

A History of School District 105

Countryside – Hodgkins – LaGrange Illinois



From the Beginning

(A brief history published in 1957)

The schools of a community are not merely structures of brick and mortar, or steel and wood. They are a reflection of the will, the faith, the aspirations and the personalities of the people who create them and who contribute in an ever changing scene to their growth and to the fulfillment of their purpose. History in this connection is but a sketchy note, a fading record of successive buildings and of only a few of the many citizens who have given of their time and energy that these schools should be and then should grow to meet the challenge of each succeeding year.

From very early School District records we find that this area first was known as District 4, in Township 38, Range 12. In 1844 a [Margaret McNaughten](#) (1814–1856) taught in a little log school house located in what now is Lyonsville, at Wolf Road and Route 66. Margaret McNaughten became the wife of [Samuel Vial](#) (1819-1911) and later taught her own children and those of her neighbors in her own home on Joliet Road near the present southeast corner of East Avenue and Route 66. Some time between 1854 and 1858 a little white school house was built at this location. It was known for many years as the "School at Skunk Corners," a name applied when some young prankster killed a skunk and nailed its hide to a fence board at the crossroads.



[Hiram McClintock](#) (1840-1863), "a very scholarly gentleman" served as teacher during the school term in 1861. After only one year at the school he joined the Union Army in 1862 and was this area's first casualty in the Civil War. Despite his brief stay, this schoolmaster had made a decided impression in the community and the Hiram McClintock Post of the [Grand Army of the Republic](#) was named after him. It was very difficult to secure teachers during these early years and judging by the faculty spelling in notes and records left behind, they must have been very poorly educated. Salaries paid ranged from \$25 to \$45 per month, and in 1875 the teacher was paid \$55 per month for the eight month school term.

In 1886 Samuel Vial gave an acre for a new school site at the northeast corner of East Avenue and Route 66, and a "permanent school house" was built on this site. Another ten years passed and a one-room addition to the school was built to meet the needs of a growing population. Still later this two-room school was raised; a one story brick building was constructed and the two frame classrooms formed the second floor of the enlarged school house. Fire destroyed this building in March of 1918. Charles Conrad, who was then a school director, recalls salvaging some desks and books from one of the rooms while the Hodgkins Fire Department was fighting the blaze. The entire building was destroyed. School directors, facing the problem of finding temporary housing for the children, spent several weeks collecting old lumber and in constructing benches to accommodate the pupils in temporary quarters at Hodgkins and in two classes at the Thatcher farm house to finish the term.

Just a few days before Armistice Day in November, 1918, classes were resumed in a new school located about 40-50 feet back from where the old building had stood. It was known only as "the new school" until the spring of 1919 when County Superintendent of Schools Edward J. Tobin

made his annual visitation. Tobin termed it an "ideal" school for the rural community and the name stuck. Now outgrown and out-moded, this building still stands at East Avenue and Joliet Road.

Shortly after 1920, Hodgkins made a strong bid for a school in their own community and a two-room building that now forms the original part of the present school was erected.



During the boom period in the late 1920s a four room school had been built "in the prairie" at Seventh Avenue and 49th Street. The School Board of Directors at this time included [Homer L. Furman](#), President, and [Cole G. Lenzi](#) and Fred Petges as members. Opinion of the community on this venture was divided and it was regarded by many as an unwise move. The area continued to develop, especially following erection of the Electro-Motive plant in 1935 and the population increased by leaps and bounds. In 1945 plans were made for the addition of eight rooms, a kindergarten and an auditorium-gymnasium to the Seventh Avenue School. This building program was completed in September, 1947, and a bronze plaque placed in the hall bears the familiar names of Kenneth Jensen, President, and Cole Lenzi, Lyman M. Hoadly, Albern Hollands, William E. Kroll, Ralph H. Potts and Elvin H. Skinnes as members of the Board of Education at that time.






By 1950, the school population of District 105 had increased from the recorded 279 in 1945 to a total enrollment of 728 children. Existing facilities at Ideal, Hodgkins and Seventh Avenue Schools had been overwhelmed and most classrooms were badly over-loaded. It was evident, further, that the entire community was experiencing a period of dynamic residential development and that any limited construction program would be totally inadequate to meet the emergency.




Responding to a citizens' recommendation that expert counsel be retained, the Board of Education asked [Dr. William C. Reavis](#) (1881-1955), noted University of Chicago consultant, to survey and make recommendations concerning the needs of the District. In consequence of this and other detailed studies, additional property was acquired and construction started on a new Ideal School on 58th Street, one block east of LaGrange Road, and on a second new school on Spring Avenue at 52nd Street in LaGrange. At the same time, two classrooms and a gymnasium were added to the Hodgkins School. These new schools, planned to accommodate children enrolled in Kindergarten through the eighth grade in their respective attendance areas, were completed in time for use in the fall of 1952.





Within less than two years following occupation of these new buildings it became apparent to the community that even this construction program had been inadequate to match the rapid growth of the District and that new steps must be taken. A Citizens Advisory Committee was formed, Dr. Reavis again was retained and exhaustive new surveys were conducted. These studies resulted in renewal of earlier recommendations that all seventh and eighth grades of the District be consolidated in a new school and plans for the [William F. Gurrie](#) Central High School were evolved. The proposal was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in a referendum on March 17, 1956, and the new school, though not completed, was placed in use in September, 1957.






Year by Year Chronology

Year	School Board President	Superintendent	Student Population	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Significant Events
2009-2010	Mark Smith	Glenn Schlicting, Ph.D.	TBD	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Mark Smith elected as School Board President. Mr. John Signatur is named new Principal of Hodgkins Elementary School.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction bond approved. Three new classrooms added to Spring Avenue School. The State of Illinois recognizes Hodgkins Elementary School as a 2009 "Spotlight School" and Spring Avenue School as a 2009 "Academic Excellence School". New library system (Destiny) installed at all schools. Gurrie students issued bar coded ID badges which they use to check out library books and to electronically pay for lunch.
2008-2009	Jan Kinsley	Glenn Schlicting, Ph.D.	1292	14.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State of Illinois recognizes Gurrie Middle School as a 2008 "Academic Improvement School", Hodgkins Elementary School as a 2008 "Spotlight School" and Spring Avenue School as a 2008 "Academic Excellence School". New District and School website rolled out.
2007-2008	Jan Kinsley	Glenn Schlicting, Ph.D.	1177	14.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State of Illinois recognizes Gurrie Middle School as a 2007 "Academic Improvement School" and Spring Avenue School as a 2007 "Academic Excellence School". New PowerSchool Parent Portal allows Gurrie parents to view student grades, attendance, lunch balances and other information.
2006-2007	Jan Kinsley	Glenn Schlicting, Ph.D.	1187	14.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glenn Schlicting, Ph. D. is named the new District Superintendent.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Steve Bahn is the new Principal of Ideal Elementary School.

					 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State of Illinois recognizes Ideal Elementary School and Seventh Avenue Elementary Schools as 2006 “Academic Improvement Schools”.
2005-2006	Jan Kinsley	James Ewing, Ph.D.	1184	14.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. Elizabeth Webb-Peterman is the new principal of Spring Avenue School.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Ed Hood is the new Principal of Gurrie Middle School. 
2004-2005	Jan Kinsley	James Ewing, Ph.D.	1159	14.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Jan Kinsley elected as School Board President. District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
2003-2004	Ginger Mercer	James Ewing, Ph.D.	1146	14.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Ginger Mercer elected as School Board President.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. Sherry Krzyzanski is new Principal of Seventh Avenue School.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.

2002-2003	Susan H. Witte	James Ewing, Ph.D.	1147	14.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. James Ewing, Ed.D is named the new District Superintendent.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hodgkins School was expanded with the addition of two new classrooms. District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence. New phone and voicemail system installed district-wide.
2001-2002	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1084	13.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Mary Savage is the new Principal of Ideal School. Ms. Kathy Keenan is the new Principal of Hodgkins School.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Kim Sekulich is the new Principal of Spring Avenue School. Gurrie Middle School adopts new math curriculum. District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
2000-2001	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1048	13.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
1999-2000	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1078	14.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new classrooms were constructed at Hodgkins School. District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
1998-1999	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1068	14.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 is awarded the “Bright Red Apple” by <i>School Search</i> as an outstanding district. District 105 introduces the “Accelerated Reader” program.
1997-1998	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1090	15.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
1996-1997	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 is awarded the “Bright Red Apple” by <i>School Search</i> as an outstanding district.
1995-1996	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.		16.1	
1994-1995	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.	1057		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Roger Bacon is the new Principal of Gurrie Middle School. 

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 is awarded the “Bright Red Apple” by <i>School Search</i> as an outstanding district.
1993-1994	Susan H. Witte	Edward L. Olds III, Ed.D.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edward Olds III, Ed. D. is named the new District Superintendent.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Jay Howe is the new principal of Spring Avenue School  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
1992-1993	Susan H. Witte	Lee A. Fabri, Ed.D. (Interim)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Susan Witte elected as School Board President.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. James Ewing, Ph.D. is new principal of Gurrie Middle School. District 105 earns Red Apple award for excellence.
1991-1992	Norman H. Wiegel	David A. Amsler			
1990-1991	Norman H. Wiegel	David A. Amsler			
1989-1990	Norman H. Wiegel	David A. Amsler			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> William Petullo named principal of Ideal Elementary School. 
1988-1989	Norman H. Wiegel	David A. Amsler			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New gymnasium and two new classrooms added to Hodgkins School.
1987-1988	Norman H. Wiegel	David A. Amsler			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Norman Wiegel elected as School Board President.

					
1986-1987	Donna L. Raymond	David A. Amsler			
1985-1986	Donna L. Raymond	David A. Amsler			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Donna Raymond elected as School Board President.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. David Amsler is named District Superintendent 
1984-1985	Frank Haggerty	Arthur H. Franson			
1983-1984	Frank Haggerty	Arthur H. Franson			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Frank Haggerty is elected as School Board President. 
1982-1983	Betty L. Guyer	Arthur H. Franson			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microcomputer curriculum initiated in District 105.
1981-1982	Betty L. Guyer	Arthur H. Franson			
1980-1981	Betty L. Guyer	Arthur H. Franson			
1979-1980	Betty L. Guyer	Arthur H. Franson			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Betty Guyer is elected as School Board President. 

1978-1979	Edmund Pellettiere	Arthur H. Franson			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Edmund Pellettiere is elected as School Board President.
1977-1978	Keith S. Windross	Arthur H. Franson			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Keith Windross is elected as School Board President. • New Library Learning Centers opened at Hodgkins and Ideal Schools.
1976-1977	John Capron	Arthur H. Franson	1276		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. John Capron is elected as School Board President. • Mr. Arthur Fanson is named District Superintendent. • Mr. Ralph Lewis is named principal of Seventh Avenue School. • Mr. Paul Vorwick is named principal of Hodgkins School. • The Cole/Lenzi Library Learning Center and a new art/music room are added to Hodgkins School.
1975-1976		Stanley Veach	1279		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Stanley Veach is named District Superintendent.. • Summer School initiated in District 105
1974-1975		Robert Lynn			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Robert Lynn is named District Superintendent. • Mr. Paul Vorwick is named principal of Ideal School.
1973-1974		John Prater			
1972-1973		John Prater			
1971-1972		John Prater			
1970-1971		John Prater			
1969-1970		John Prater			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. John Prater is named District Superintendent.
1968-1969		Henry Ford			
1967-1968		Henry Ford			
1966-1967		Henry Ford			
1965-1966		Henry Ford			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Henry Ford is named District Superintendent.
1964-1965		David Aurand			
1963-1964		David Aurand			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five classrooms, kindergarten classroom and an art/music room added to Hodgkins School.
1962-1963		David Aurand			
1961-1962		David Aurand			
1960-1961		David Aurand			
1959-1960		David Aurand			
1958-1959		David Aurand			
1957-1958		David Aurand			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurrie Middle School opened.
1956-1957		David Aurand			
1955-1956		David Aurand			
1954-1955		David Aurand			
1953-1954		David Aurand			
1952-1953		David Aurand			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Avenue Elementary School opened. • Gym and two classroom additions to Hodgkins School.

1951-1952		David Aurand			
1950-1951		David Aurand			
1949-1950		David Aurand			
1948-1949		David Aurand			
1947-1948		David Aurand			
1946-1947		David Aurand			
1945-1946		David Aurand			• Mr. David Aurand is named District Superintendent.
1944-1945		G. E. Larson			
1943-1944		G. E. Larson			
1942-1943		G. E. Larson			
1941-1942		G. E. Larson			
1940-1941		G. E. Larson			
1939-1940		G. E. Larson			
1938-1939		G. E. Larson			
1937-1938		G. E. Larson			
1936-1937		G. E. Larson			
1935-1936		G. E. Larson			
1934-1935		G. E. Larson			• Mr. G. E. Larson is named District Superintendent.
1933-1934		E. D. Aurand			
1932-1933		E. D. Aurand			
1931-1932		E. D. Aurand			
1930-1931		E. D. Aurand			
1929-1930		E. D. Aurand*			• Mr. E. D. Aurand appointed as District Principal..
1928-1929		N. S. Vial*			• Seventh Avenue Elementary School opened with 4 classrooms. And 75 students. “Head Teacher” was a Ms. Alice Higgins plus two other teachers..
1927-1928					
1926-1927					
1925-1926					
1924-1925					
1923-1924					
1922-1923					
1921-1922					• Hodgkins Elementary School constructed.
1920-1921					

* Note: “Superintendent” was not used as the title for Mr. E. D. Aurand and Mr. N. S. Vial. They were referred to as “Principal.” There is evidence that Mr. Vial had that role as early as 1926; however, the records are incomplete between the years of 1920 and 1926.