

The History of Hamlin Elementary School

Hamlin Elementary School has a long and rich educational heritage. In 1836, a hundred and seventy three years ago, the first of two wooden schoolhouses was built on this site. Abe Lincoln was twenty-five years old when children started coming to school at Hamlin. In 1837, Michigan became a state. At that time, Miss Charlotte Brook was the teacher, and students were required to bring firewood for the school stove. Familiar names such as Carl Juengel (Juengel Orchards) and Adolph Hamlin attended Hamlin School in its early years.

In 1902, a fire destroyed the first wooden schoolhouse, and a second wooden school was constructed approximately where the front turnaround is located. Then in 1929, a modern three-room brick school was completed, including a furnace, incinerator, lockers, basement, and indoor bathrooms. There were 45 students the first year this building opened, but this number grew steadily. By 1954, a major addition was completed to include a gym, library, and five more classrooms. Minnie Thorpe-Carey became the Principal of Hamlin after starting as a teacher in the early 1940's. Mrs. Thorpe-Carey retired in 1972 after overseeing two more additions to Hamlin. By 1972, twelve classrooms had been added, and the population had grown to over 600 students.

Mr. Joseph Neubacher served as Hamlin's Principal from 1972 - 1978, followed by Mr. Thomas Mikula from 1978 - 1983. In June 1983, Hamlin's doors closed due to declining enrollment. This marked the end of 147 consecutive years of education on this site. The next chapter in the History of Hamlin began in September 1985, when Hamlin served the community as an Early Childhood Center. Again, nearly 700 children attended Hamlin in Pre-School, Day Care, and Kindergarten. The following September, Hamlin once again served as an elementary school with Mr. Gary Cornish as Principal.

In 1992, a total renovation and new additions were begun at Hamlin. In September 1993, staff and students of Hamlin moved into the newly constructed Hampton Elementary School for one full year while this major renovation took place to our school. In September 1994, staff and students returned to a beautifully renovated, state of the art facility.

The new school has incorporated standards for the future as it retrofitted these into the character and charm of the 1929 facility. As a result, Hamlin School features a full wall of over 800 tiles painted by students and staff during the 1992-93 school year. Our Media Center offers expansive space divided into three distinctive areas. This will accommodate an entire grade level of students doing multiple activities simultaneously. The gym and cafeteria multipurpose room accommodates seating for over 400 adults in chairs and easily seats the entire student population by opening the wall between these two areas. On a daily basis, this allows lunch and physical education to take place at the same time.

Specialized facilities for art, vocal music, childcare, science, and special education allow students every opportunity to maximize their learning. Offices and storage are ample and further facilitate the smooth and efficient operation of the school. Video and computers are networked to allow access to every child from their classroom. The school has implemented aggressive goals and high expectations for the effective utilization of technology.

Hamlin has been dedicated to educating children for 174 years. The future holds great promise for us to continue to serve and educate the children of Rochester with pride, caring, and commitment.