

MARTIN
Arts



Presentation to the Historic Preservation Board

March 16, 2026

The Vision for the historic Stuart High School Campus is in keeping with its history

In 1923, a young Hugh Dent Stuart wrote a dedication essay for Stuart High School that was published in the Stuart Messenger. Hugh was the son of Hix C. Stuart, noted author of the 1928 book *The Notorious Ashley Gang* about a well-known band of local outlaws, and a Stuart Marshal (1917 - 1919). In his article he thanked the community and school board and concluded “... we are fitting ourselves for our life work by the work we do in these classrooms.”



Class of 1930 ~ the 1st to graduate with caps and gowns. Hugh Stuart is at the upper right.
Courtesy Radie Belle Kreuger/Thurlow Collection

A Solution Rooted in History and Purpose

This adaptive reuse project will breathe new life into one of Stuart's last remaining 1920s buildings, creating a vibrant Arts Campus that serves as both a cultural hub and an economic catalyst. The original bones of the building—its stage, layout, and character—remain intact, honoring the past while building something visionary for the future.



Stuart High School

Opened 1923

In 1919 – 1920 ten acres of pineapple fields were purchased by the School Board for the construction of the Stuart Elementary and High School. Ground was broken in 1922 and on September 21, 1923 the school opened with an enrollment of about 300 students. In 1934 a 450-seat gymnasium was built, followed by a large cafeteria in 1956.

The building was constructed of concrete and stucco in the Art Deco style and set back more than 100 feet from the street. An impressive façade featuring a main entrance of large double doors above which the decorative letters SHS were inscribed greeted students and visitors.



Stuart High School

1955-1956 Additions

In 1956, \$90,000.00 for Stuart schools was approved by the Martin County School Board. Building funds were made available by the State of Florida from car license tag sales.

Stuart architect Don Armstrong submitted plans for three school buildings for approval. Designed in the Mid-Century Modern style they featured functionality, clean lines, simplicity, and unadorned materials. The two buildings created a symmetrical balance of structures that combined the old and the new.





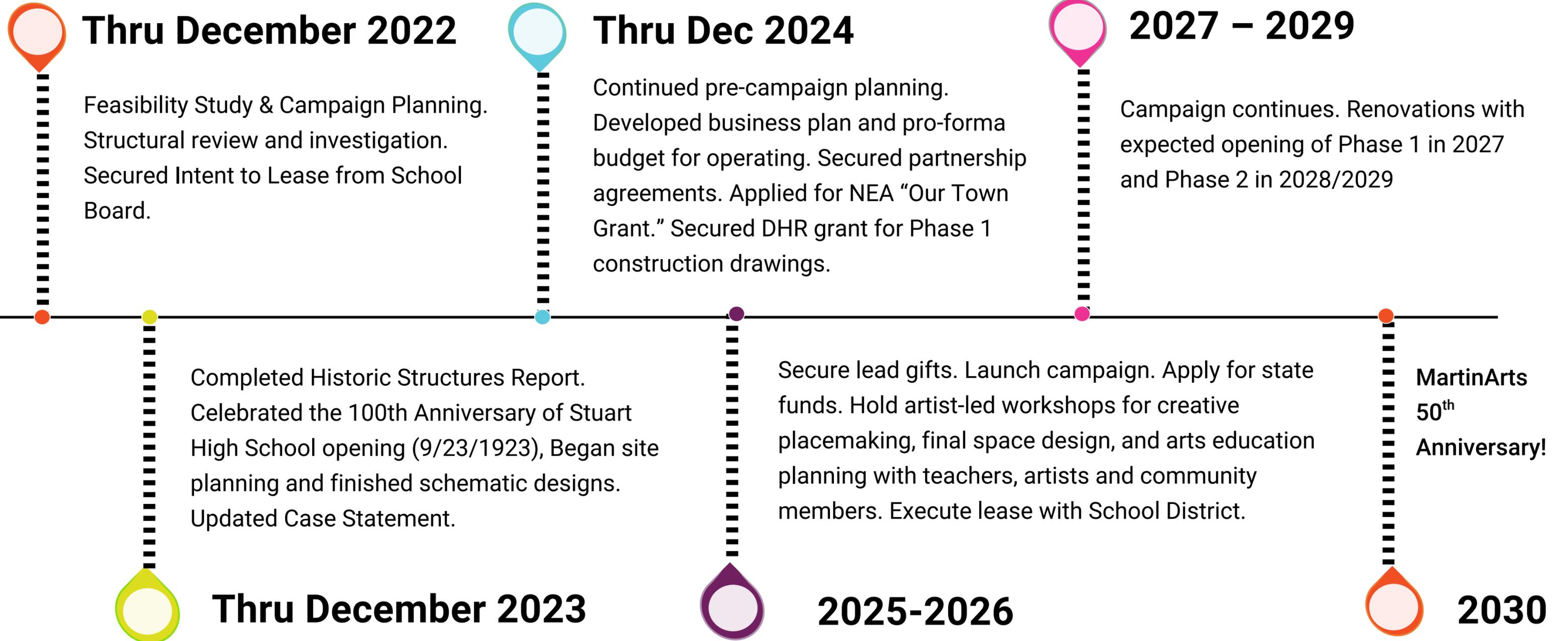
The vision MartinArts holds for transforming the historic Stuart High School into a vibrant arts campus is deeply rooted in the belief that every child deserves access to creative opportunities, regardless of their background or financial circumstances.

By establishing a dynamic, inclusive space dedicated to arts education, this campus will offer children—especially those who are historically underserved or financially challenged—a place to learn, grow, and express themselves through the arts.

Improving the Lives of Youth through the Arts



Estimated Timeline





We Can't Do This Without You!

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