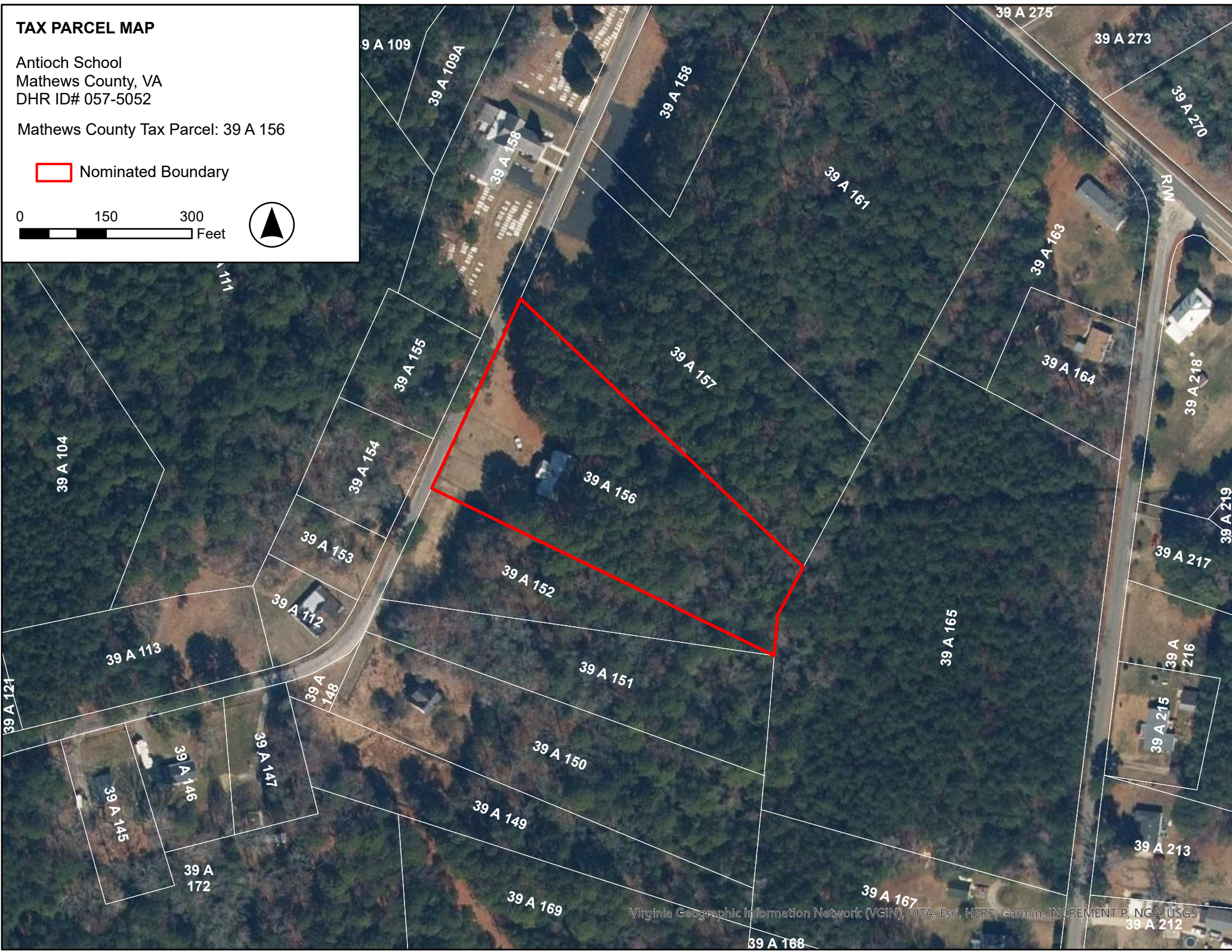
TAX PARCEL MAP

Antioch School
Mathews County, VA
DHR ID# 057-5052

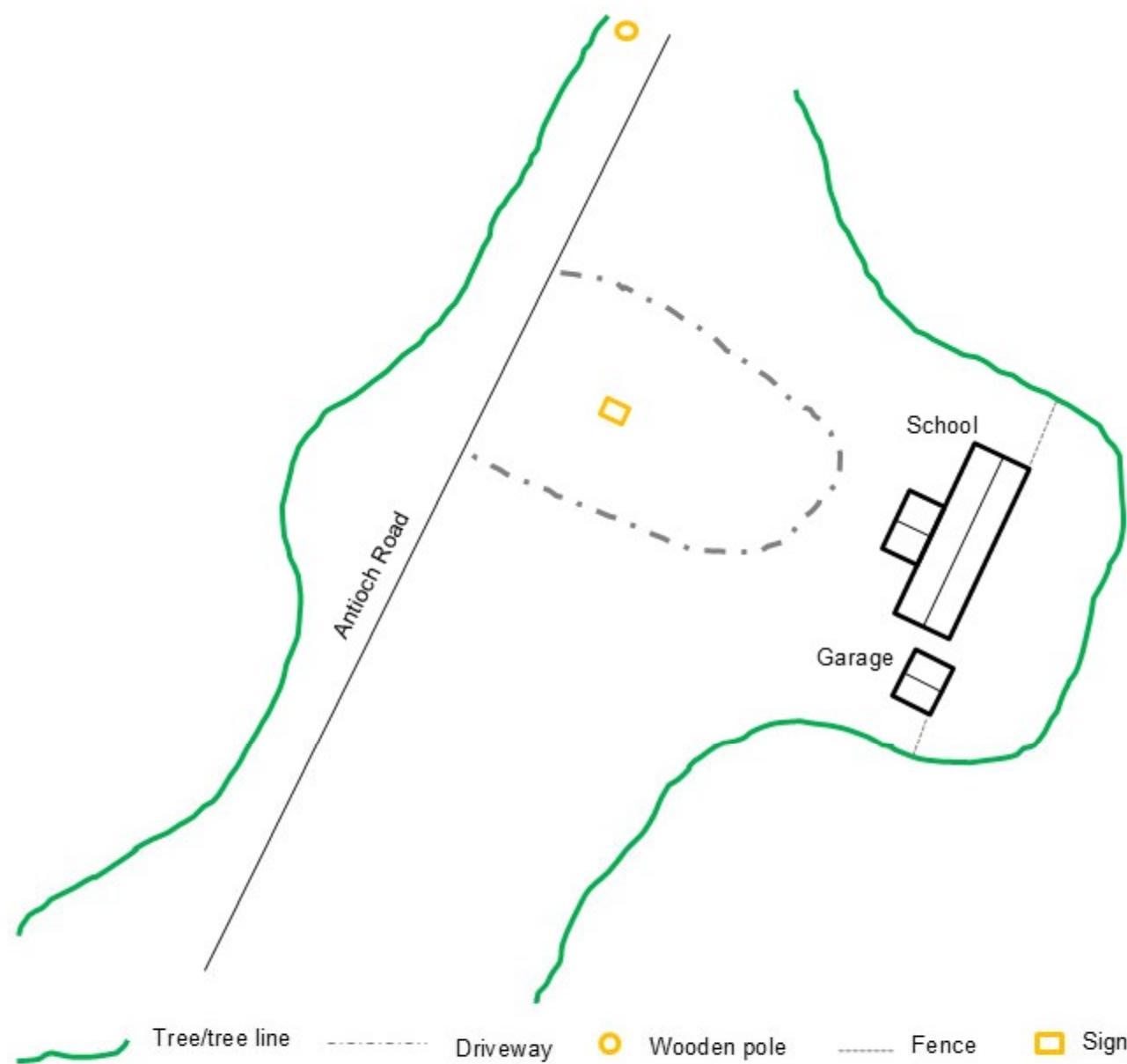
Mathews County Tax Parcel: 39 A 156

 Nominated Boundary

0 150 300
Feet

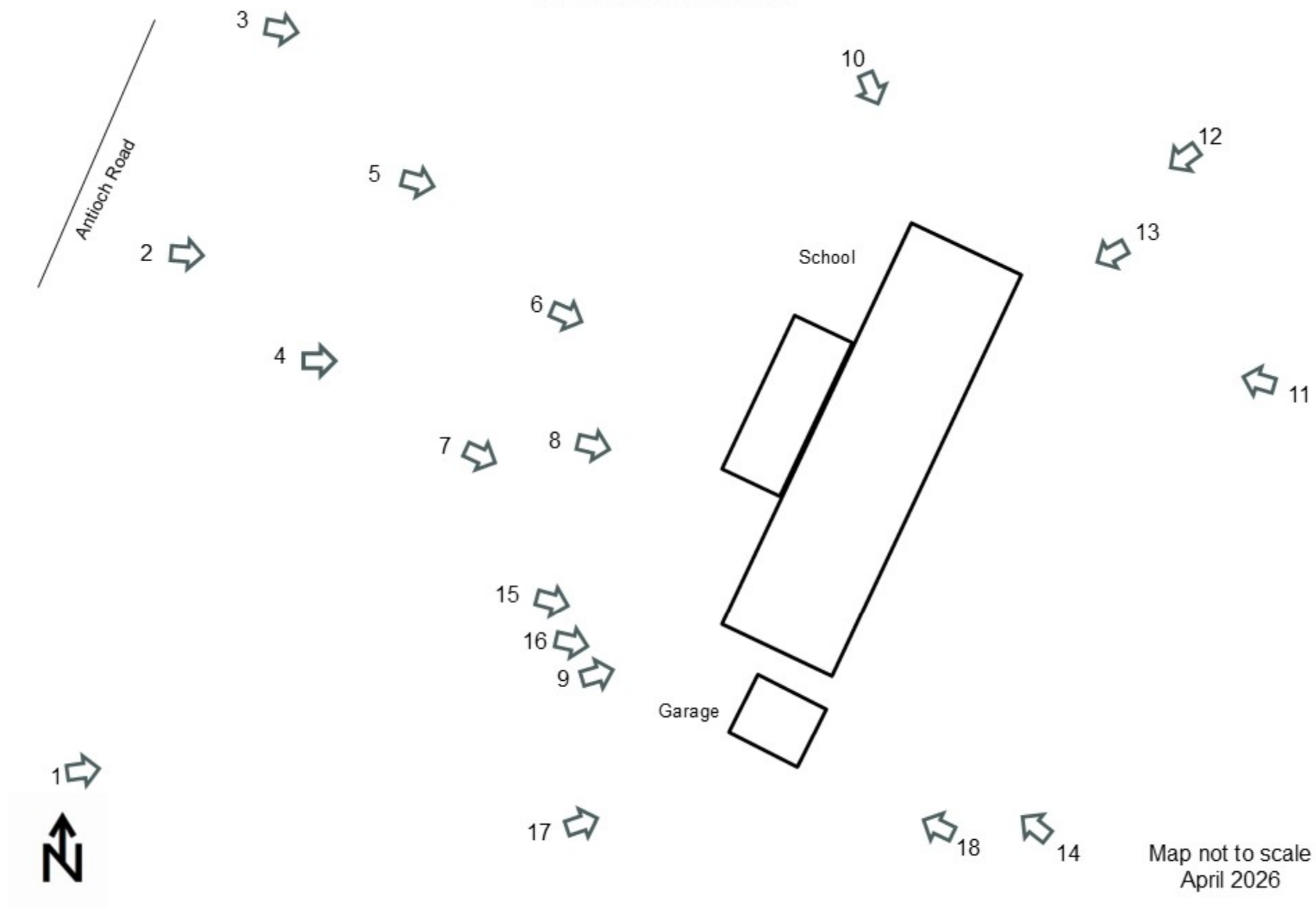


Site Plan for Antioch School 183 Antioch Road

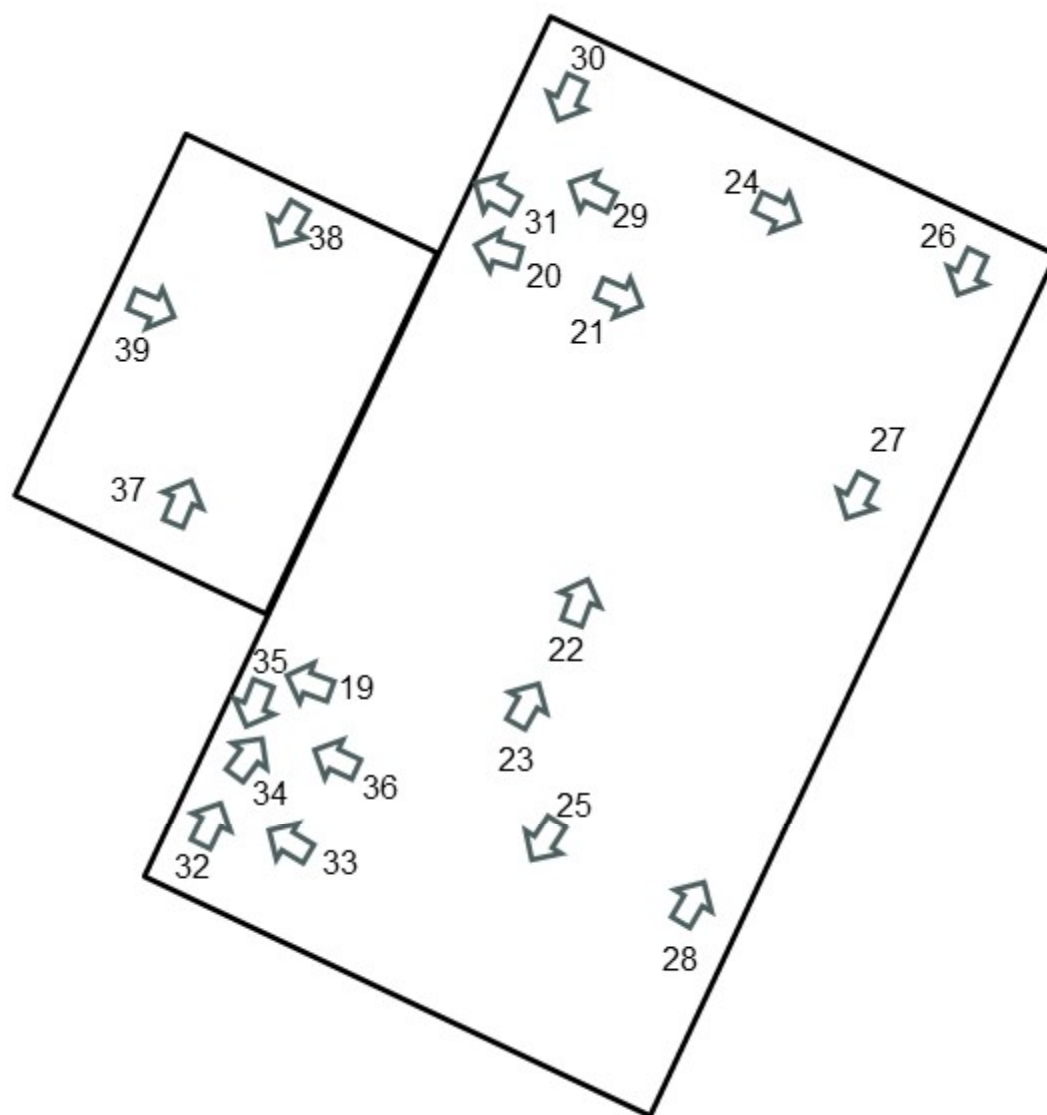


Map not to scale
April 2026

Exterior Photo map for Antioch School 183 Antioch Road



Interior Photo map for Antioch School
183 Antioch Road



Map not to scale
April 2026



183

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH
L.W. WALES CENTER
AND PARSONAGE

EST. 1927





































