

History of Lombard Elementary School District 44

Sources: District 44 newsletter ("Reporter") archives
History of Hammerschmidt School compiled by Diana Flint in 2002
"The Story of Lombard" 1833-1955 by Mildred Robinson Dunning
"The Life of Peter Hoy" by Peter Hoy Research Project Group

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Chronology compiled by Diane Dassow of Binding Legacies, 2004.

Lombard Education in the Early 1800s

In the early 1800s, Sheldon Peck sends back East for a teacher to teach his children, and he invites other children of the Babcock's Grove settlement to attend school in the attic of his home.

1851

- With at least five frame houses, a store, train depot, and a railroad building being used as a hotel, the settlement uses a building on present St. Charles Road, a bit west of Grace Street, as a schoolhouse

1858

- The German people establish a school just east of the Peck home, at what is now Grace and St. Charles Road, with Julius Schoene as teacher

1861

- A one-room, frame schoolhouse is built on the site that would become Lincoln School; later a second frame is added with a coal shed between the two

1868

- The town is platted and the state is petitioned for a charter

1869

- The town, named after Josiah Lombard, receives its charter

1863

- The Rev. Charles Caverno, pastor of First Church of Lombard, has children of high school age; his wife turns the front room of their home into a schoolroom and teaches children from neighboring villages as well as her own

The Earliest Years of Bricks & Mortar for the Lombard Public Schools

1887

- Lincoln School, on what was then Lake Street (later St. Charles Road) at School Street (later renamed North Lincoln Street) is built of wood and red brick veneer, and consists of three rooms. A large bell is housed in the belfry. One of the punishments issued by the principal is to have the erring student assume the responsibility of ringing the bell for the day. The principal is a Mr. Hench from Dundee, who on Sundays is a preacher.

- The two previous frame buildings are moved and remodeled into houses
- The town of Lombard is incorporated as a Village, with elections being held in the schoolhouse

1908

- An addition is built at the rear of the Lincoln School building

1916

- The community finally outgrows the little red schoolhouse. Moreover, because of its wooden construction, the structure is a fire hazard. So, in 1916 the first section of the newer school is erected beside it at a cost of \$28,000. The new building consists of four rooms in which the first and second grades are taught, with the old school still housing the other grades.
- A gym is added to Lincoln School

Mid-1920s

- Portable buildings for grades 1-3 are set on Main Street just south of the CA&E and also on Madison just west of Main to serve as temporary schools for the Green Valley subdivision
- The growing village of Lombard requires an additional public school. The William Hammerschmidts, who settled in this area in 1848, donate a two-acre family farm as a site for the school. (In 1878, the parent company of what would become the Hammerschmidt Lumber Company was started on the school site as the Lombard Tile and Brick Factory. The smoke stack, which remained on the site, was part of the kiln used in firing the tile and bricks.)

District 44 Begins

1927

- School Board, District 44, organized in spring
- Voters approve a school bond issue of \$45,000 to erect a school building south of Electric Road
- Passage of a new law, which would limit the debt-incurring power of districts and cut the bond issue in half, is declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, but delays construction
- Hammerschmidt School is built, consisting of six classrooms and two offices

1928

- Further additions are made to Lincoln School
- A boulder is placed in front of the Lincoln School as a memorial to Lombard men who died in the Civil War
- Prior to the construction of Lombard Junior High School in 1952, Lincoln School serves as a kindergarten-through-eighth-grade building
- Hammerschmidt School is dedicated
- The Special Education program, consisting of classes for the educable mentally handicapped as well as for blind and deaf children, all originate at Lincoln School
- A permanent building is constructed on the Green Valley site on Madison Street

1930

- The latest census lists 6,197 persons in Lombard versus 1,331 persons in 1920.

1932-47

- During the Depression, Green Valley School stands closed

1940

- Lombard's population grows to 7,100.

1947

- Lombard Public School is demolished

1949

- Special referendum passes for a \$140,000 addition to Hammerschmidt School

1950

- Lombard's population increases to 9,817, and an average of 300 new homes are being built each year
- Robert Chelseth becomes Hammerschmidt School's first full-time principal; prior to that a full-time teacher served as principal as an adjunct to regular duties
- Additional property adjoining Hammerschmidt School grounds is purchased for \$7,500
- Pleasant Lane School is built, consisting of three classrooms and a kindergarten, on a five-acre site purchased from William D. Heinberg
- Addition is made to Green Valley School

1951

- Five classrooms and an all-purpose room added at Hammerschmidt School
- Lombard Junior High School cornerstone is laid July 29 at 150 West Madison
- A school bus service starts to transport children to various local schools

1952

- Lombard Junior High opens for some 250 students, with Robert Chelseth principal; it contains 11 classrooms, a gym, cafeteria and office complex

1953

- Four more classrooms are added at Hammerschmidt School
- Addition is made to Green Valley School
- Pleasant Lane School to add six classrooms and an all-purpose room

1954

- First Adult Activity Program offered in cooperation with Lombard Park Board
- Addition at Pleasant Lane completed

1955

- Glenn Westlake is superintendent of School District 44
- Enrollment is 2170 and increasing rapidly, well over the figures in 1944 (540) and 1950 (1,037)
- Junior High School addition of seven classrooms and library completed
- Park View School opens in March with five classrooms; it is the first in the district to become involved in a cooperative plan between District 44 and the Lombard Park District
- Teacher shortage becoming more critical year by year
- Referendum passed to build a southeast school with four classrooms
- Additional classrooms at Pleasant Lane School
- Addition is made to Green Valley School

1956

- Initiation of Guidance Program in elementary schools
- Film strip libraries established in each building
- New subdivisions pose challenges
- Additional referendum passes to add four more classrooms and other rooms
- Construction begins on addition to Park View School
- New classrooms and all-purpose room at Green Valley School
- New construction on southeast school, which opens as Fairwood School with 145 children and five teachers, one of whom also served as principal
- Average enrollment 2,631
- Cost per pupil is \$209.50, compared with national average of \$250

1957

- Fairwood School (543 East Taylor Road) dedicated January 27, 1957
- Park View School, 341 North Elizabeth Street, dedicated April 14, 1957
- Referendum passes, approving 15 more classrooms
- School Board approves purchase of land, at a price of \$12,000, for what is to become Peter Hoy School

1958

- New school at Finley Road and Ethel Street named Peter Hoy School
- Board adopts subsidized milk program
- Long-range program developed to deal with teacher shortage
- A tea is held for college-trained mothers to discuss how they might fill teaching positions
- New program for children with impaired hearing
- Referendum passes approving addition to Lombard Junior H.S.
- Foreign language program begins

1959

- District enrollment is 3,453
- New school being built at Main and 16th Street, named Highland Hills School, is designed as a “starter” school for kindergarten through third grade
- Peter Hoy School dedicated May 31, 1959, named after Peter Hoy, an early school board member. Hoy, who once owned the acreage where the school is located, immigrated from Denmark in 1887. After a perilous shipwreck in mid-ocean he arrived in the U.S. with only a few dollars in his pocket and a train ticket to Chicago. In 1890 he bought the Lombard farm that soon became a favorite holiday spot for children, with horseback and hayrides through the countryside.
- Rising enrollment spurs plan for addition to Lombard Junior High School, to include 10 classroom, a band rehearsal room, new cafeteria, teachers’ room and expanded locker rooms
- Resource Room for Blind opens at Lincoln School, serving DuPage County
Northern Illinois U. extension service initiated at Lombard Junior High to assist in new teacher development

1960

- Highland Hills School opens January 4, 1960
- Boundary change transfers small area from York and Villa Park districts to Lombard district
- New development project in Butterfield area
- Two-year curriculum study begins
- PTA conducts quadrennial census to count area pre-schoolers
- Parking lots and driveway at junior high upgraded

1961

- District experiments with limited use of airborne TV science programs sponsored by the Ford Foundation
- Bond issue referendum passes to cover additions to Peter Hoy, Park View and Lombard Junior High Schools

1962

- Board of Education develops statement of policy on civil defense
- Building projects completed as financed by 1961 bond issue
- Bond issue passes to cover additions at Pleasant Lane, Peter Hoy, William Hammerschmidt and Highland Hills Schools

1963

- Physical Education and accelerated programs cut back at junior high to accommodate overcrowding
- All additions begun in 1962 are completed

1964

- Referendum passes for a second junior high school as well as addition to Butterfield School
- Second junior high school built
- PTA's "Picture Lady" program introduced at two schools to expose children to art

1965

- District graduates its largest 8th-grade class, 485 boys and girls
- Counseling program enlarged to three counselors
- Tax levy increase and building bond issue to build and equip 11 new classrooms (at Butterfield, Peter Hoy and Highland Hills schools) approved by voters
- Self-sustaining Summer Review School is begun to assist under-achievers
- "Gifted" Program instituted, financed by a state grant

1966

- Glenn Westlake Junior High dedicated in honor of Superintendent Westlake's 40th anniversary as an educator in Lombard
- Referendum passes to construct the district's 12th school—Glen Park School, 2S361 Glen Avenue in the Butterfield area—on property donated by F&S Construction Company
- Heavy rains and prolonged strike of heavy equipment operators delay construction of Glen Park School
- A December referendum passes, approving a total of 14 new classrooms and other facilities to Glenn Westlake Junior High, Fairwood and Peter Hoy Schools
- Internal changes are made to the Hammerschmidt School building

1967

- Assistant Superintendent Robert Chelseth named Superintendent
- Glen Park School dedicated on May 28; present enrollment is 219 pupils in kindergarten through third grade

1968

- District enrollment up to 5,700 pupils in 12 schools with a staff of 265, compared with 1952, when there were 1,618 pupils in 5 schools with a staff of 59
- Building referendum passes, including fund for a site and construction of a new school south of Roosevelt Road, as well as additions to Glen Park School and the Administration Center
- PTA Cultural Arts Program expands
- Choral groups from Lombard Junior High School participate in an “Up With People Sing-Out”, a nationwide movement of moral re-armament for young people
- Hearing and Language Center for West Suburban Association of the Hearing Handicapped erected on the northeast portion of the 13-acre Lombard Junior High School Property
- Internal changes are made to the Hammerschmidt School building

1969

- Innovative features developed by group of parents and administrators to enhance the district’s summer program
- Glen Park School expands to include kindergarten through sixth grade
- Students and staff celebrate Lombard’s Centennial
- New report cards and more informative method of reporting pupil progress developed
- New vision and hearing screening equipment purchased

1970

- University of Cincinnati air pollution (lead) testing device operates atop Hammerschmidt School
- New school built on 10-acre site bounded by Grace Street, Fairfield Avenue, 14th and 16th Streets

1971

- Referendum for an increase in the educational fund tax rate fails
- In a school-naming contest, two students independently suggest the following change: The new school, which is located more deeply in Highland Hills, is to be named Highland Hills School; the former Highland Hills School is to be renamed Manor Hill School, which more accurately describes its location

1972

- Learning Disabilities program is expanded to a resource room and a learning disabilities teacher at each building, eliminating busing of the children out of their attendance area
- Innovative program is launched at Park View School involving some 25 sixth grade students as “helpers” for primary grade pupils

1973

- Unit district proposal fails
- Lombard Education Association, the teachers' collective bargaining agent, threatens a strike

1974

- Contract negotiations resume with a complex proposed contract and a change in the Board negotiating committee
- "Music Lady" program is added to enhance the cultural arts at Peter Hoy School
- Peer tutoring program, suggested by a student, initiated at Pleasant Lane School
- It is noted at Peter Hoy School that student turnover has decreased to 11% from 22% a few years ago, indicating that families are not moving around as much as they did in recent years. Also, more than 40% of Peter Hoy's students report that both their mother and father are employed, reflecting national statistics on women entering and re-entering the work force.
- Parents and students are notified of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 concerning inspection of student records

1975

- Referendum asking for an increase in the educational levy is soundly defeated

1976

- Budget cutbacks planned to help address estimated deficit in excess of one million dollars
- Citizens Advisory Council selected to assist the Board by studying school district issues
- Referendum for an increase in educational fund, to deal with financial crisis and declining enrollments, is approved by voters

1977

- Cooperative Association for Special Education (CASE) building is constructed on Manor Hill's site
- Plans are made to close Fairwood School and lease the building to the Ray Graham Association for the Handicapped; students to be transferred to the William Hammerschmidt School
- Plans are made to close Highland Hills School and rent facilities to the West Suburban Association for Hearing, orthopedically and Visually Impaired (WSAHOVI) as well as continued rental to the Montessori School; students will transfer to Manor Hill School; impaired hearing classes to be moved to Pleasant Lane

1978

- Six-district CASE headquarters constructed adjacent to Manor Hill School.
- Green Valley launches its student council.
- Declining enrollment forces closure of Glen Park, to be combined with Butterfield School. Glen Park leased to National College of Education (NCE).
- 141 Green Valley Drive building leased to Ray Graham Association.
- Energy conservation measures considered.
- Early retirement policy for certified employees initiated.
- Teachers' Resource Center organized.
- Superintendent Robert Chelseth announces retirement.

1979

- Superintendent Dr. Leonard Roberts takes the helm
- Enrollment is half of the 1972 figures, despite minor baby “boomlet” in 1978; number of teachers reduced
- Gifted Program initiated with grant funds
- Art Program reinstated
- Student Health Care System initiated with support from DuPage County Health Department

1980

- Organization structure revamped to support the learning process
- Electronic data processing initiated to increase administrative efficiency and enhance classroom activity
- New Housing and Programming Task Force analyzes enrollment trends
- Five million dollar building renovation program

1981

- Glenn Westlake Junior High and Lincoln Elementary closed
- Lombard Junior High operates on a “school within a school” concept of teacher teams

1982

- Four former school buildings successfully leased; four classrooms at Green Valley leased to Pioneer Preschool
- 1982-83 school year tax levy reduced 21 cents
- Music Parent organization founded

1983

- Three-year tax abatement begins

1984

- Registration-by-mail system implemented at two schools

1985

- Registration-by-mail system extended to all schools
- L.I.O.N.S. (Lombard’s Ideal Operation for Noteworthy Students), a system of behavior modification, implemented at Lombard Junior High

1986

- Dr. Leonard Roberts resigns
- Dr. Gordon Wendlandt new Superintendent

1987

- Summer School expanded to five weeks
- Cutbacks implemented to reduce expenses

1988

- School board votes to establish a 6th-through-8th grade middle school to help smooth the transition from elementary to high school

1989

- DuPage/West Cook (special education cooperative) leaves Pleasant Lane School
- Park View – Pleasant Lane boundaries revised
- Enrollment is 2,737 attending 8 schools. Staff includes 181 teachers, 43 teacher aides, 17 custodians, 12 administrators, 20 secretaries and 41 lunchroom supervisors

1990

- District's bond rating improves to A1

1991

- Referendum asking voters for \$8 million in the sale of building bonds

1992

- Glenn Westlake Middle School opens (remodeling of Glenn Westlake Junior High)
- Space at elementary schools, made available with move of 6th graders, converted for needed use

1993

- Board grapples with significant budget reductions
- Technology's role in education growing

1994

- Dr. Gordon Wendlandt retires
- Dr. Gary Smit becomes superintendent
- District receives Bright Red Apple Award
- Paired Schools concept to address space needs is studied and rejected

1995

- Peer Mediation Conflict Resolution program initiated at Glenn Westlake Middle School
- District receives Bright Red Apple Award

1996

- District sells Green Valley School
- District earns Intergenerational Award from DuPage Consortium Inc.
- SchoolScape first appears on cable television to highlight school news
- District receives Bright Red Apple Award for second year
- First on-line computer telecommunication project using the Internet and interactive videoconferencing used at Pleasant Lane
- District receives Intergenerational Award of Recognition

1997

- Character Counts coalition is formed among community groups including District 44
- Life Safety Survey completed by architects
- Neighborhood Town Meetings held at each K-5 school to discuss district's facilities needs

1998

- A \$13.1 million referendum is approved for building additions and renovations at all six K-5 buildings, to create safe drop-off zones, and to upgrade technology infrastructures at all District 44 schools
- State of Illinois Construction Grant approved and monies to be rebated to taxpayers
- District joins Family Education Network, dedicated to helping parents get more involved in their children's education

1999

- Construction projects continue at all schools, adding new Learning Resource Centers, two gym-community rooms (one in conjunction with the Lombard Park District) and classrooms, as well as smaller areas for instruction
- Citizens Advisory Council survey results are reviewed and recommendations made to enhance communication with parents and coordination of schedules with other schools in the area
- Construction and safety projects funded by 1998 referendum are completed

2001

- New phone lines installed in every classroom and office
- Kindergarten Readiness Program (KRP) moves to Fairwood School building

2002

- No Child Left Behind Act signed into law, revising the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act

2003

- State financial woes affect District
- New, high-tech Discover Earth Through Math and Science Center opens at Manor Hill School
- Dr. Gary Smit announces retirement

2004

- Dr. James Blanche becomes Superintendent
- Adult English as a Second Language class first offered through partnership with College of DuPage
- Blue Star Program discontinued

**Superintendents of Lombard District 44
and Their Years at the Helm**

Glenn Westlake * 1955-1967
Robert Chelseth * 1967-1979
Dr. Leonard Roberts * 1979-1986
Dr. Gordon Wendlandt * 1986-1994
Dr. Gary Smit * 1994-2004
Dr. James Blanche 2004-2014