

GROWTH OF THE FAIRPORT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

September of 1951 saw the opening of the newly consolidated Fairport Central School District. Kindergarten classes were held at the East Avenue, West Church Street, and Midvale schools. Due to overcrowding, some of the first graders were moved from the West Church Street to the West Avenue school. The sixth grade rooms at West Avenue were needed for the junior high students, so the sixth graders were bused to Midvale School and District #3 on Turk Hill Road.

The problem of space did not improve. By 1952 the district was using seven school buildings, two churches, and the library basement to house its pupils. Some classrooms were partitioned to accommodate two classes; other classes were held in basements. At several of the small district schools, there was no hot water, and bricks were falling from the West Church Street school façade. Despite the poor conditions, the vote to build a new school on already-purchased land on Potter Place failed twice, with opponents citing high taxes and increased traffic as problems. The voters finally passed a third pared-down proposal in November 1953. The new school, named Johanna Perrin School after the first white woman to settle in Perinton, had 42 rooms and housed all the kindergarten through sixth grade students in the district. Grades seven through twelve attended the West Avenue School, and East Avenue and Midvale Schools were kept in reserve. The West Church School, which had been deteriorating, was razed in 1955.

By the mid 1950's the West Avenue School was severely overcrowded. In 1956, 140 students had to be sent to the East Avenue School due to the lack of space. Although the West Avenue School was built to accommodate only 500 students, projections estimated that by 1961 there would be 1,000 students in grades 7 –12. Since expansion was impossible at that facility, a proposal was made in 1955 to build a new \$2.1 million structure on the former Filkins property south of Hulburt Road. Despite the significant increase in taxes of approximately \$10 per thousand assessed valuation, the proposal was voted on and passed in June of 1956. The new high school, named after Fairport teacher and principal Minerva DeLand, was opened in January 1959. Miss DeLand was present at both the dedication and the first commencement exercises of the new high school. With the opening of the Minerva DeLand High School, the West Avenue School was renamed after another Fairport teacher, Martha Brown, and became the junior high school, housing grades six through eight.

Growth in the Fairport-Perinton community continued unabated during the 1960's and the early 1970's. Between 1961 and 1967 the school population doubled, and three more schools were built. Brooks Hill Primary School opened in 1962, the new Martha Brown Junior High School on Ayrault Road opened in 1965 (the West Avenue school reverted to its original name and became an intermediate school), and Jefferson Avenue Primary School opened in 1966. Building continued into the early 1970's, paralleling a constant increase in student population. In 1970, the district built a new high school on Ayrault Road on the site of the old Ayrault farm, and Minerva DeLand became a junior high school. The same year saw the opening of the Dudley-Northside complex with Dudley School housing grades 1-3 and Northside housing grades 4 – 6. At that point the district was running nine schools.

During the subsequent decade there was a small decline in the student population, leading to the closing and sale of the West Avenue school and its conversion to condominiums. The 1990's brought a return to increasing enrollments, which was dealt with for several years by reconfiguring grade levels and constructing additions to the existing buildings.



*Minerva DeLand and Robert Dudley
at the 1957 groundbreaking for the
Minerva DeLand School*

In its third century, the Fairport district has continued to make additions and renovations to its current buildings, and the school district continues to work to meet the needs of the community and to provide students with a quality education.