

Kokomo Schools

Education Foundation Newsletter



Wallace Elementary Celebrates Centennial!



Students and staff at Wallace Elementary School are celebrating their school's centennial during the 2017-2018 school year!

Joe Dunbar, the Kokomo Public Schools Education Foundation Executive Director, compiled a history of Wallace Elementary School. The following is an excerpt from that history.

Prior to Wallace Elementary School's construction in 1917, a one-room schoolhouse operated by Center Township's school system existed on the Wallace property. The Hitch School, as it was called then, was opened in 1856, and was one of eight township schools.

By the early part of the 20th Century, consolidation of small township schools left only Darrough Chapel to the east of Kokomo and Hitch to the west of Kokomo. The township razed the Hitch School in 1917 and built a new brick structure with four classrooms on the same site. The Kokomo Tribune described the building as "the finest four-room school building in the State."

A reunion of all Hitch School alumni and teachers took place at the new school in August of 1917. Reunion organizer, alumnus, and former Hitch teacher, Dr. James Garr, proposed that the new building should be called the Lew Wallace School. General Lew Wallace was an Indiana native from Crawfordsville who had served with distinction in the Civil War and was famous for his authorship of the classic novel, Ben Hur.

At the official dedication of Wallace School in September of 1917, township trustee C.S. Jackson placed a copper receptacle in the cornerstone. This receptacle included the history of Center Township, U.S. coins of various denominations, the name of the architect (Elmer E. Dunlap, who also served as architect for Willard School and what is now Central Middle School), name of the contractors, a statement containing details of the structure, a list of county and township officials, a county directory of schools, and copies of the Kokomo Tribune, Kokomo Dispatch, and the Indianapolis Star. A boulder also was placed on the site of the school to mark the exact center of Indiana... east and west. Wallace School is exactly 72 ½ miles east of Illinois and 72 ½ miles west of Ohio.

The township added four additional classrooms in 1950, and another four again in 1954, as the population in Kokomo and Center Township grew rapidly following the end of World War II. During that same period, Kokomo City Schools and Center Township began discussing a possible consolidation due to deteriorating facilities in the township, and a lack of a professional educational administration. Voters approved the consolidation, by a vote of 2-1, in a referendum in May of 1954, and the official reorganization took place on May 4th of that year. The

consolidation created the Kokomo-Center Township Consolidated School Corporation, which was shortened to Kokomo School Corporation in 2013.

Wallace Elementary closed from 2008-2010 as the recession hit, and forced public school districts across Indiana into financial shortfalls. By 2010, the recession began to ease, and the Board of School Trustees selected Dr. Jeff Hauswald to become Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Hauswald developed a unique curricular plan to boost enrollment, and his plan provided students and parents with choices that met the needs of each student. These plans included a massive parent survey to determine what choices parents desired. One of those choices was a school designated for the arts.

By 2012, Wallace School reopened as Wallace Elementary School of Integrated Arts... an elementary that allows students to learn a core curriculum in an environment where the arts are integrated into all aspects of learning. Mr. Charley Hinkle was the first principal at the new integrated arts school at Wallace Elementary. Wallace students have the opportunity to study art, music, dance, movement, and similar subjects while applying this knowledge to core subjects. Integrated Arts students also have daily class time to learn piano keyboarding, as well as to study violin and other stringed instruments.

As Wallace flourished, the Board of School Trustees approved structural additions to the school to accommodate the growing enrollment. In 2014, an arts wing for violin, piano, and dance was constructed. In 2015, a new cafeteria and kitchen were constructed to accommodate larger enrollment. Finally, in 2016, an educational wing was built to add additional classrooms.



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