

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 Property

Historic name: Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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



2. Location

Street & number: 325 Holguin Road

City or town: Vado State: NM County: Dofia Ana

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 X statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

	<u>12/16/16</u>
Jeff Pappas, Ph.D., New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	

Signature of commenting official:	Date

Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Dofia Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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:)

Joe Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

2-7-17
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

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</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 _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education: school _____

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Brick, Asphalt, Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing 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 Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School is a rectangular brick elementary school, which was built by Doña Ana County in 1926 after the school board chose to racially segregate its public schools. The Dunbar School is located on the south side of Vado in the Lower Rio Grande Valley between the river and Interstate 25, roughly fifteen miles south of Las Cruces. The symmetrical main (east) façade features a center entrance with a window on each side. The walls are distinguished by the red-brick veneer, which is mottled with irregular bands of white. The low-pitched hip roof includes gabled vents on the north and south sides. These elevations feature a bank of four windows. The bank on the north side is missing one window and a south-side window was replaced with a door. The rear façade features a center entrance with a bank of four windows on each side. The windows, which have been replaced, fit the original openings. The interior plan, which has been altered to accommodate its use as a Head Start facility, includes classrooms, a kitchen, office, and other spaces in a mostly nonhistoric configuration. A noncontributing playground is located on the front and south sides of the school. North of the school and outside the National Register boundary is a Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority water plant with storage tanks and pump houses.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Description

The Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School is a rectangular brick elementary school, which was built by Doña Ana County in 1926 after the school board chose to racially segregate its public schools the previous year. The school is located on the south side of Vado in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, roughly fifteen miles south of Las Cruces. Land use in the area is predominantly agricultural. The windows, which have been replaced, fit the original openings.

The low-pitched hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles and includes gable vents on the north and south sides (photos 7, 10). The roof is supported by wood joists with a twelve-inch soffit. Three chimneys at the north, south, and middle of the building likely served as flues for stoves that heated the classrooms in winter. The roof supports the addition of four swamp coolers to cool the classrooms in summer.

The main façade, which faces Holguin Road to the east, features a center entrance flanked on either side by a large sash window. The brick exterior walls are laid in a soft lime-and-cement mortar (photos 1-2). The brick bond is mostly seven-course American bond. The walls are distinguished by the red-brick veneer, which is mottled with irregular bands of white (photo 4). The main entrance features concrete steps, a concrete ramp built against the façade, and double-leaf steel doors with a transom (photo 4). The rear elevation features an asymmetrical center entrance with a metal door flanked by a bank of four sash windows on each side (photos 8-9).

The south elevation includes a metal door with two concrete steps and a concrete landing (photo 7). Next to the door is a bank of three sash windows with concrete sills. The door was probably added in place of a window. The north elevation features a bank of four windows with concrete sills (photo 10). One window is missing and its opening has been filled with plywood.

The interior plan has been altered since the school desegregated in 1957. When Dunbar Elementary was a school for African American children between 1926 and 1957, the plan featured a corridor along the front of the school, which provided access to four classrooms (see Boyer floor plan). Former-student Bobbie Boyer recalls that the center partition could be folded so the two center classrooms could be joined to form a large open space for schoolwide events.

The current floor plan reflects the needs of the Head Start program in Vado (see current floor plan and photos 11-18). One of few remaining elements of the historic plan is a remnant of the front corridor (photos 12-13). Most of the building features open classroom spaces. A kitchen, office, storage room, and restrooms for children and adults have been added.

The historic landscape associated with the school includes the grass-covered front lawn and the two sidewalks, on which boys and girls lined up in the mornings. These were constructed in 1937 and inscribed "WPA—1937" (photos 1-3, 6). An asphalt basketball court is located at the

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

rear of the school (photo 8). The school had been surrounded by agricultural fields and, although there is new development, the west side of the school is bounded by a farm field.

The National Register boundary includes approximately one acre of a 1.75-acre lot owned by the Gadsden Independent School District. The school district permitted the public water works to build a water storage plant adjacent to the school. In addition to the storage tanks and pump houses, a concrete-block shed was built within a few feet of the north side of the school. This shed is not included in the National Register boundary.

Historic Integrity

The historic integrity of the Dunbar School is high. It retains its historic location and significant aspects of its original agricultural setting. The exterior retains its original design, materials, and evidence of workmanship. The long, rectangular form of the building remains intact and the roof retains its low-pitched hip form, chimneys, and dormer vents. The distinctive mottled brickwork and the fenestration remain intact. The original openings remain unaltered, though the windows have been replaced with modern sash windows and the original wood doors have been replaced with steel doors.

The interior has been substantially altered from its original four-classroom plan. A remnant of the historic front corridor remains and there are three open classroom spaces. During its use as a Head Start facility, a kitchen, office, storage room, and restrooms for children and adults have been added. There is little remaining of the four-classroom interior that served students from 1926 to 1957. Though altered on the interior, the Dunbar School retains sufficient historic integrity because it is a rare, surviving resource associated with the racial segregation of African Americans in southern New Mexico. The school building continues to serve the small, rural community of Vado, New Mexico, as a community meeting place and as an important community landmark building.

Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

The Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School building is counted as one contributing building. The front lawn with the WPA sidewalk is counted as one contributing site. The basketball court on the west side of the school is counted as one contributing structure.

The playground and playground equipment on the east and south sides are counted one noncontributing site.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

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.)

- 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

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1926-1957

Significant Dates

1926—Dona Aña County Schools built Dunbar Elementary School

1957—Last racially segregated class graduated Dunbar Elementary School.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Morris, S.D. (Builder)

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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

The Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School in Vado, New Mexico, is eligible for listing at the state level under National Register Criterion A in the areas of social history and black ethnic heritage because the school is an important surviving example of racial segregation in southern New Mexico between 1925 and 1957. The Dunbar School retains its historic exterior appearance from the so-called “Jim Crow” period of racial segregation when nine school boards along the Texas border in eastern and southern New Mexico segregated their schools in accordance with a state law passed in 1925. School boards in the communities of Alamogordo, Artesia, Carlsbad, Clovis, Hobbs, Las Cruces, Roswell, Tucumcari, and Vado built six separate elementary schools and two high schools for African American children.

Racial segregation in New Mexico remained distinct from Southern states in which Jim Crow laws affected every aspect of life for African Americans. In New Mexico, segregation was limited to self-selected school systems, but in some counties African Americans continued to enjoy lives integrated with the white community. Additionally, black schools in the South were mostly underfunded, substandard, and often over-crowded. Segregated schools in New Mexico built for African American children were often solidly built, as indicated by the brick-and-concrete Dunbar School in Vado. Racial segregation in the state lasted from 1925 until roughly 1954, with the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which overturned the separate but equal doctrine. The Dunbar school in Vado, which is among a very small number of segregated schools built in the state, is a landmark in the history of segregation and in the history of African Americans in New Mexico.

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

Education for all children in New Mexico is enshrined in its Constitution. Adopted on January 21, 1911, the New Mexico Constitution provides in Section I of Article XII that, “A uniform system of free public schools, sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in that state shall be established and maintained.” The day-to-day details for the establishment and maintenance of the schools were left to the state legislature. After Southern states had long adopted the “separate but equal” doctrine, New Mexico children were educated together, regardless of race or ethnicity.

By the 1920s, many Americans felt unsettled by the massive immigration from Europe that had begun in the late 19th century. The newcomers, they believed, threatened traditional American values. In 1915, the Ku Klux Klan was revived with an updated message of racial and religious opposition tailored to each region of the country. Paid speakers railed against Catholics in the northeast, Jews in Eastern cities, Hispanics in California, and African American in the South.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

The Klan, with its white robes and methods of violence and intimidation, tapped into existing American sentiments so successfully that by the mid-1920s, Klan membership reached three million. The Klan exerted its influence in local and state elections, and in 1925 and 1928, thousands of Klansmen in full Klan regalia marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

In Texas, an adjacent state that fought with the Confederacy, Jim Crow laws were embraced to ensure racial segregation for both blacks and Hispanics. Segregation embraced all aspects of life for minorities, including separate schools, churches, residential districts, and most public places such as restaurants, theaters, and barber shops. Most communities in Texas included a "Negro quarter" and a "Mexican quarter." Black citizens could not attend sports or cultural events, eat at better restaurants, or get lodging at the finer hotels unless these facilities provided separate accommodations. Schools for African Americans uniformly suffered from inadequate funding and poor facilities.

After an influx of white residents from Southern states, New Mexico adopted Jim Crow laws. In 1925 legislators passed a law regarding segregated schooling, which stated:

That where, in the opinion of the County School Board or Municipal School Board and on the approval of said opinion by the State Board of Education, it is for the best advantage and interest of the school that separate rooms be provided for the teaching of pupils of African descent, and said rooms are so provided, such pupils may not be admitted to school rooms occupied by pupils of Caucasian or other descent. Provided further, that such rooms set aside for the teaching of such pupils of African descent shall be as good and as well kept as those used by pupils of Caucasian or other descent, and teaching therein shall be as efficient. Provided further, that pupils of Caucasian or other descent may not be admitted to the school rooms so provided for those of African descent.

As a result of the 1925 school segregation law, school boards in communities along the eastern and southern borders with Texas—Alamogordo, Artesia, Carlsbad, Clovis, Hobbs, Las Cruces, Roswell, Tucumcari, and Vado—embraced racially segregated schools. Almost immediately, counties built six separate elementary schools and two high schools for African American children.

Racial segregation in New Mexico was limited to the self-selected school boards and the level of intensity varied among cities. In Las Cruces, racial segregation did not encompass all aspects of life as it did in Texas and other Southern states. Historian Clarence Fielder is quick to point out that segregation in Doña Ana County departed from widespread practices in the South by being

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

largely confined to the classroom. In Doña Ana County, Fielder recalls, “Blacks lived all over Las Cruces, the same way with Hispanics, and they had good relations, although you didn’t go to school with themWhen you went home in the afternoons, those are the kids you played with out in the street. We didn’t have a swimming pool. We’d go swimming in the irrigation ditches. Those are the kids you’d pal around with, that you’d go to the movies with.” Vado Historical Society Board members, John and Espy Holguin, relish similar memories. They remembered thinking as children how crazy it was to have sleep-overs, catch crawdads in the drains, and play together all weekend, and then attend separate schools come Monday morning.

In Tucumcari, where the school board built a small one-room elementary school for African Americans, a barracks building with hand-me-down textbooks and furniture from the white and Hispanic school, segregation encompassed all aspects of life for blacks as it did in the American South. African Americans in Tucumcari could not swim in the public pool and were required to sit in balconies to watch movies. They could not register at the city’s finer hotels and could eat in restaurants only in designated sections for blacks. As in most public accommodations, blacks were required to enter from separate, usually rear entrances. Rather than accept these day-to-day humiliations, many African Americans chose to self-segregate and avoid the local movie theater, restaurants, and hotels. In 1952, black parents requested that African American students be permitted to attend the local high school, rather than send them eighty-five miles on a bus to the Lincoln Jackson High School in Clovis. The Tucumcari school board relented and desegregated its schools in 1952.

Racial segregation in New Mexico ended mostly in 1954 with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. In New Mexico, unlike Southern states, compliance with the Supreme Court ruling occurred either immediately or within a few years of the decision. The New Mexico school segregation law was repealed in 1967.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

In 1869, developers with Kendleton and Board House in Texas were among the earliest speculators to seek profits by establishing towns exclusively for blacks. Between ten- and twenty-thousand African Americans left the American South between 1873 and 1880 seeking land and opportunities. The majority of African Americans who participated in this exodus came from Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas. Nicodemus, the first black town in Kansas, was founded in September 1877. Publicity in eastern and southern cities extolled its success, leading other speculators to develop black communities. Author Norman L. Crockett defined this phenomenon as the establishment of a “separate community containing a population of at least ninety-percent black, in which residents attempted to determine their own political destiny.” By the 1930s, black towns were platted in Alabama, California, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, and New Mexico.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

In the Territory of New Mexico in 1850, census records indicate that there were 22 free blacks living in the territory, most of them in Santa Fe. Ten years later, that number had increased to 64. By 1870, the number of blacks had increased to 172. During the 1870s and 1880s, freed blacks were attracted to ranching and mining activities. By 1890, the black population reached 1,956 statewide. Clarence Fielder and historian Terry Moody determined that the black population in Doña Ana County grew from 78 in 1920 to 649 in 1930, the decade in which Vado was founded by diaspora from the Blackdom community in New Mexico.

The Boyers in Georgia and New Mexico

Henry Boyer originated the idea of an independent black community in New Mexico. Boyer, a freed slave from Pullam, Georgia, drove a wagon as a civilian in Colonel Alexander Doniphan's battalion of mostly African American Missouri Volunteers. He arrived in New Mexico in 1846 during the Mexican-American War. Upon his return to Georgia, he described to his family the region's "head high grass" filled with "antelope, buffalo, and whitetail deer." He remembered the spacious beauty and special qualities of the landscape and its people. Boyer never returned to New Mexico, but his son Francis "Frank" Marion Boyer, the first Boyer child born free from slavery, moved to New Mexico. As part of his college education at Augusta Baptist Seminary (Morehouse College in Atlanta) and Fisk University in Nashville Tennessee, Frank learned about the legal requirements for homesteading. As a teacher, Frank urged his African American students, colleagues, and friends to challenge the daily abuses encountered during the "Jim Crow" era in the South.

In Georgia in 1896, Frank Boyer and his friends were horrified by the fate of a town barber who accidentally nicked a white customer's face and neck while shaving. After the second nick, the white customer shot the black barber. An all-white jury took ten minutes to acquit the shooter. Frank's life was threatened by the Ku Klux Klan because he was an outspoken critic of segregation. Fearing for his safety, Frank and two of his students fled Georgia that same year. They walked more than one-thousand miles to New Mexico with the goal of establishing a self-sustaining black community. By 1900, Frank Boyer, in an effort to fund his black community, had worked as a cook on a cattle drive, a Chisolm ranch hand, and a laborer on nearby white-owned farms. He also worked as a bellhop at the Roswell Hotel for several years. His wife, Ella Louise McGruder, a teacher, and their four children arrived in New Mexico in 1901.

The Blackdom Community

Frank Boyer was a founder of Blackdom, the first community in the New Mexico established by African Americans in 1901. Located eighteen miles south of Roswell, Blackdom reached its zenith c.1910. The early success of the community is due in part to Boyer's out-of-state newspaper advertisements, which appealed to African American homesteaders. Blackdom included 15,000 acres and was home to twenty-five families with a population of roughly three

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

hundred. In the early 20th century, African American land ownership was rare, and exclusively black towns were more unusual.

Blackdom published a weekly newspaper and included a blacksmith's shop, hotel, retail stores, a post office, and a Baptist Church, which also served as a school. In a letter to the editor of *The Chicago Defender*, a newspaper with predominantly black readership, Lucy Henderson was persuasive in her appeal for others to join her in Blackdom: "Here the black man has an equal chance with the white man. Here you are reckoned at the value which you place upon yourself. Your future is in your own hands."

Newspapers in surrounding towns had varying opinions on Blackdom. *The Roswell Record* on September 10, 1915 reported:

On Sunday the village of Blackdom consisting entirely of colored people will hold a dedication service for a new Baptist Church which they have just completed at a cost of \$1,000. Refreshments for white people will be served separately and they are cordially invited.

A commentary in the *Artesia Advocate* on September 19, 1903 stated:

The Blackdom Townsite Company has filed its articles of incorporation with the Secretary of New Mexico. Those citizens of the valley who supposed the idea of an exclusive Negro town in Chaves County was a huge joke are badly mistaken. . . . If the colonists work hard, behave themselves and do exactly what their white neighbors want them to do, all will be well. Otherwise, otherwise. . .

Boyer, with a loan from the Pacific Mutual Company, dug a well and began cultivating an apple orchard and growing alfalfa. Incoming settlers built homesteads around Frank and Ella Boyer's house. Despite the arid conditions and an inability to afford deep agricultural wells, many families owned windmills and were able to dry-farm crops and raise hogs and chickens. Blackdom farmers produced cotton, cantaloupes, onions, alfalfa, apples, and sugar beets.

By 1916, the artesian wells began to dry up as the Pecos Valley water table was severely lowered resulting in increased alkali concentrations in the soil, which made farming difficult. Weakened crops became infested with worms. Unable to afford the cost of drilling deeper wells, most of the town's settlers began to work on nearby white-owned farms. Blackdom was challenged by problems with crops, a severe water shortage, and the ensuing financial hardships. As failures to make improvements under the federal Homestead Act mounted and some families suffered

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

foreclosures, residents of Blackdom moved to the nearby towns of Roswell, Dexter, and Las Cruces.

Despite the decline of Blackdom, the Boyers and Keyes families earned clear titles to their homesteads, on which they placed mortgages to provide loans to others in need. Frank Boyer later failed to make payments on a loan for an irrigation pump, which led to the foreclosure of the Boyer home in 1921. Frank moved his family to Pacheco and then to Vado. The post office in Blackdom closed in 1920.

On June 9, 1922, the *Artesia Advocate* noted:

An experiment in the colonization of the Negro, which was attempted several years ago at the little village of Blackdom, has proven to be a failure, despite the optimistic expectations of several of the responsible persons . . . Blackdom has passed its better days and the Negro town and church is no more.

Blackdom was officially incorporated in 1921, though most of its population had already moved to more promising communities. Currently, only foundations remain of the Blackdom settlement.

African Americans Move to Vado

Although school records show that some residents remained through the 1930s, Blackdom was all but abandoned by 1929. The Mesilla Valley held more promise for African American farmers. Elephant Butte Dam to the north began operations in 1915 to provide southern New Mexico with water for irrigation. The Boyers were the first African Americans to farm in Doña Ana County, and in Vado they established the only continuous black community in New Mexico. Like Blackdom, Vado offered challenges to farmers. In the early 1880s, when the Santa Fe Railway made its way through Vado, the earthen rail bed blocked receding flood waters from returning to the Rio Grande channel. Slow to drain, the land was left increasingly saturated with alkali. Eventually only prickly desert scrub, such as mesquite, creosote, and tornillos, could thrive in the poor soils. The land company owners believed that the soil was worthless for farming and were eager to enter into long-term contracts with newcomers strapped for cash.

Frank Boyer, his family, and their friends worked on white-owned farms and, when time allowed, worked to clear their own bosque plots, dug drainage canals, cleaned the salty soil, and planted crops. Hobart Boyer was twenty-one years of age when he moved to Vado with his parents, Frank and Ella. Nearly sixty years later, in an interview with *New Mexico Magazine*, Hobart recalled, "I'd work another man's land for nine or ten hours and then go home and work

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

my own, clearing mesquite and tornillos by hand until dark.” Soon after settling in Vado, Hobart’s father platted the town, established a Baptist church, and founded a one-room school.

In the 1930s and 1940s, cotton prices increased, which allowed black families to acquire large farms with rich soil. Frank Boyer established the Valley Grove Masonic Lodge No. 9 and a literary society in an effort to create a tightly knit community. Frank’s grandchildren remembered that he “was very, very big on education,” encouraging “all of his kids and grandkids” to attend college. His persistence earned Frank the nickname, “Black Moses” because of his ability to attract African American settlers to Blackdom and later to Vado.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

The Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School, named for renowned black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, was constructed as a result of the 1925 state law permitting racial segregation in public schools. In 1914, when Central School was built as a high school, children black, white, and Hispanic children attend school together, although students were prohibited from speaking Spanish on school grounds. The name of Central School was changed to Las Cruces Union High School in 1925, when it moved to a new building on Alameda Avenue.

In 1924, the Las Cruces School District began to racially segregate its schools, removing thirty-four African American students from Central Elementary School and sending them to school at Phillips Chapel CME Church in Las Cruces. Eight black children in Vado were sent to a make-shift school in the nearby village of La Union.

In 1926, the Dunbar School was established as the segregated school for black children. The Dunbar School was funded by the Doña Ana County Department of Education and built by S. D. Morris of Chamberino, New Mexico. The brick-and-concrete school was wired for electricity, but students used boys’ and girls’ privies on the west side of the school. Additionally, the school did not include a library, cafeteria, or central heat. Mitch Boyer, grandson of Frank Boyer, recalled that the school had one teacher for multiple grades and its four classrooms held as many as 175 students. In some instances, overcrowding required that classes were held in a nearby church.

When the school formally opened on February 10, 1926, it taught elementary and high school students. Later, students travelled to Las Cruces for high school at the segregated Booker T. Washington School, which was built on Solano Street in 1934. When the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown v. Board* decision in 1954, it was with the proviso that states desegregate their schools “with all deliberate speed.” In the South, most schools were not desegregated until 1970. Compliance with the *Brown* ruling came much faster in New Mexico. Mitch Boyer remembers, “We were the last class here [at Dunbar Elementary School] in 1957 before they integrated the Gadsden District. . . .and allowed us to go to other schools.”

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Following desegregation, the school was used as a community center and now serves as a Head Start facility. The Vado Historical Society meets in the school, which continues to serve as the main gathering place for residents of Vado. The town of Vado, once a majority African American community, is currently a mostly Hispanic community, with a small number of black residents.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Primary Sources

Artesia Advocate, September 19, 1903.

Bureau of the Census. *The Statistics of the Population of the United States from the Ninth Census: 1870*. Washington, DC: Census Bureau (1872): 608. Microfilm.

Bureau of the Census. *The Statistics of the Population of the United States from the Tenth Census: 1880*. Washington, DC: Census Bureau (1883): Volume I, 402. Microfilm.

Bureau of the Census. *The Statistics of the Population of the United States from the Twelfth Census: 1895*. Washington, DC: Census Bureau (1872): Part I, 422. Microfilm.

Bureau of the Census. *The Statistics of the Population of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*. Washington, DC: Census Bureau (1913), 171. Microfilm.

Constitution of the State of New Mexico. Adopted 21 January 1911.

Doña Ana County Warranty Deed Number 59154 dated October 1925 between the Brazito Development and Power Company and the Doña Ana County Board of Education, School District Number 17.

Doña Ana County Warranty Deed Number 86959 dated 6 March 1928 between the Brazito Development and Power Company to John Adams, et. al., Trustees.

Giles, C. R. "Boyer Envisioned a Black City; Vado—Chance for Dream Dying." *El Paso Times* October 26, 1975.

Letter from Charlotte H. Hetherington, Simons, Cuddy, and Friedman to Alfredo R. Fierro, August 16, 1990.

Letter from Alfredo R. Fierro to Esperanza Holguin, September 19, 1990.

Loomis, Neil H. Property appraisal report. Las Cruces, NM, November 30, 1989.

Paterson, Kent. *Frontera del Sur*. "Enduring Legacies." New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe, New Mexico. n.d.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

Secondary Sources

Axelrod, Dr. Alan and Charles Phillips. *What Everyone Should Know About the 20th Century*. Holbrook: Adams Media Corporation, 1995.

Baton, Maisha, Ph. D. and Henry Walt, Ph. D. "A History of Blackdom, N. M. in the Context of the African American Post Civil War Colonization Movement." Project No. 35-95-100009.9. New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division, October 29, 1996.

"Black Heritage in New Mexico: The Town of Blackdom." Albuquerque, n.d.

De León, Arnoldo and Robert A. Calvert, Texas Historical Commission, "Segregation." tshaonline.org

Glasrud, Bruce A., ed. *African American History in New Mexico: Portraits from Five Hundred Years*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013.

Goodman, I. B. "Childhood Memories of Southern New Mexico." *Password* 18 (Summer 1973).

Julyan, Robert. *The Place Names of New Mexico*. Second edition. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1998.

Kurtz, Don. "Vado: Refuge on the Rio." *New Mexico Magazine*. (July 1980).

"Public Education in New Mexico: A Report of the New Mexico Educational Survey Board." Nashville: Division of Surveys and Field Services George Peabody College, 1948.

Richardson, Barbara J. *Black Directory of New Mexico: Black Pioneers of New Mexico a Documentary and Pictorial History*. Bicentennial Edition 1776-1976. Rio Rancho: Panorama Press, 1976.

Richardson, Barbara J. "Black Cowboys Also Rode." *Password* 31 (Spring 1986).

Walton, M. A. "Vado, New Mexico: A Dream in the Desert," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* 2 (January 1995): 17-23.

Williams, Robin M. and Margaret W. Ryan. *Schools in Transition: Community Experiences in Desegregation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Wiseman, Regge N. "Glimpses of Late Frontier Life in New Mexico's Southern Pecos Valley: Archaeology and History of Blackdom and Seven Rivers." Museum of New Mexico, Office of Archaeological Studies, 2000.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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: Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 0.56 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 32.118195 Longitude: -106.662734
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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 property is indicated by a heavy black line on an attached map drawn to scale and corresponding to the point of latitude and longitude.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary includes the intact parcel historically associated with the Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jean Fulton, M. A. (Architectural Historian)
organization: TimeSprings, Inc./Conserving Cultural Resources
street & number: 3090 Snow Road
city or town: Las Cruces state: NM zip code: 88005
telephone: 575.649.3265
date: March 4, 2016

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title: Steven Moffson, State and National Register Coordinator
organization: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
street & number: 407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236
city or town: Santa Fe state: New Mexico zip: 87501
telephone: 505.476.04444
date: October 15 2016

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

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: Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

City or Vicinity: Vado

County: Doña Ana

State: New Mexico

Photographer: Steven Moffson

Date Photographed: September 30, 2016

Photographer: Jean Fulton

Date Photographed: February 26, 2013 (photos 4, 7-9)

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

- 1 of 18. Dunbar School and its setting, photographer facing west.
- 2 of 18. Main façade with historic sidewalks, photographer facing west.
- 3 of 18. Detail of sidewalk with "WPA—1939" stamp.
- 4 of 18. Detail of main entrance, photographer facing west.
- 5 of 18. Detail of brickwork on main façade, photographer facing west.
- 6 of 18. Main and south sides, photographer facing northwest.
- 7 of 18. Rear and south sides, photographer facing northeast.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

- 8 of 18. Rear façade, photographer facing east.
- 9 of 18. Bank of window on rear façade, photographer facing east.
- 10 of 18. North side and shed (not in National Register boundary), photographer facing south.
- 11 of 18. Interior, main entrance and main corridor, photographer facing south.
- 12 of 18. Interior, Main corridor, photographer facing north.
- 13 of 18. Interior classroom 1, photographer facing southwest.
- 14 of 18. Interior Kitchen, photographer facing north.
- 15 of 18. Interior classroom 2, photographer facing southwest.
- 16 of 18. Interior classroom 3, photographer facing southeast.
- 17 of 18. Interior South corridor, photographer facing south.
- 18 of 18. Interior Storage room, photographer facing east.

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.).

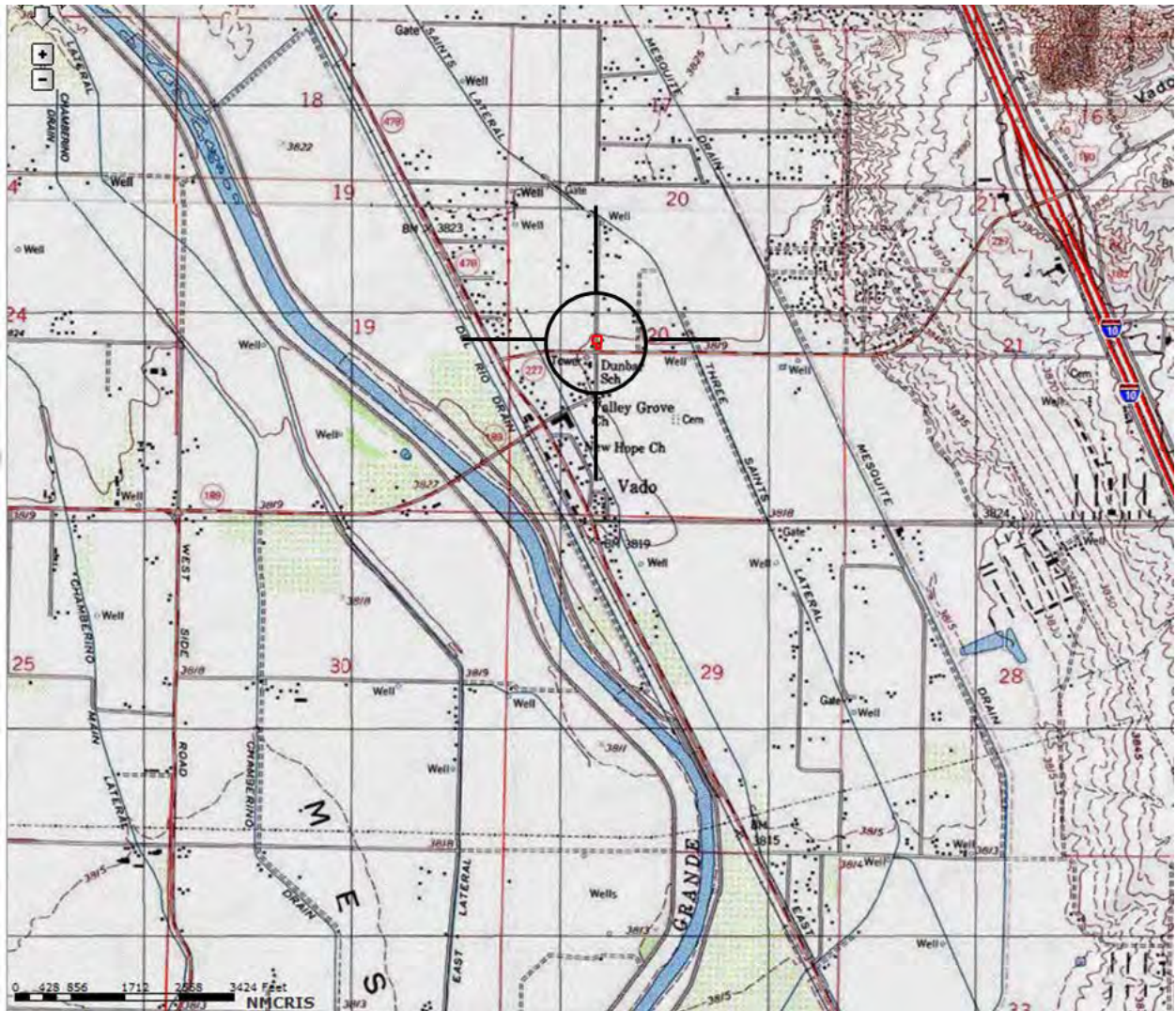
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Vado, Doña Ana County, New Mexico

National Register Boundary ———



Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State

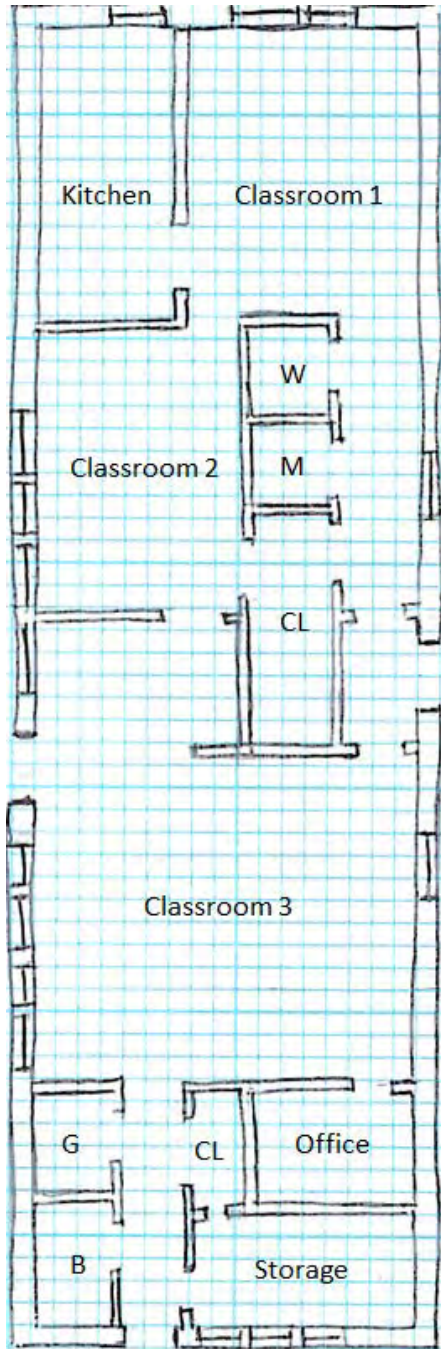


Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School
Vado, Doña Ana County, New Mexico
Floor Plan
No scale

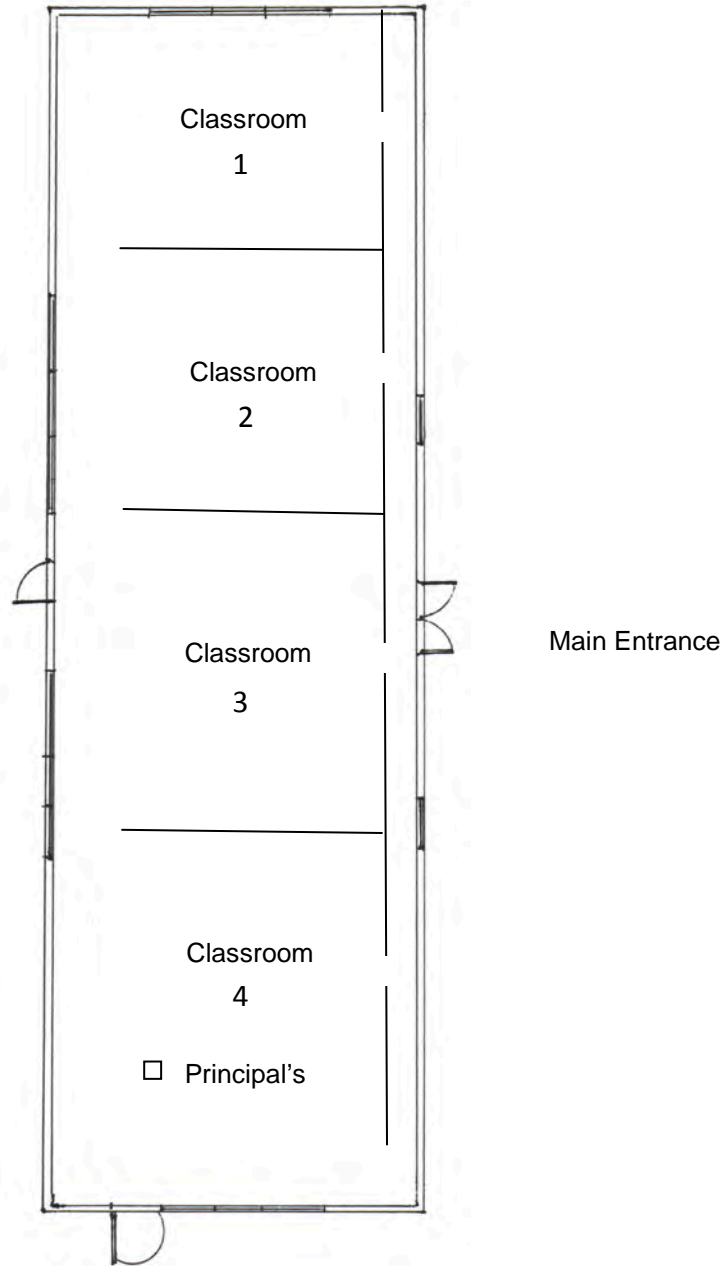


Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School, c.1957

Vado, Doña Ana County, New Mexico

No scale

Floor Plan c. 1957 based on the recollections of former student Bobbie Boyer.



Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



Students and Parents gather at the front entrance, no date



Children from Dunbar Elementary at Vado Church, no date

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



Boyer Family Reunion, 1976

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



1 of 18. Dunbar School and its setting, photographer facing west.



2 of 18. Main façade with historic sidewalks, photographer facing west.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



3 of 18. Detail of sidewalk with “WPA—1939” stamp.



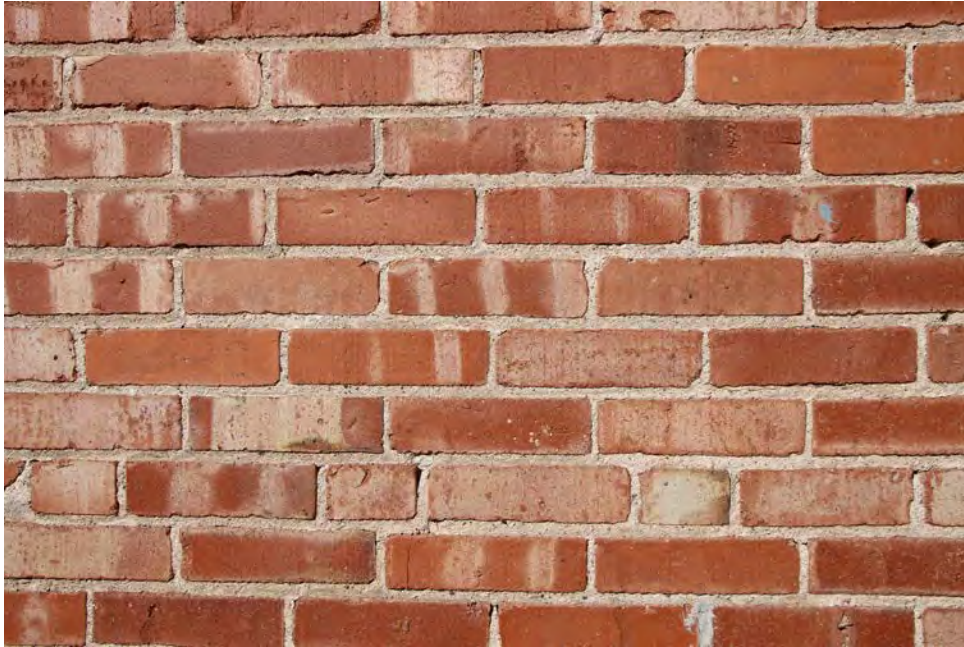
4 of 18. Detail of main entrance, photographer facing west.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



5 of 18. Detail of brickwork on main façade, photographer facing west.



6 of 18. Main and south sides, photographer facing northwest.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



7 of 18. Rear and south sides, photographer facing northeast.



8 of 18. Rear façade, photographer facing east.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



9 of 18. Bank of window on rear façade, photographer facing east.



10 of 18. North side and shed (not in National Register boundary), photographer facing south.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



11 of 18. Interior, main entrance and main corridor, photographer facing south.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



12 of 18. Interior, main corridor, photographer facing north.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



13 of 18. Interior, classroom 1, photographer facing southwest.



14 of 18. Interior, kitchen, photographer facing north.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



15 of 18. Interior, classroom 2, photographer facing southwest.



16 of 18. Interior, classroom 3, photographer facing southeast.

Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School

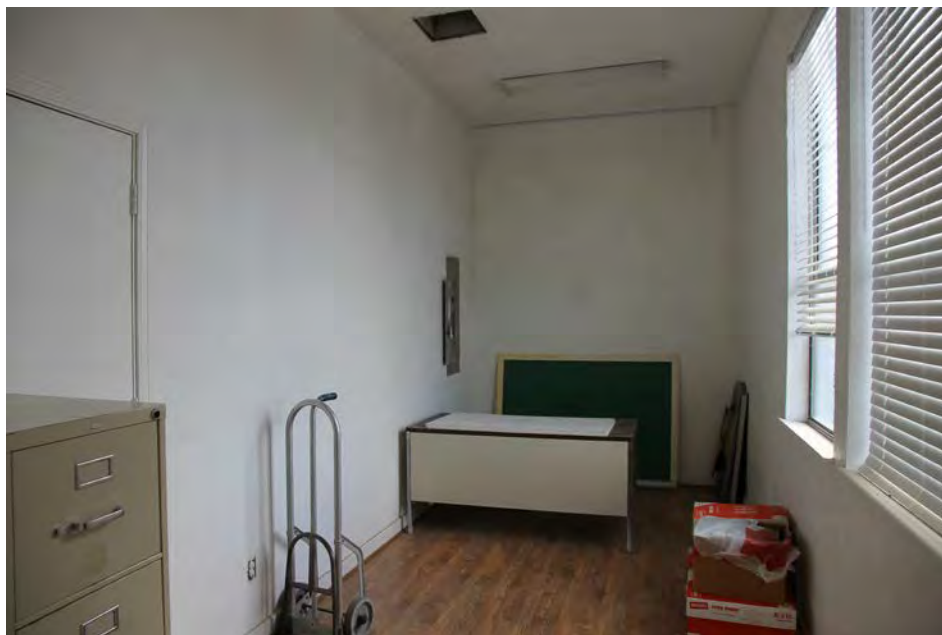
Doña Ana County, NM

Name of Property

County and State



17 of 18. Interior, south corridor, photographer facing south.



18 of 18. Interior, storage room, photographer facing east.





RIO VALLEY

White Deer County
of West Texas
Small County

RESERVED
PARKING

RESERVED
PARKING

2014

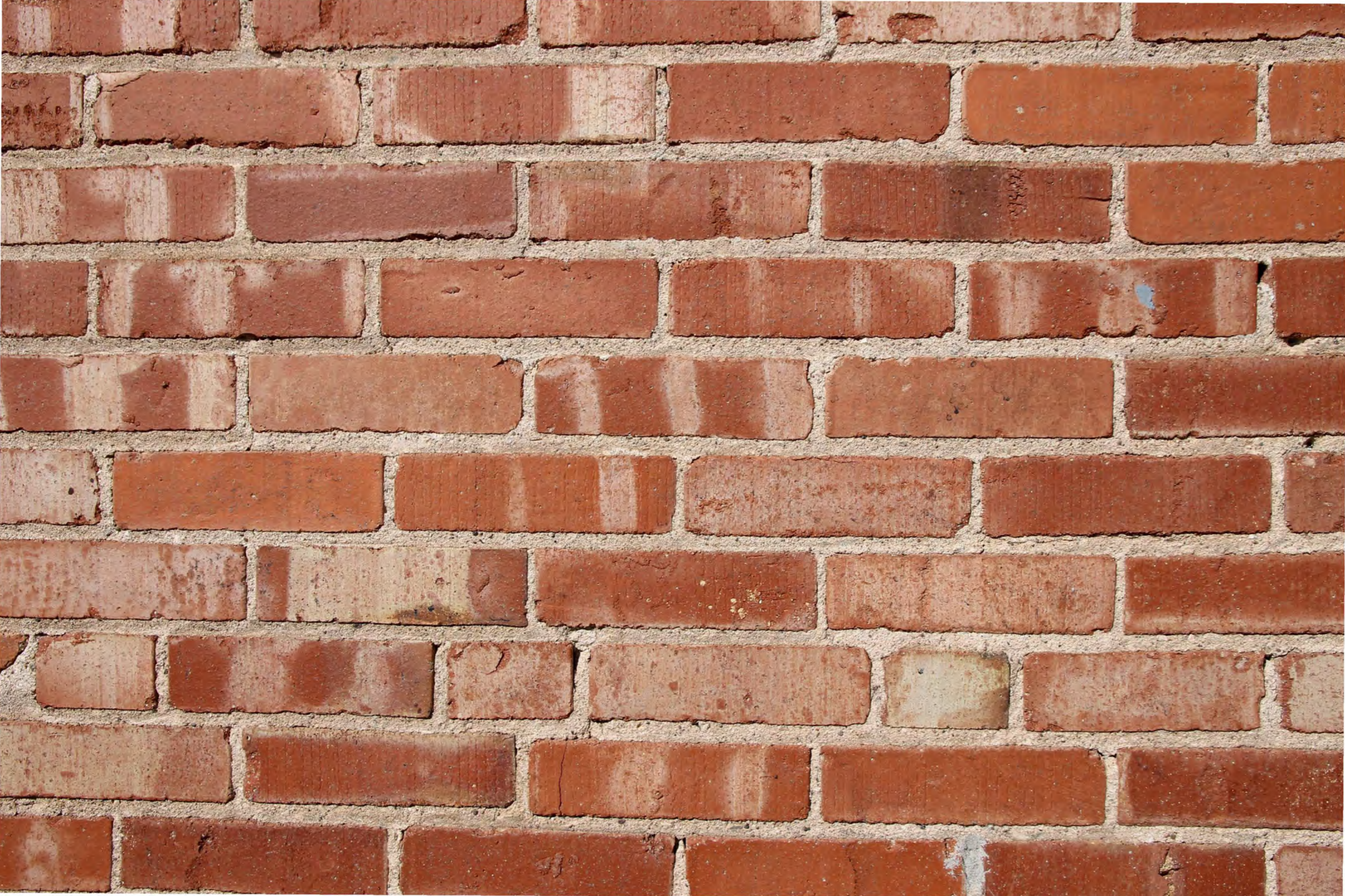
WPA 1955

325
HOLGUIN RD

Doña Ana County
Head Start 
Vado Center
325 Holguin Rd.
(575) 233-2401
Sponsored by:
New Mexico State University

RESERVE
PARKING

STATE DISABLED PARK
PERMIT REQUIRED













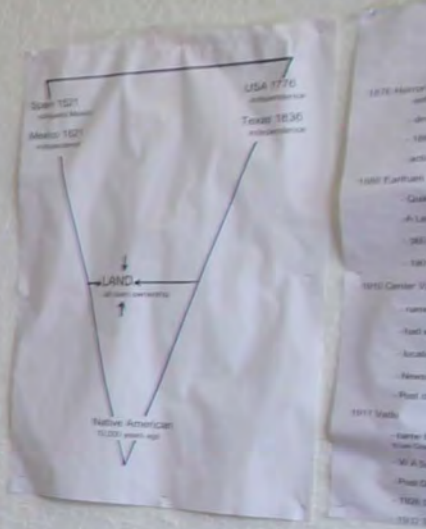




MEN



EXIT









EXIT

BLOCKS CENTER

WRITING CENTER

READING CENTER

HAPPY TO SEA YOU!

H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

SHAPES
CIRCLE SQUARE

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



EXIT
EXIT

FIRE
EXTINGUISHER

Bis for Brushing

outside
inside
top
bottom
tongue



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/23/2016 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 2/7/2017 Date of Weekly List: 2/16/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 2/7/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Susana Martinez
Governor

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

BATAAN MEMORIAL BUILDING
407 GALISTEO STREET, SUITE 236
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501
PHONE (505) 827-6320 FAX (505) 827-6338



December 16, 2016

J. Paul Loether
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W. 8th floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School in Doña Ana County, New Mexico to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Disk of National Register of Historic Places nomination form and maps as a pdf
- Disk with digital photo images
- Physical signature page
- Sketch map(s)/attachment(s)
- Correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do do not constitute a majority of property owners.
- Special considerations: Note that this property is nominated at the national level of significance.

Sincerely,

Steven Moffson
State and National Register Coordinator

Enclosures