

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100004855

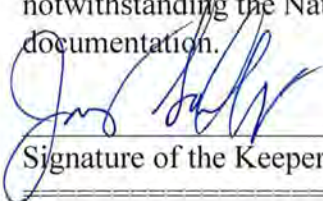
Date Listed: 12/30/2019

Property Name: James L. M. Murray Graded School (Early Twentieth Century Schools in Puerto Rico MPS)

County: Cabo Roja

State: PR

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

12.30.2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Section 10: Acreage

Less than one acre (.25 acres).

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file; Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

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 James L. M. Curry Graded School  
Other names/site number Escuela James M. Curry  
Name of related multiple property listing Early Twentieth Century Schools in Puerto Rico  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & Number Calle Betances  
City or town Cabo Rojo State PR County Cabo Rojo  
Not for publication  Vicinity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  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

*Carlos A. Rubio-Cancela*

Carlos A. Rubio-Cancela SHPO/Director

*November 6, 2019*

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

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 of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

*James L. M. Curry*  
Signature of Keeper

*12.30.2019*  
Date of Action

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

**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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</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>0</u>	Total

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

**6. Function or Use**

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

EDUCATION/ school  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

GOVERNMENT/ municipal building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

Neoclassical  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, stone, masonry, reinforced concrete



James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

### Description

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe 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.)

The **James L. M. Curry Graded School** is a 1903, one story, four rooms, C-shaped, brick, masonry and reinforced concrete, Neoclassical, shed-with-parapet, reinforced-concrete-roofed building. The property, with a footprint of three hundred and fifty nine (359.07) square meters, sits in a nine hundred and ninety-four (994.03) square meters urban lot, located two blocks south from the main town square and the Catholic Church *Parroquia San Miguel Arcángel* (**Fig. 1**). The oldest school building in Cabo Rojo and one of the earliest schoolhouses in the island in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the property was the first institutional facility in the municipality built under the United States' authorities after 1898. With some changes in its layout, the resource retains every other aspect of integrity.

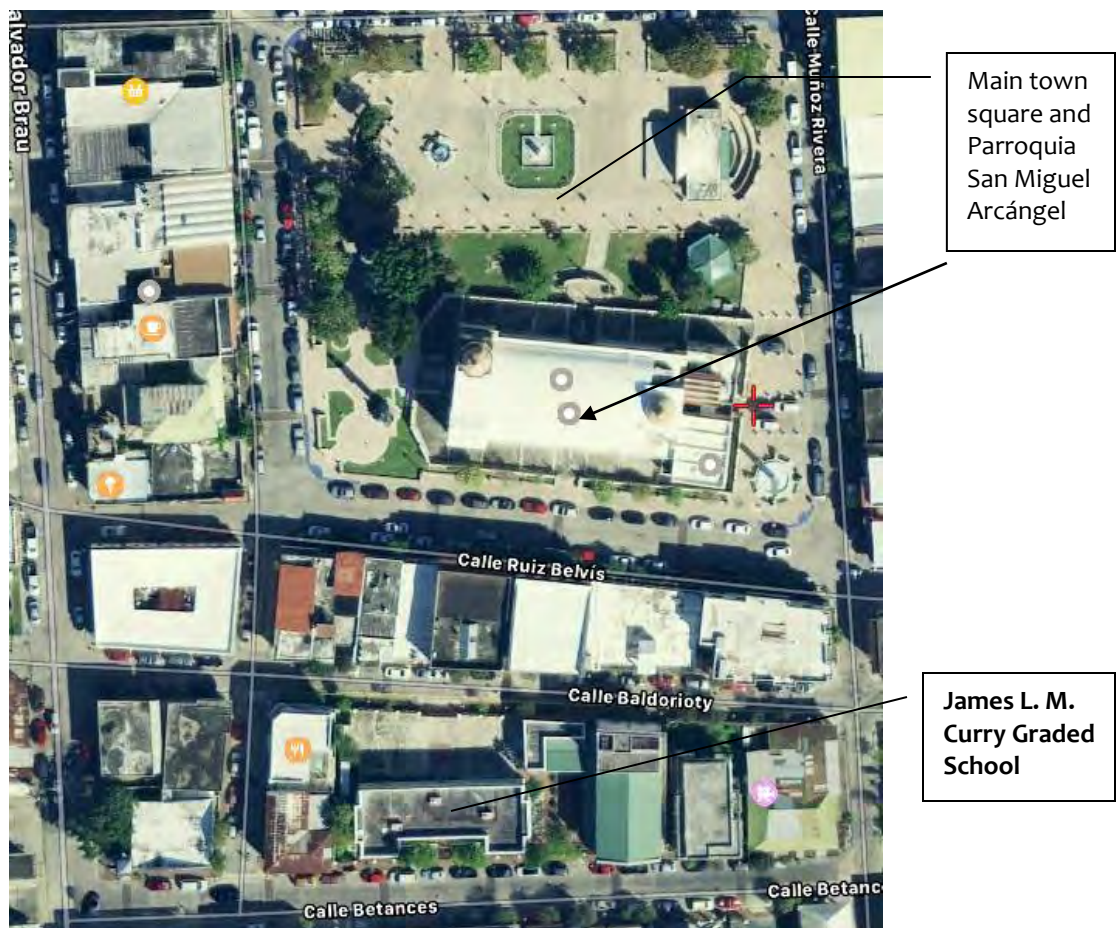


Figure 1. The James L. M. Curry Graded School urban setting.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property****County and State**

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

The **James M. Curry Graded School** faces south towards *Calle Betances*, one of the oldest, most important roads in Cabo Rojo's urban core (**Fig. 2**). The front side of the building has a fence that combines free standing reinforced concrete columns with a faux-brick finish, connected through an artistically designed grill sections. The side walk in front of the building also has a faux-brick look that harmonize in color and texture with the building's fence.<sup>1</sup> The fence was added as part of the 2002 rehabilitation of the old school building, after the property was transferred from the Department of Education to the municipality of Cabo Rojo.<sup>2</sup>

Designed in a very sober neoclassical style, the building's southern façade (main façade) presents a symmetrical three-volume arrangement in its elevation. The main central volume recedes, while flanked by two identical volumes that project outward at each end. Each volume has its exterior entrance.



Fig. 2. Main façade. Central volume recedes back, while the flanking volumes project outward.

<sup>1</sup> Early twentieth century photos show a highly distinguishable brick-made sidewalk at the building's front. The current pattern re-creates that early period.

<sup>2</sup> As part of the rehabilitation process, the metal windows and doors used in almost every school in the island since the late 1950's, were replaced with wooden ones, making the building's appearance more consonant with its historic look.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

Past the fence gate, placed center-piece, a five-risers-stair ends in a clay-tile covered elevated platform that is six-feet wide and extends almost the entire length of the façade providing easy access for the three volumes external entrance (**Fig. 3**). Entrance to the central volume is through a two-wing wooden door, framed with a set of pilasters moldings and a segmented ornamental cornice above (**Fig. 4**).



Figure 3. Elevated platform that provides access to the three entrances on the main façade. In the 2002 rehabilitation, as it was originally build, wooden doors where installed once again.



Figure 4. Entrance to the central volume. Above the door, the name “J.L. M. Curry School” engraved at low relief.



James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

Each one of the lateral volumes has an independent two-wing wooden door entrance, topped with an original trapezium trim as ornament. The trapezium molding feature is repeated throughout the entire building's exterior above every door and window opening, with the door at the central volume as the exception.

The central volume of the main façade entrance has two evenly spaced two-wing wooden windows with frosted glass. These windows correspond to the two classrooms located within this section. The same recurs with the lateral projecting volumes, where there are two additional sets of double-wing wooden frosted glass windows corresponding to each one of the classrooms.

On the lateral facades (east and west), a wall segment protrudes forward at a right angle, creating an extended volume. When designed and built in 1903, the east and west facades were symmetrically identical with three evenly spaced windows and a large trapezium molding on top. The west wing has kept the arrangement. However, during the early 2000s, in response to changes in the interior space, two of the windows on the eastern volume were converted into entrance doors. This provided double access to the former classroom which functions now as a Dance Workshop. A concrete slab six-riser stair for access was also added (**Fig. 5**). The building's rear section (northern façade), as originally designed, presents an austere appearance, with its walls plastered, with only the openings of doors and windows breaking the wall's continuity.



Figure 5. Eastern façade.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

The building's exterior reflects its interior layout. The main entrance flows into a lobby that runs northerly toward another exit at the rear, as originally designed, providing access to the building's backyard. Originally, the hallway space was symmetrically arranged, with two access openings leading to the classrooms aligned to the left and right of the hallway. At the same time, each classroom in this central volume had a connecting doorway to the classroom in the lateral wings (**Fig. 6**).

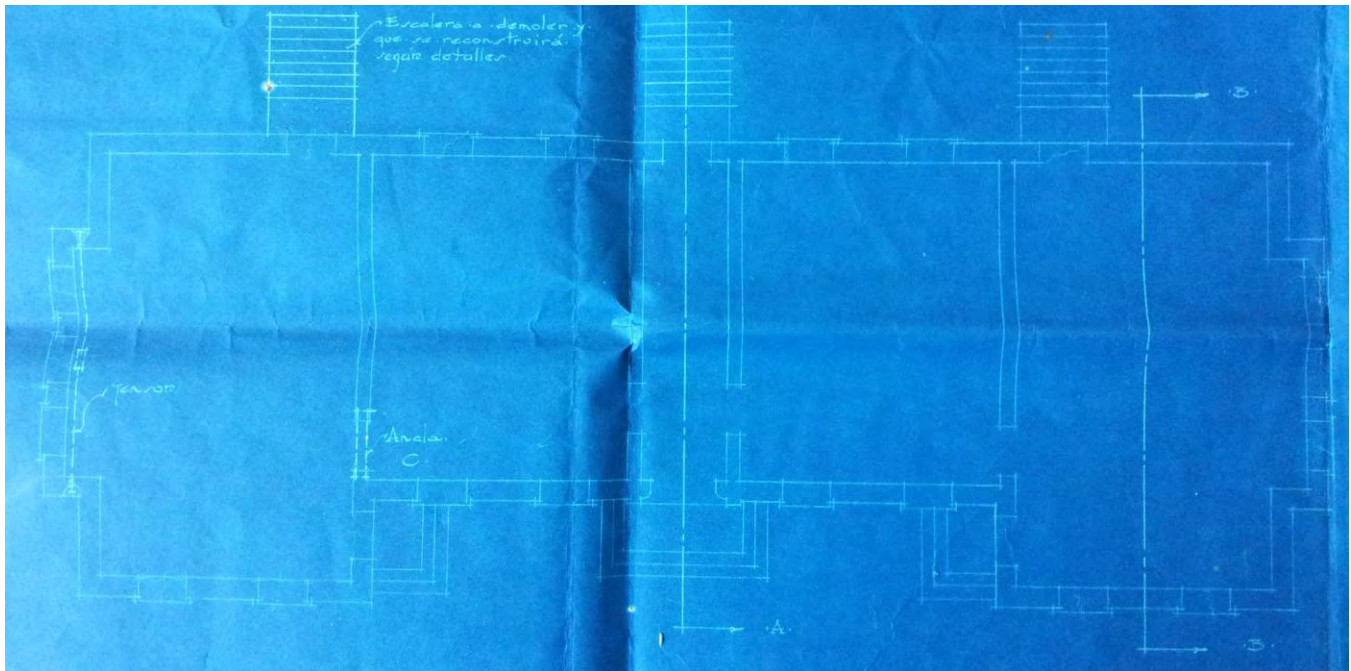


Figure 6. The above 1919 blue print shows the layout of the **James Fenimore Cooper Graded School** in Sabana Grande. Blueprints for the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** have not been identified. The document is useful however, as both schools had exactly the same lay-out. The drawing shows the arrangement of each classroom in the central volume aligned with the straight lobby and the entrance way from these to the classrooms on the lateral volumes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR). Obras Públicas. Serie: Edificios Escolares. Sabana Grande. Legajo 59. Caja 1046. Reparaciones a la Escuela James Fenimore Cooper. The **James Fenimore Graded School** in Sabana Grande was included in the National Register of Historic Places in May 26, 2015.



James L. M. Curry Graded School  
Name of Property

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
County and State

The most significant changes impacting the original layout of the nominated property were done precisely within the central volume layout. As part of the early 2000s rehabilitation, the flow of the internal circulation was altered. The straight lobby was converted into an I-shaped hallway (**Red**) by reducing the size of the two classrooms through the addition of a wall system (**A**) on each one (**Fig. 7**). The front area of the building was converted into a transit hall in order to provide access to the lateral rooms, independently, without having to enter the central rooms, as in the historic layout. At the same time, the reduction of the two central classrooms, created a space at the rear of the building which was transformed into a transitional hallway and two separated spaces for restrooms (**B**). The old classrooms in the lateral volumes still retain the same spatial layout.

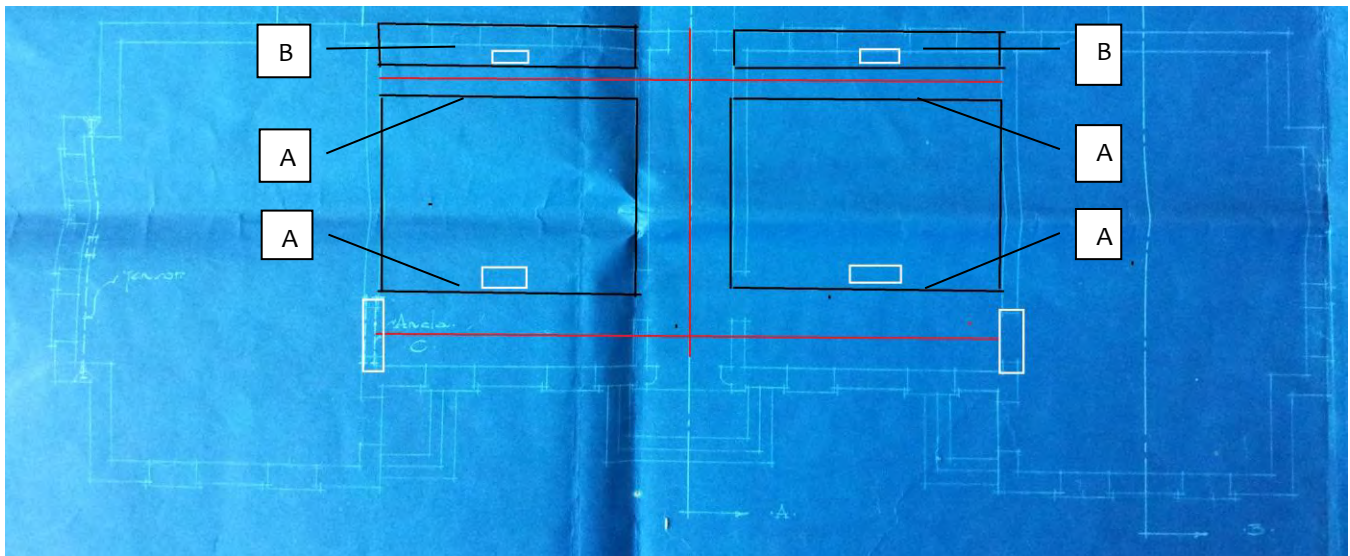


Figure 7. The 1919 blueprint from the previous page, with an over-imposed layer showing the changes in the circulation layout of the central volume in the **James L. M. Curry Graded School**.

As in every other school in the island, the original wooden floors and roofs have been replaced by a slab of reinforced concrete. In all four classrooms, acoustic panels form the current ceiling, while all floors are covered with modern terrazzo, with the exception of the room in the eastern volume, which has wooden panel flooring.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

The two rooms in the central volume are currently vacant. The old classrooms in the lateral wings, however, are in use. The one in the western wing is used as a *Centro Cibernético Caborrojeño*, where on-line classes are provided to local students enrolled at the Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Recinto de San German. The eastern wing is used as a Dance Workshop (**Fig. 8**).



Figure 8. Former classroom, use today as a Dance Workshop, on the east wing volume.

Even with the changes in design (particularly in the central volume's interior), the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** still retains its ability to convey its historic significance through its location, material, setting, workmanship, feeling and association.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.  
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

**Period of Significance**

1903

**Significant Dates**

1903

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Post, Charles G. (architect)



James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**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 **James L. M. Curry Graded School** is statewide significant under Criterion A in Social History as the property is one of the earliest twentieth century schoolhouse built in the island. The schoolhouse was the first institutional resource built in Cabo Rojo during the early stages of the United States' administration in Puerto Rico. The property exemplified the arrival in the municipality of the new metropolis' educational and social discourse in the municipality. The school building represents the social project undertaken by the United States in Puerto Rico to promote education and economic well-being, combined with the political project of promoting the American values and the acculturation process of the Puerto Rican society. The period of significance, 1903, coincides with the resource's construction period.

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

In 1898, as a result of the Spanish Cuban American War, Puerto Rico was transferred to the United States. The US authorities found an island with a population of 951,836 inhabitants, out of which 143,472 were able to read and write, and only 5,045 had more than an elementary education. Only 500 schools were in service by 1898, for a school-age population of 322,393. Of this last number only 25,644 pupils, a little over 8%, were enrolled in the public schools by June 30, 1898.<sup>4</sup> Under Spain, public schooling was not conducted in buildings erected for that purpose. Public education was carried out in rented buildings or in the teachers' homes, who were allowed a small sum for house rent in addition to their salaries. Some of the buildings used were fairly good, but in most cases, according to the new American administrators, they were "*miserable apologies for schoolhouses*".<sup>5</sup>

Other problems reported by the new authorities were the reduced number of teachers, the low number of schools in the rural areas in an island where most of the inhabitants lived in the countryside. Also, an absence of teachers able to manage the English language and the new educational methods. Additionally, it was reported that many teachers charged the pupils a fee for attending the schools. As such, the public schools became untitled properties of the instructors. Spain

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Military Governor of Porto Rico on Civil Affairs. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1901. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901, 354.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

also kept a strict policy of separate school facilities by gender. This policy negatively affected girls the most, as the public educational facilities for females were extremely limited in number.

On matters related to education, the military government forced upon the island for the first eighteen months (1898-1900), instituted sweeping reforms with significant impact on subsequent civil administrations: schools were open to both sexes; the schoolhouse were to be separated from the teachers' residences; all fee-collecting practices were prohibited, making schools absolutely free to everyone between the ages of 6 and 18 years; a graded system was established in the urban schools; church doctrine and religious teaching were eliminated from the public schools; a curriculum embracing English, geography and elements of US history and civil government was adopted, among many others.<sup>6</sup>

During the twentieth century's first decade, the US education policy in Puerto Rico had three main objectives: the forced use of English as the main teaching language, the use of the education system as a means for acculturation of the Puerto Rican society and the establishment of an effective schoolhouse-construction program.

To enforce the first objective, an aggressive campaign was conducted to recruit young teachers in the United States. Most of them came from the Northeast region: New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Ohio, among others states.<sup>7</sup> As part of the acculturation efforts, a practice of sending Puerto Ricans students to the US was established as early as 1899. Initially, some sixty students were sent to the *Carlisle Indian Industrial School* (CIIS) in Pennsylvania.<sup>8</sup> In 1901, under Martin G. Brumbaugh, a program was organized to send a selected group of students to other institutional facilities in the US such like Tuskegee and Hampton. A very relevant factor can be seen in the programs mentioned above. These early educational policies were built on a racial and ethnic discourse that reflected more on the dominant social views in the US than the social reality of Puerto Rico. Initially, the new administrators saw the Puerto Ricans as "*Indians*", so sending the "*natives*" to Carlisle was a "*natural*" course of action. Under Martin G. Brumbaugh, the first Commissioner of Education under the

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Military Governor of Porto Rico, 126.

<sup>7</sup> Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1906. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906, 125-126.

<sup>8</sup> Pablo Navarro Rivera, Acculturation under Duress: The Puerto Rican Experience at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School 1898-1918. Centro Journal of the Hunter College for Puerto Rican Studies in New York City, New York.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

Foraker Act, Puerto Ricans began to be categorized as “*colored*”, so Tuskegee and Hampton became more proper as institutional facilities to educate the inhabitants of the new territory in the Caribbean.

The actual construction of every school building served to promote the three main objectives mentioned before. Named mostly after US’ significant figures, every schoolhouse served as an opportunity to promote the American values. In his 1901 report, Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh indicated that:

*“Almost every school in the island has an American flag. In almost every city of the island, and at many rural schools, the children meet and salute the flag as it is flung to the breeze. The raising of the flag is the signal that school has commenced, and the flag floats during the entire sessions. The pupils then sing “America”, “Hail Columbia”, “Star Spangled Banner”, and other patriotic songs. The marvel is that they sing these in English. The first English many of them know is the English of our national songs. The influence of this is far-reaching”.*<sup>9</sup>

During the initial years, because of lack of funds, the new US authorities, like Spain, continued with the same renting-building-policy. On January 2, 1901, however, a School Trust Fund was initiated for the purpose of school construction with the transfer of \$200,000 to the local Treasure Department, directly ordered by the President of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The 1901’ school fund came with the significant creation of the Division of School Extension within the Department of Education. The division had the responsibility of administering the portions of the trust fund allotted to the construction of school buildings; plans and specifications for buildings were prepared by the division; contract let; and the actual construction work was supervised by the division’s inspectors. By 1902, the Department of Education initiated a new program in which it was able to enter into a contract with any municipality to build schoolhouses, especially graded-urban facilities. As a combined effort, the department agreed to furnish the funds to construct the building, while the municipal authorities would furnish the land and agree to reimburse the department half the cost of the building in monthly payments extended over a period of five years. This program was normally refer to as the half-and-half program.<sup>11</sup>

From 1901, at least until 1906, the Division of School Extension was headed by architect Charles G. Post, under the title of “Inspector in Charge”. During 1901-1902, with the new trust fund, the division’s production was mostly oriented toward the construction of rural schools and some graded schools

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1901.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901, 361.

<sup>10</sup> *Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1901.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901, 355-356.

<sup>11</sup> *Third Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1903.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903, 177-178.



James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

within urban centers. In either case, wood was the dominant construction material. However, by 1903, an improvement was made in the general architectural features of the buildings constructed. As expressed by Post himself, these changes were based *“upon the increased experience in school construction attained in this office by the supervising architect as he has struggled to overcome the peculiar difficulties which attend all building in this climate”*.<sup>12</sup> Guided by Post, the division adhered to the policy of constructing buildings that had more than the average permanency, avoiding expending large sums for any unnecessary features or for mere matters of adornment. Cabo Rojo, with its **James L. M. Curry Graded School**, was among the first municipalities that took advantage of the half-and-half plan.

**The James L. M. Curry Graded School**

Located in the southwest of the island, Cabo Rojo was founded in 1771 (**Fig. 9**).



Figure 9. Cabo Rojo's location and wards.

During the eighteenth century, the town's economy was mostly based on a subsistence agriculture. By 1878, however, due to its fertile lands, irrigated by the *Viejo y Estero* Rivers and more than eighteen *quebradas* (streams), the municipality experienced a significant growth in sugar production, having over eighteen sugar haciendas. By 1878, as indicated by Manuel Ubeda y Delgado, Cabo Rojo had a population of 3,035 families, out of which, 616 families were living in Barrio Pueblo, the municipality's urban and administrative center. With its seventeen (17) streets, and over six hundred houses and

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 152-153.

James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

bohíos as dwellings, there were only four schools in the urban center.<sup>13</sup> As everywhere else in Puerto Rico, all the schoolhouses in Cabo Rojo were private properties rented by the local *Junta de Instrucción Pública (School Board)*, with even the own teacher's dwellings were being used as school houses.

By 1903, Cabo Rojo still had the same amount of schoolhouses that it had in 1878. Even with the economic hardship created by the 1899 San Ciriaco hurricane among the sugar and coffee producers throughout the island, Cabo Rojo was listed as one of the municipalities able to contribute in the half-and-half plan in the 1903 report prepared by the Commissioner of Education. The program provided the city with the opportunity to promptly acquire a building purposely designed as a graded school with the ownership eventually passing to the municipality, breaking with the unproductive renting-cycle. The Division of School Extension constrained to keep school construction under the simplest scale and to the simplest type of building practical for school purposes. To maximize efforts and reduce costs, Charles G. Post adopted the innovative practice of using the same building plan for equal size schools, regardless of their future sites. Very sober external architectural details and ornaments were used to differentiate one schoolhouse from the other, but the plan was essentially the same.

In 1904, the Commissioner of Education reported the completion of the first five new graded schoolhouses built in the island under the half-and-half program for the towns of Adjuntas (*Washington Irving Graded School*), Sabana Grande (*James Fenimore Cooper Graded School*), Guánica (*James Garfield Graded School*), Añasco, (*Eugenio Maria de Hostos Graded School*) and Cabo Rojo. (**Fig. 10**).<sup>14</sup>



*Washington Irving Graded School, Adjuntas.*



*James Fenimore Cooper Graded School, Sabana Grande*

<sup>13</sup> Manuel Ubeda y Delgado. *Isla de Puerto Rico. Estudio histórico, geográfico y estadístico de la misma*. Puerto Rico. Establecimiento tip. del Boletín. 1878, 205 -208.

<sup>14</sup> The *Washington Irving Graded School*, the *James Fenimore Cooper Graded School*, the *James Garfield Graded School* and the *Eugenio María de Hostos Graded School* are all included in the National Register of Historic Places.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**



*James Garfield Graded School, Guánica*



*Eugenio María de Hostos Graded School, Añasco*

Figure 10. Four of the first five school completed under the half-and-half program.

Cabo Rojo' school building, with four classroom made out of brick and stone, was completed by May 9, 1903, becoming the very first school built under the new half-and-half program. At a cost of \$8,699.00, the municipality was to repay the amount of \$4,349.00 within the next five years (**Fig. 11**).<sup>15</sup>

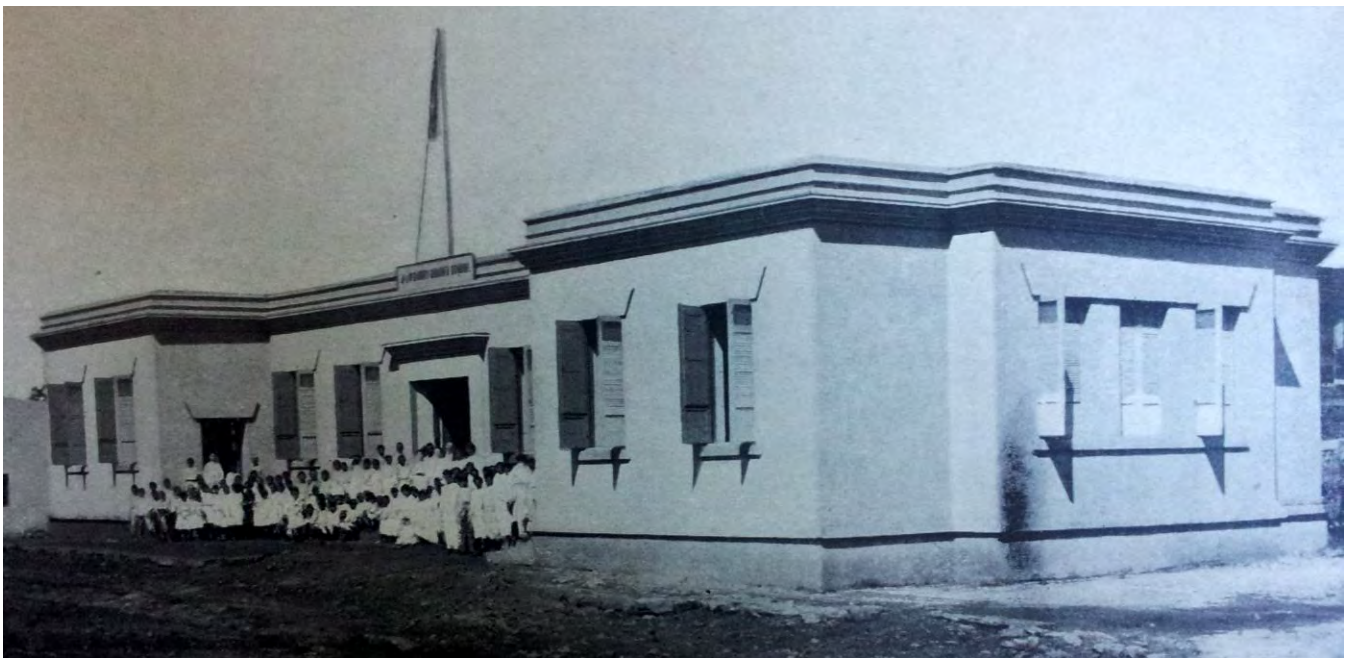


Figure 11. The 1903 **James L. M. Curry Graded School** in Cabo Rojo.

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Education of Porto Rico, 1904*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904, 230.



James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

The new school building, with the single flagpole to place the *Stars and Stripe*, represented not only new educational opportunities, but also the arrival of the new metropolitan power. The building was located two blocks south of the Catholic Church and the town square. Facing Betances Street, one of the most important roads in Cabo Rojo's urban center, the new school sat across the City Town Hall building. Its privileged location served to establish the schoolhouse as a symbol of the new power brokers administering the island and their social project. At this early stage after the US occupation, one of the most important concerns of the new policy makers was the conquest of the inhabitant's conscience. The educational system was the most effective mean to reach that goal, as clearly stated by the second Commissioner of Education, Dr. Samuel McCune Lindsay:

*"Colonization carried forward by the armies of war is vastly more costly than that carried forward by the armies of peace, whose outpost and garrisons are the public schools of the advancing nation".<sup>16</sup>*

The **James L. M. Curry Graded School's** location, its construction material and its prominent size, served to emphasized the new schoolhouse as the "*outpost and garrison of the advancing nation*" in Cabo Rojo.

The building had the capacity to provide space for two hundred students, fifty per classroom. By 1906, that amount was doubled as Cabo Rojo's School Board implemented the double enrollment program, in which two hundred students attended classes in the morning period, and another two hundred attended in the afternoon.<sup>17</sup>

As with many other schoolhouses built during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original 1903's architectural plans for the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** have not been located. However, blueprints were drawn in 1919 by architect Adrian C. Finlayson, working at that moment for the Department of the Interior, for three of the other five schools built under the half-and-half program. Since the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** was the first one built, it is logical to assume that Finlayson's drawings can be used to understand the building's original layout (**Fig. 12**)

<sup>16</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1902*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902, 257.

<sup>17</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Education for Porto Rico to the Secretary of Interior, USA, 1906*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906, 108.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
Name of Property

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
County and State

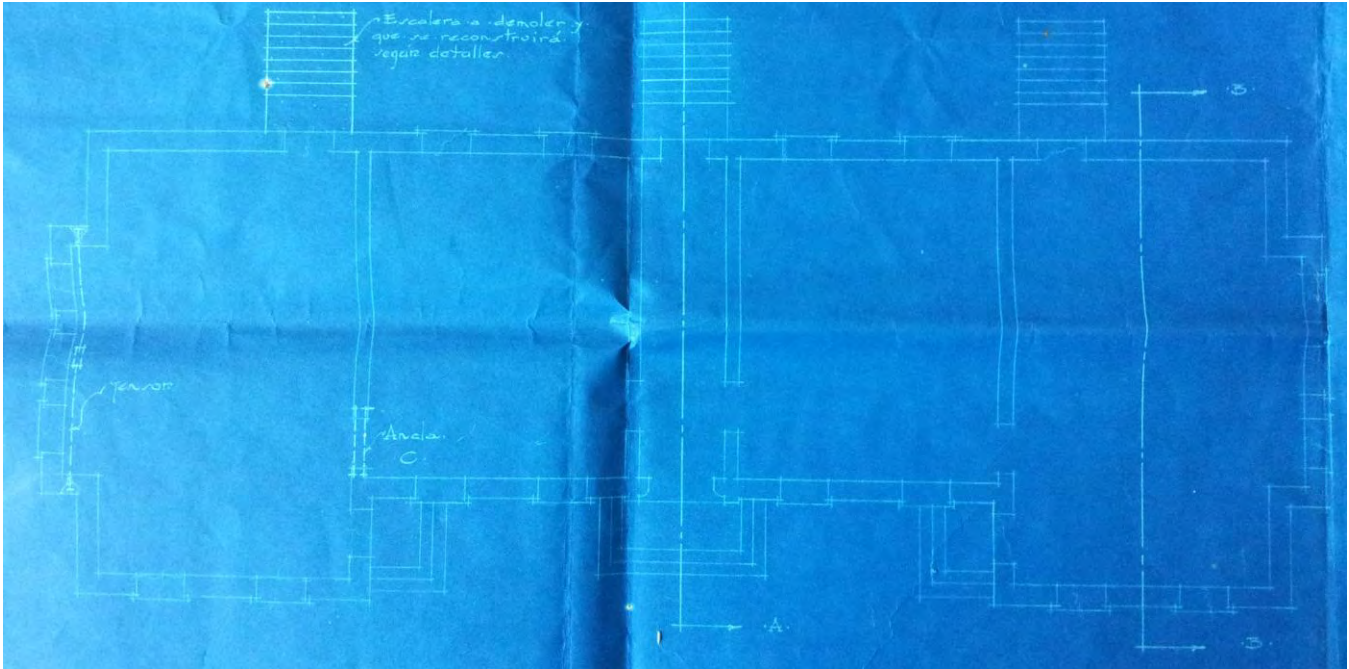


Figure 12. Above, Adrian Finlayson’s 1919 blueprint for Sabana Grande’s *James Fenimore Cooper Graded School*. As Charles G. Post used the same plan for all five 1903 schoolhouses, the drawing provides an accurate view of the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** original layout.

Early on, the **James L. M. Curry Graded School** became a distinguished landmark among the town’s urban landscape that attracted the attention of the locals and the new comers (**Fig. 13**). In 1910, when Lt. William Armstrong described Cabo Rojo’ urban core as part of his 1909-1912 island-wide topographical survey for the United States’ Army, the schoolhouse was again highlighted in his cartography and photographs (**Fig. 14**).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> William Armstrong. *Manuscritos sobre algunos pueblos de Puerto Rico, 1909 – 1912*. Volumen 1. Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
Name of Property

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
County and State



Figure 13. The **James L. M. Curry Graded School**, ca. 1910. (Colección A. Moscioni, Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Rio Piedras). Moscioni's photo shows distinguishable features still found in today's building: same footprint, openings, moldings, etc. It also shows that the sidewalk directly in front of the school received a special treatment in its texture to emphasize the school's special location and significance. Currently, the 21st century fence and sidewalk in front of the building resemble a similar treatment.



Figure 14. Armstrong's photo included the Presbyterian Church's building west of the schoolhouse, making that particular block, across from City Hall, a symbol of the new social and ideological order in the island.

Throughout the years, the building has endured changes and new trends on its functionality. Between 1919 -1920, the masonry parapet at the building's roof was replaced by one of concrete, as the original parapet was damaged during the 1918 earthquake. During the 1950s and 1960s, the original wooden components (floors, roof, doors and windows) were replaced with a reinforced concrete roof and metal windows and doors, as in every other schoolhouse in Puerto Rico. By the late



James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

1990s, the building ceased to be used as a schoolhouse, due to its then small size and its inability to expand because of its constraint location. The Department of Education eventually transferred total ownership of the building to the municipal authorities.

During the early 2000s, as part of a rehabilitation process, wooden doors and windows were installed once again. Misguided and intrusive changes, although well-intentioned, were done at this time on the building's central volume interior circulation, reducing the size of the two former classrooms by adding extra walls (see, Section 7). The available space was converted into additional hallways and needed service rooms. However, even with these changes in its interior, the property still retains its physical features, its mass, historic footprint and proportion, along with most aspects of integrity like its location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. (Fig. 15).



Figure 15. The James L. M. Curry Graded School Building, 1903/2019.



James L. M. Curry Graded School

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

The physical changes and alterations have not impaired the property's ability to convey its significance. The **James L. M. Curry Graded School**, one of the oldest and best kept early twentieth century school buildings in Puerto Rico, represented the arrival of much needed educational opportunities to the local population of Cabo Rojo. But even more socially significant, the 1903 schoolhouse became the physical representation of the transculturation and Americanization project methodically implemented by the new US administrators upon Puerto Rico after 1898.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

---

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

---

**Bibliography** (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1901.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901.

*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1902.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.

*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1906.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906.

*Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1901.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901.

Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR). Obras Públicas. Serie: Edificios Escolares. Sabana Grande. Legajo 59. Caja 1046. Reparaciones a la Escuela James Fenimore Cooper.

Armstrong, William. *Manuscritos sobre algunos pueblos de Puerto Rico, 1909 – 1912.* Volumen 1. Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

Colección A. Moscioni, Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

Navarro Rivera, Pablo. Acculturation under Duress: The Puerto Rican Experience at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School 1898-1918. *Centro Journal of the Hunter College for Puerto Rican Studies in New York City*, New York.

*Report of the Commissioner of Education of Porto Rico, 1904.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904.

*Report of the Commissioner of Education for Porto Rico to the Secretary of Interior, USA, 1906.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906.

*Report of the Military Governor of Porto Rico on Civil Affairs.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.

*Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1901.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901.

*Third Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1903.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903.

Ubeda y Delgado, Manuel. *Isla de Puerto Rico. Estudio histórico, geográfico y estadístico de la misma.* Puerto Rico. Establecimiento tip. del Boletín. 1878.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**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) \_\_\_\_\_

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

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property \_\_\_\_\_ USGS Quadrangle \_\_\_\_\_

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map): \_\_\_\_\_

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |    |      |            |         |               |          |                |
|----|------|------------|---------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| 1. | Zone | <u>19Q</u> | Easting | <u>696167</u> | Northing | <u>2000697</u> |
| 2. | Zone | _____      | Easting | _____         | Northing | _____          |
| 3. | Zone | _____      | Easting | _____         | Northing | _____          |
| 4. | Zone | _____      | Easting | _____         | Northing | _____          |

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

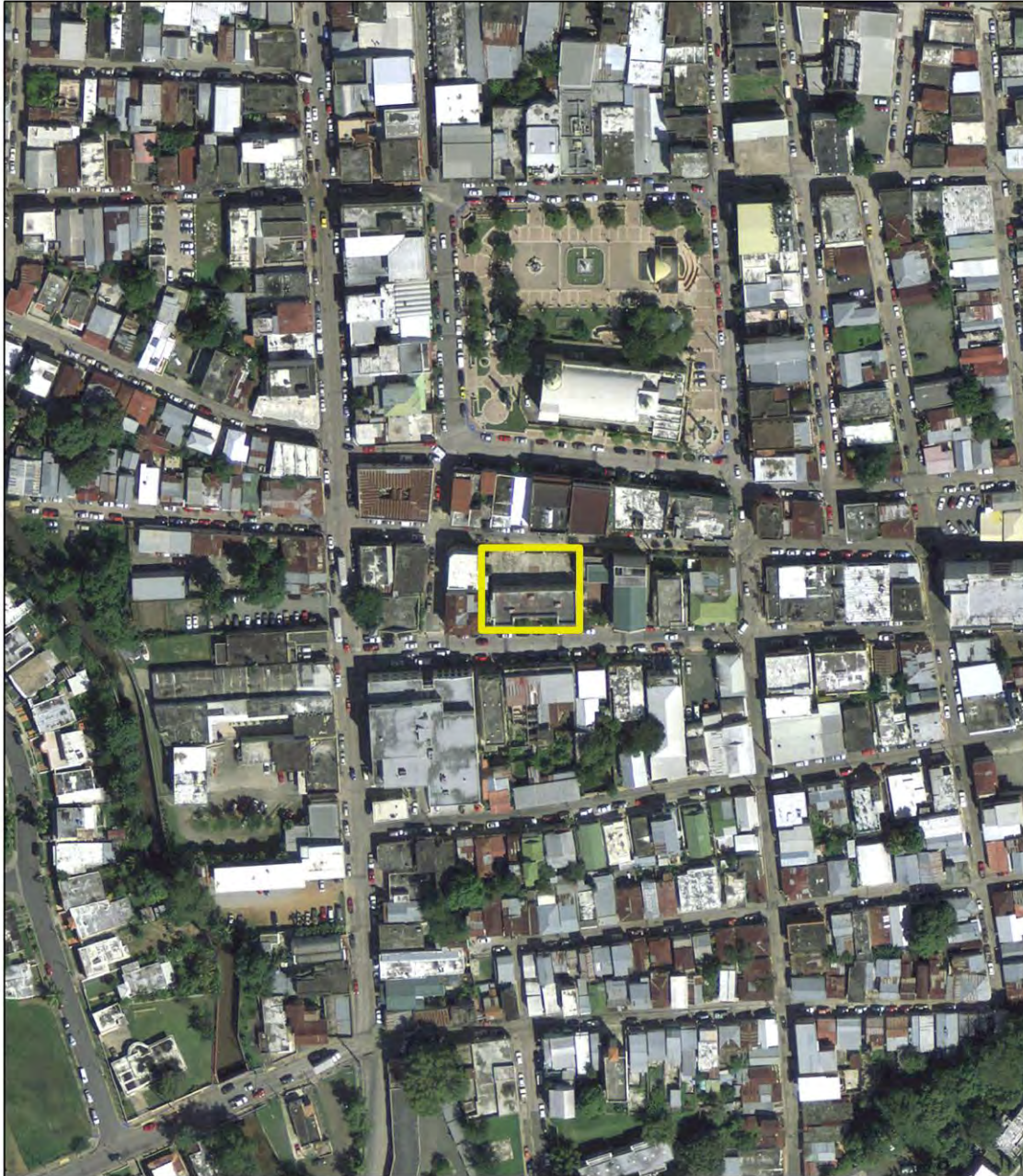
Lot of nine hundred and ninety-four (994.03) square meters, as recorded at the Centro de Recaudaciones de Ingresos Municipales (CRIM) under the number 332-017-063-02.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire lot historically associated with the building.

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
Name of Property

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
County and State



**James L. M. Curry Graded School**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

19Q E696167 N2000697 UTM

1:1,800

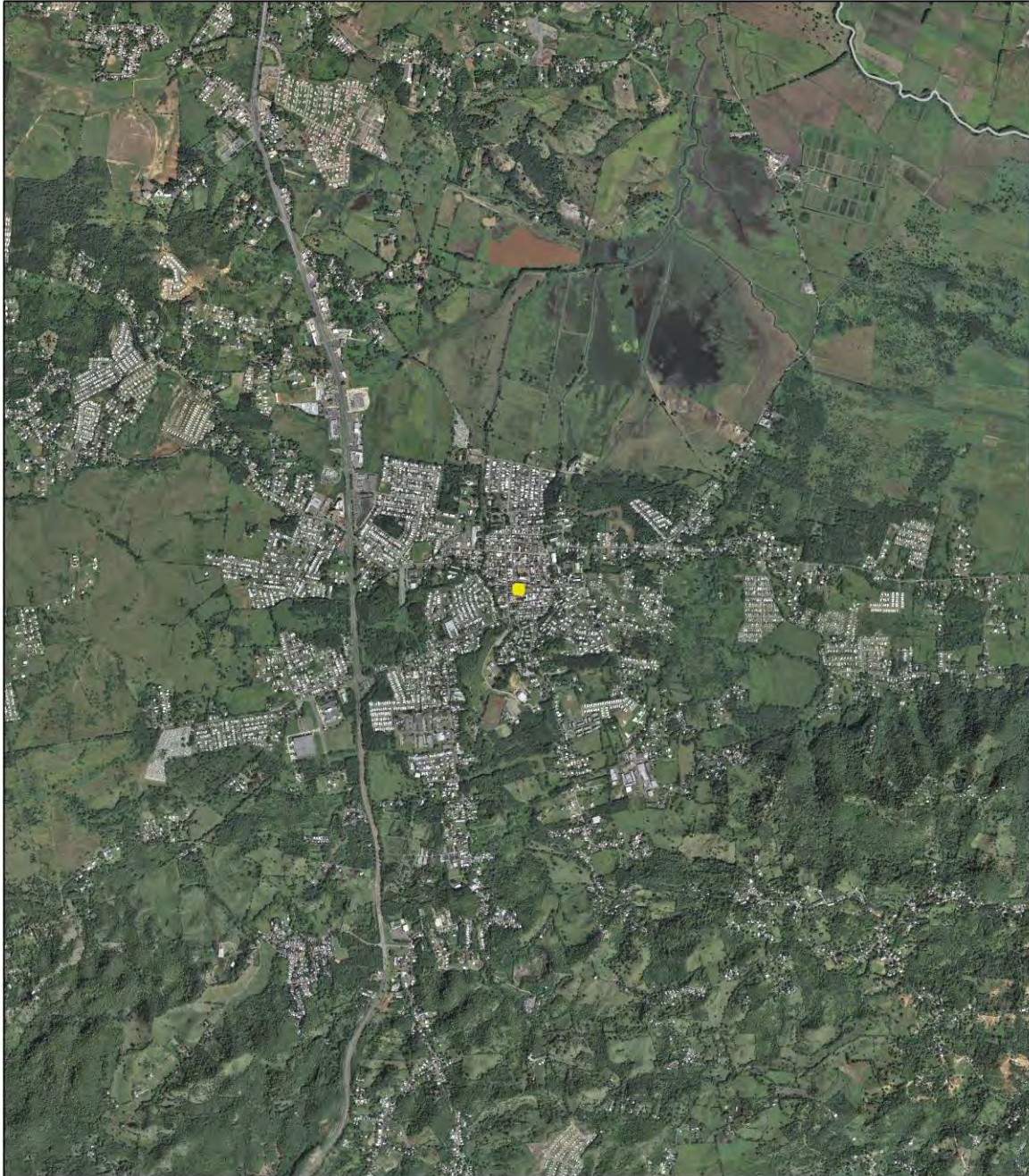
0 50 100 Feet





James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**



**James L. M. Curry Graded School**  
Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
19Q E696167 N2000697 UTM

1:1,20000  
0 1,000 2,000 Feet  
N

James L. M. Curry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Juan Llanes Santos, Historian  
organization PRSHPO date November 7, 2019  
street & number PO Box 9023935 telephone 787-721-3737  
city or town San Juan state PR zip code 00902-3935  
email jllanes@prshpo.pr.gov

**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 map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO 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 James L. M. Curry Graded School  
City or Vicinity Cabo Rojo County Cabo Rojo State Puerto Rico  
Photographer Juan Llanes Date Photographed July 30, 2019

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

1. Main façade; looking northeast; 0001
2. Elevated platform at main entrance; looking east; 0002
3. Eastern façade; looking west; 0003.
4. Interior of former classroom, today Dance Workshop, building's east wing; looking north; 0004

**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.





**CENTRO CIBERNÉTICO CABORRO**  
UNIVERSIDAD INTERAMERICANA DE PUERTO RICO  
RECINTO DE SAN GERMAN











CELATO





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: James L.M. Curry Graded School

Multiple Name: Early Twentieth Century Schools in Puerto Rico TR

State & County: PUERTO RICO, Cabo Rojo

Date Received: 11/22/2019      Date of Pending List: 12/12/2019      Date of 16th Day: 12/27/2019      Date of 45th Day: 1/6/2020      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100004855

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years      |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |  |

Accept       Return       Reject      12/30/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The first public school built by the American government as part of the overall program to "Americanize" the island after its acquisition. Prior to this program, there was little if no free public education in the island under Spanish rule

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : **Yes**

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



GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO

Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica  
State Historic Preservation Office



Wednesday, November 6, 2019

## Joy Beasley

Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street NW (Mail Stop 7228)  
Washington, DC 20005

**SUBMISSION - JAMES L. M. CURRY GRADED SCHOOL, CABO ROJO,  
PUERTO RICO**

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **James L. M. Curry Graded School**, in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, to the National Register of Historic Places.

Should you have any questions on this nomination, please contact Juan Llanes Santos, Specialist in Historic Property at 787-721-3737, ext. 2009 or [jllanes@prshpo.pr.gov](mailto:jllanes@prshpo.pr.gov).

*Sincerely,*

**Carlos A. Rubio-Cancela**  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CARC/GMO/JLS

Enclosures

Cuartel de Ballajá (Tercer Piso),  
Calle Norzagaray, Esquina Beneficencia, Viejo San Juan, P.R. 00901

PO Box 9023935, San Juan, P.R. 00902-3935  
Tel: 787-721-3737 Fax: 787-721-3773  
[www.oech.pr.gov](http://www.oech.pr.gov)



OFICINA ESTATAL DE  
CONSERVACIÓN HISTÓRICA  
OFICINA DEL GOBERNADOR

STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION OFFICE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR