the Jacksonville Grammar School. The first thorough public school in Florida was opened in Jacksonville in the fall of 1875; from this evolved Duval High School, the history of which will be traced separately.

Local school affairs passed into the hands of the home people in 1877. The greatest difficulty confronting public school officials now, was to overcome the pronounced prejudice that existed among the people as a result of the system prevailing under the political influences of the so-called reconstruction period. Their first act was to erect a building for Duval High School; this they did without the knowledge of the general public, and few knew of its erection until it was completed. They knew that the public would "kick" anyway; but they decided that it was better for the "kick" to come afterward. What happened is not known, but this was the home of Duval High School until it was destroyed by the fire of 1901.

By 1885, public sentiment toward public schools had changed somewhat from opposition to lukewarmness. Schools for white children had been built in Brooklyn, LaVilla, East Jacksonville, and North Jacksonville (Springfield). Riverside school on Gillmore Street, facing Riverside Park, was built in 1891 and occupied in November of that year. As the years went by, other school houses were built in the different community centers in and around Jacksonville. In nearly every case these were plain, wooden buildings. To meet growing attendance, wings and extensions were added from time to time to many of the schools until some of them, especially Springfield (Fifth and Hubbard) and Riverside (Riverside Park) became great box-like structures, constituting an extremely dangerous fire hazard. That Jacksonville did not experience an appalling school fire in those days is certainly an example of genuine good luck.

Prior to 1914, there were eight brick, or partly brick, school houses in Duval County, namely: Duval High, Central Grammar, West Riverside No. 12, West Springfield No. 11, Fairfield No. 9, Northeast Springfield No. 8, Fifth and Hubbard (brick and frame), Lackawanna No. 10. In most cases, however, these schools were but a starting unit for the subsequent great enlargement.