

# Schools

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In 1899, the first Overbrook High School was started, gathering 40 students in the Grange Hall. 1902 was the year a new building was built on the site where the present grade school can be found. It held students in both grade school and high school at the time. The building was eventually enlarged to hold all of Overbrook's students, but a fire in January 1919 destroyed the building.

With wartime prices at their peak, it became impossible to replace the burnt out building with a school large enough to accommodate both primary and high school students. With the steely determination of the townspeople and the provisions of the New Rural High School, citizens worked out a plan to organize a new high school. A bond election was held with a near unanimous outcome, and the Overbrook Rural High School District was formed.

The new grade school was started in October 1919, at its present site at Seventh and Oak streets. The high school opened into the new building in 1920 at the northeast corner of Ash and East Fourth streets.

By 1965, USD No. 434 was created, consisting of students from Overbrook, Carbondale and Scranton. In 1970, a new high school was dedicated five miles west of Overbrook, with a cost per square foot of \$16.91. It was named Santa Fe Trail High School because it sits on the Santa Fe Trail.

Following a significant amount of research and planning, reorganization of the school district will occur for the 2009-10 school year: Students in grades K-2 will attend Overbrook Attendance Center; students in grades 3 and 4 will attend Scranton Attendance Center; and students in grades 5-8 will attend classes at Carbondale Attendance Center. Students in seventh and eighth grades are considered Santa Fe Trail Junior High students.

In May, Santa Fe Trail High School graduated 93 seniors.

## Melvern

The first school in Melvern was held in a log cabin in 1868. The

Melvern "Beck" School (Melvern Township) was started in 1870, in either Oscar Beck or Dr. James Beck's log home. Beck was one of the town's early settlers. It was known as District 42 of Osage County for 17 years.

In 1872, a two-story native stone structure was built and students were moved there to attend classes. The schoolhouse was also used as a place to hold community events, and four church congregations alternated using the structure on Sundays: Methodist, Presbyterian, Adventist and Baptist.

A new school was built in 1887 and the old school was converted into a home in the 1890s. Since that time, it has been owned by many families and used as a rental house. In 1985, the home was purchased by William and Mary Fisher and Paul and Frances Lillig. They worked as partners, restoring the schoolhouse into the Schoolhouse Inn Bed and Breakfast, with Bill and Mary Fisher as hosts. Many county residents also helped in the restoration.

In 1986, the building was entered on the Register of Historic Kansas Places by the Kansas Historical Society. It is located on the south side of Melvern, along state Highway 31.

In 1910, the school became an accredited four-year school. In 1923, a fire broke out in the school and it was completely destroyed. A new school was built in 1924 and enlarged in 1953, with a workshop added on in 1957.

In 1965, schools of Melvern, Quenemo and Olivet were unified into one school system. Then in 1979, Melvern High School became known as Marais des Cygnes Valley High School.

Student population has risen and fallen through the years, as with so many other area districts. The first class graduated in 1889 with five students. In May 2009, Marais des Cygnes Valley High School graduated 23 seniors.

## Osage City

Students attending Osage City schools experienced changes rather often. In 1867, a schoolhouse was built south of town, on the Henry Martin Farm. Miss Emma Crumb was the first teacher. Three years later, the school was moved to the west side of

town, locating at Second and Market streets, where it existed until a brick schoolhouse, known as West School, was built.

Within 10 years, West School had established procedures for tracking attendance, grades, and completion of 11 years.

In 1880, a new 10-room school was built and named Central Grade School. The school directory showed there were 515 students enrolled. Two years later, District No. 20 was created, which included Central Grade School (students in first through 11th grades). West School taught first through eighth grade students, while North School, on 11th Street, instructed first through fourth grades.

By 1888, another school, named Ninth Street School, opened for first through fourth grades.

Osage City celebrated its first high school commencement in the spring of 1889, when seven students were graduated.

Craigtown School, located one mile southwest of Osage City, near Denman Hill, was considered a city school. Six grades attended in 1890-91 and were transported there by wagon.

The first boys' basketball team was formed in 1904, with a girls' team forming in 1921.

Lincoln School was completed in 1920 at Second and Market streets and used until it closed in 1959, when all students began attending Central Grade School.

In May 1912, a new high school was built on the west side of Fifth Street. An auditorium and basement gymnasium was added in 1921 and served for 50 years until it was condemned in the fall of 1971.

The Rapp Schoolhouse, built in 1929 about five miles west of Osage City, is one of the few, if not the only, one-room, eighth-grade schoolhouses in Kansas that still has its original desks and textbooks. It has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is now used as an educational site where elementary classes can spend a day, where families can hold reunions, and where visitors can experience the contributions made by one-room schools.

The basement served as a place for school activities in the winter months, and a large coal-burning furnace was also used.

The current Osage City high school building was built in 1936

for \$87,000, with an addition in 1948. Osage City Rural High School District No. 10 was formed on March 1, 1956, while the grade school remained District No. 20. Each school had its own board of education.

The current Osage City grade school opened in 1957. Central Grade School was then torn down. Unification laws, passed by the State of Kansas in 1965, named the schools as District No. 420.

Several more additions were made to the schools in the 1970s, including a band and classroom addition, shower and dressing room facilities at the football field, lunchroom and stage, and a new gym. Further additions made in the 1980s included a bus barn, superintendent's office, high school library, commons area and several classrooms.

In May 2009, Osage City High School graduated 59 seniors.

## Lyndon

The first school in Lyndon was started in 1870, shortly after the city was founded. The first year, 60 pupils attended school, which was a home located at 723 Madison Street. The house continued as a school until it was purchased by School District No. 28 in August 1889, for \$300. The school continued to own the property until October 1907.

The land where the grade school was located was originally part of a section owned by B.G. Hall, one of the founding fathers of Lyndon. He donated the land for the purpose of building a school. Built in 1882, the building burned down in 1938.

The second school was a room on the second story of a two-story frame building which stood on the east side of Main Street, north of Sixth and Topeka Avenue. School was held here for a short time before a stone school building was built. The third school was a frame house located about the middle of what is now courthouse square, facing Topeka Avenue. It was removed when the courthouse was built after the World War.

The fourth school was at 327 E. Sixth in the Methodist church. School number five was located where the present grade school gymnasium stands. This building was torn down and the stone school building was built in 1882. High school students were taught on the

upper floor and the grade school was on the ground floor. The stone school was sold in 1937 and became a broom factory. The building was destroyed by fire in 1938.

In 1920, because of overcrowding, the grade school was built just west of the stone school. Then in 1930, the new high school was built across the street from the grade school. This building was dedicated on Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1930.

In May 2009, Lyndon High School graduated 25 seniors.

## Quenemo

The first school in Quenemo began in October 1869, when the town was called Agency. The first school had 15-20 students, including whites, Indians, and African Americans.

A year later, the town's name was named after a Sac and Fox Indian named Que-ne-mo, according to historical accounts. Students gathered in the Sac and Fox Indians' council house. Soon after, District No. 30 was organized. This school, held in the council house, was followed by a two-room brick building being built, voted on by the first school bond in 1871 for \$7,000, and was built on South Fourth Street.

In 1888, a \$6,000 bond was passed, where a school was built directly in front of the original school. A \$22,000 bond was passed in 1916 and the present old school building was erected on Fourth Street in the same location as the former one.

In 1893, the first class graduated with two members.

Years later and after several attempts, a bond of \$243,000 was approved, as the old building had been condemned. The present building on Sycamore Street was completed in 1960.

In 1965, Quenemo was unified into USD 456, along with Melvern and Olivet.

Today, Osage County has five consolidated school districts, with central offices at the following locations: No. 420, Osage City; No. 421, Lyndon; No. 434 at Santa Fe Trail High School; No. 454, Burlington; and No. 456, Melvern.

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