



EDUCATION

Overview

In 2006, education in Herculaneum is multifaceted in that several students living in Herculaneum will leave the city limits to receive their education, while other students are transported into the city limits to receive their education. Throughout the history of the Herculaneum school system, students have traditionally been transported from distant areas to attend school in the city, but were never transported out of the city. While a few students are still transported to Herculaneum, the school system no longer receives the large numbers of students from the northern areas of Jefferson County. These non-resident students once comprised a very large percentage of the student population in the Herculaneum schools. As new school districts organized to the north of Herculaneum, fewer students were being transported to Herculaneum for their education. Not only did changes occur in the northern part of Jefferson County, but numerous changes occurred in the area immediately surrounding Herculaneum. Consolidation of the Herculaneum School and the Pevely Elementary schools and new housing developments in the Herculaneum-Pevely area provided additional students for the Herculaneum schools and more than made up for the loss of students from the northern areas. Now in 2006, enrollment in the Herculaneum (Dunklin R-5) Schools is made up of students who reside in Herculaneum, Pevely and Horine and a small number of students from the Jefferson R-7 School District to the south. Unfortunately, close to 200 school age children residing within the city limits of Herculaneum are transported out of the City to neighboring school districts on a daily basis. This unfortunate situation for the Dunklin R-5 is the result of decisions made many years ago when the reorganization of the school districts occurred in Jefferson County and growth continued in the City of Herculaneum to the west.

History of Education in Herculaneum

The earliest beginnings of an educational system in Herculaneum can be traced back to 1815 when the first school was established by a teacher known as Mr. Wilson. For the next seventy-five years, the education of students was operated on a subscription basis with each family paying in accordance with the number of school-aged children in the family. The subscription schools were constructed of wooden poles with a single opening for a door, one window and dirt floors. Teachers would “board around the community” and provide instruction to students who would travel long distances to the schools either by walking or riding horses and donkeys to school. It has been reported that students were excused from school at the noon hour to feed and water their mounts. By 1890, there was an enrollment of fifty students (ages six to sixteen) in the Herculaneum school who were being educated in a one room wood frame schoolhouse.



In 1904, a rectangular four room wood frame building was constructed on School Street near the area where Church Street and School Street intersect. The primary, second and third grades were located on the east side of the building. The west side of the

school building housed grades four through eight and also included a few ninth and tenth graders. Each student was required to bring his or her own slate and ink tablet in addition to their own books. The only materials provided by the school were the wooden desks and benches. The area behind the school building was used as a playground with a fence that separated the male and female students.

In 1907, the School Street schoolhouse was completely destroyed by a fire. The original schoolhouse was replaced with another wood frame building on the same site. This building would serve as the town's school for the next five years. In 1912, an eight room brick building with an unfinished basement was constructed at the site of the present day high school. Currently part of the present day high school, this building housed grade one through ten. In 1915, grades eleven and twelve were added to the High School. The first class to attend four years of high school was graduated in 1919. The members of that first graduating class included: Mary Katherine Pipkins, Irene Farley, David Levy, Lloyd Masterson, Edwin McFarland and Mildred Thomas.

In 1912, the Herculaneum School system moved its 1907 building from School Street to a location on Brown Street, where it was converted to an elementary school building for the black students of the town. Prior to the opening of this Douglas Elementary School, the black students in Herculaneum were educated in reading and mathematics by members of their families, relatives and friends. Throughout the history of the Douglas Elementary School, all students (grades one through eight) were taught in a single school room by one teacher.

In 1919, a new addition was added to the east side of the building that housed additional classrooms and science lab facilities. In 1924, a gymnasium was added to the south side of the building which included space for Industrial Arts and the Vocal and Instrumental Music departments.



In 1916, the Catholic residents of Herculaneum organized and constructed the Assumption Church at the intersection of Church Street and Station Street. Within a few years, the Church organized a parish school for grades one through eight in the basement of the church building. Instruction in the parish school was provided by nuns/teachers from the Ursuline Novitiate. With the Assumption School enrollment reaching sixty (60) students by the mid-1930s, the Church built a two-story brick school immediately next to the Church building.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, several small elementary (grades 1-8) schools existed in Jefferson County. Upon completion of elementary school, students would be expected to enroll in one of the high schools located in the county. High schools in Jefferson County were generally located in the more populated areas of the county including Herculaneum and Festus. There were other high schools to the west and south, but no high schools were located in the northern portions of the county. Enrollment at the Herculaneum High School included students from Pevely, Horine,

Antonia, High Ridge, House Springs, Arnold, Barnhart, Imperial and other northern areas. The students from these areas were either bussed to Herculaneum or they had to provide their own transportation to school. Students from the northern areas of the county continued to attend the Herculaneum High School until the late 1950s when high schools were built in the House Springs/High Ridge area (Northwest), Arnold (Fox) and Barnhart/Imperial area (Windsor). Students in what became the Windsor School District eventually enrolled at Crystal City High School until the mid-1960s.

In 1934-35, laborers working under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) constructed the football stadium and track facility that has remained a vital part of the Herculaneum/Dunklin R-5 School District. Included in this construction was the present day stone seating area at the stadium facility and a retaining wall on Mott Street opposite the south end of the stadium. The retaining walls on Mott Street and at the southern end of the football field have been covered by more recent concrete walls. In the fall of 1933, the school district began classes in a wood frame building that was constructed north of the existing school building. The new building housed the Home Economics Department and continued to do so well into the 1970s.

In the early 1940s, the Herculaneum School District introduced kindergarten classes to the district curriculum. In 1947, a wood frame building was dismantled and relocated to the area where the current Robinson Gymnasium is located. The building functioned as a school cafeteria on the ground level and housed a school “co-op” store on the basement level. The same year, another wood frame building with a full basement was constructed north of the high school on Barclay Street to serve as a two-apartment teacher cottage. Over the years, the building has been used as an apartment building for teachers, storage and even classrooms. In the 1990s, the building was internally remodeled to serve as the district’s current administrative office.

On Christmas Day 1947, devastation struck the Herculaneum School District. An early morning fire destroyed the original 1912 building and the 1919 addition. The 1924 addition that included the gymnasium, industrial arts and home economics departments were saved by the volunteers who fought the fire. The school fire prompted the formation of the Herculaneum Volunteer Fire Department in 1951. For the next one-and-one-half years, the students attending the Herculaneum School received their classroom instruction at various locations in the town. The St. Joe Lead Company donated \$50,000.00 to assist the school district in the rebuilding of the school.



In 1948, several of the smaller elementary schools in the county were reorganized and incorporated into larger districts. The Horine Elementary School was reorganized into the Herculaneum School District to form the Herculaneum R-5 School District. The McNutt Elementary School (to the south and west of Herculaneum) was reorganized into the Festus School District along with three other schools. This reorganization resulted in the formation of the Festus R-6 School District. The reorganizations that took

place in 1948 would eventually have a tremendous impact on the future education of students who reside in the City of Herculaneum.

As enrollment in the Herculaneum School District continued to increase, a need for a separate elementary school became apparent. In 1948, the first phase of the elementary school building was erected on school property along Old Highway 61 (Joachim Avenue), directly north of the existing school. The first phase of the elementary building consisted of six classrooms and an office. Within a couple of years, a gymnasium and additional classrooms were added to house grades one through six. In 1958, a second building was built east of the original building that included six additional classrooms and a cafeteria.



In 1953-1954, the Herculaneum R-5 School District constructed a one-room block building with a full basement on Brown Street to serve as the new Douglas Elementary School for black students. The new block building replaced the existing wood frame building that had been in use since 1912. Upon the completion of their elementary education at the Douglas School, the black students were bussed to the Douglas Senior High School located in Festus. This practice continued until the first black students were permitted to enroll at the Herculaneum High School for the 1955-56 school year. Some black students continued to attend the Herculaneum Douglas School until the end of the 1956-57 school year. In the spring of 1957, a joint eighth grade promotion ceremony for both white and black students was held in the Herculaneum High School gymnasium. By the 1957-58 school year, the integration of the Herculaneum schools was complete.

In 1963, the old 1947 wood frame cafeteria was removed from its location north of the main high school building and moved a few feet west and positioned in front of the Home Economics cottage. In the area vacated by the move of the cafeteria, construction began on a new high school facility that would house three business education classrooms, an instrumental music facility, a cafeteria, physical education areas, locker rooms and a new gymnasium. The new gymnasium and classroom facility was opened in 1964.

In 1965, another major change in the makeup of the Herculaneum R-5 School District occurred as the Pevely Elementary School was consolidated into the Herculaneum District. The consolidation of the Pevely Elementary and the Herculaneum R-5 schools resulted in the formation of the Dunklin R-5 School District. Prior to this time, elementary age students in Pevely would receive their elementary education at the Pevely Elementary School and then attend high school in Herculaneum. As a result of this consolidation, many students who resided in Herculaneum were bussed to the Pevely facility and students who resided in Pevely were bussed to the Herculaneum facility. The first time Herculaneum resident students attended school in Pevely occurred in 1966 when the seventh and eighth grade students were transported to the Pevely

facility. Since that time there have been many different alignments of grade levels placed in the Herculaneum and Pevely facilities.

In 1966, the Dunklin R-5 School District constructed an eight room, two story addition to the former Pevely Elementary School. In 1978, a second addition was added to the Pevely facility that included a gymnasium, a cafeteria and office space. In 1992, another classroom addition was completed at the Pevely complex.

The year 1966 also witnessed another major change in the educational landscape of Herculaneum. Facing declining enrollment and increased financial burdens, the Assumption Catholic School permanently closed its doors and effectively brought an end to parochial education in Herculaneum. With no Catholic school facility in Herculaneum, students were transferred to the parochial schools located in Festus. High school-aged students either attended St. Pius X High School in Festus or the Herculaneum Public High School.

With enrollment in the public school district at its peak, a major decision was made in 1970 that brought an end to a long-standing component of the district's enrollment. Effective with the graduating class of 1970, the Dunklin R-5 School District would no longer accept students from outside the school district. With the new policy in place, students from the Antonia School District were no longer allowed to attend Dunklin R-5 Schools. Students from Antonia began attending schools in the Fox C-6 District in 1970-71. It should be mentioned that the Class of 1970 was the largest graduating class in the history of the Herculaneum High School.

The Dunklin R-5 School District continued to expand in the 1970s and 1980s with the construction of new buildings on North Main Street and on existing school property near the high school facility. In the early 1970s, the school district purchased fifty-two acres on North Main Street and in 1970 constructed the Senn-Thomas facility. In 1972, a new addition consisting of ten classrooms, a cafeteria and a multi-purpose room was added to the 1970 building. In early 1983, the new gymnasium and physical education facility was built just east of the existing Senn-Thomas facility. Additional space was provided at the high school facility in 1976 with the addition of a new building directly in front of the 1964 gymnasium. The new building consisted of two classrooms for mathematics and three home economics lab classrooms. Another building to house the vocal and instrumental music department and the science department was completed adjacent to the 1976 building in the early 1980s. At approximately the same time, the middle floor of the 1912 building was extensively remodeled to provide new space for the library, study hall and guidance offices.

Aside from the expansion taking place in the Dunklin R-5 School District facilities, big changes were occurring in the City of Herculaneum. In the late 1970s, a new housing development was beginning to take shape in Herculaneum in the area bounded by Interstate 55 and Scenic Drive. New houses were being built in an area



that has become known as Westchester Oaks subdivision. Although the residents resided in the City of Herculaneum, the houses were located in the Festus R-6 School District. The Westchester Oaks subdivision was located in the area of the old McNutt Elementary School district that had become a part of the Festus R-6 School District during the reorganization of Jefferson County Schools in 1948. Obviously a boom to a school district's tax base, the Westchester area became a hot topic of debate between the two school districts. The residents residing within the city limits of Herculaneum, the Dunklin R-5 School District, believed that the Westchester area should be redistricted into the Dunklin school district. The Festus R-6 School District saw the potential for continued growth in the old McNutt area and believed the area should remain in the Festus district. In 1978, the debate landed in a hearing before a Missouri Department of Education arbitration board at Jefferson College. After hearing testimonies from the Dunklin R-5 School District and the Festus R-6 School District representatives, the arbitration board ruled in favor of the Festus R-6 School District. With the Missouri Department of Education ruling in place, school age children living on the west side of Scenic Drive in Herculaneum were required to attend the Festus schools.

The 1948 Jefferson County school district reorganization plan and the 1978 Missouri Department of Education decision continue to play a big role in the education of Herculaneum school-aged children. In the mid-1990s, the City of Herculaneum annexed an area to the south and west of the city limits that was included in the Festus R-6 School District. Shortly thereafter, construction began in what is now known as the Prairies at Friedburg subdivision. In the early 2000s, the City annexed property north of the Prairies subdivision and west of the commercial area along Interstate 55. As with the Prairies development, this newly annexed area was largely located within the Festus R-6 School District. In 2005, construction began on the first houses in the newly annexed area known as the Providence subdivision. All Herculaneum school-aged children residing in the Prairies subdivision and a large percentage of those living in the developing Providence subdivision are required to attend the Festus schools. As a result, a large percentage of families living within the city limits of Herculaneum are paying taxes to the Festus R-6 School District and sending their children out of the City for their education.

Another quirk in the education of Herculaneum residents is that the Crystal City School District to the south of Herculaneum actually encroaches inside the city limits of Herculaneum. Although only a few Herculaneum residents live in this area, some school-aged children living in Herculaneum must attend schools in Crystal City.

Continued expansion and construction occurred once again in 1992 when a new office complex, a cafeteria and business classrooms were added to the high school facility. The new facility was physically connected to the original 1912 building. With the new addition in place, major renovations began in the 1964 gymnasium building resulting in expanded locker room facilities and weight training areas. In the early 2000s, two additional buildings were constructed at the high school complex. A state-of-the-art theatre and performing arts building was constructed in a stand-alone building at the

northern boundary of the district property. A state-of-the-art industrial arts building with classrooms was constructed adjoining the science building.

With adequate space available and a need to increase district enrollment, the Dunklin R-5 School District returned to a former policy of accepting out of districts students in the early 1990s. Students who graduated from the Jefferson R-7 School District (K-8) program were allowed to attend Herculaneum High School. In the beginning years of this change in policy, only a handful of students chose to attend Herculaneum High School. Many of the Jefferson R-7 students either attended the Festus High School or Crystal High School, while others attended other county high schools. A major drawback for the Jefferson R-7 students wanting to attend Herculaneum High School was the need to find transportation to Herculaneum. The Dunklin R-5 district would accept students but did not provide any type of transportation to and from Herculaneum. In the late 1990s, the Dunklin R-5 Schools began bus service to Jefferson R-7 and the number of Jefferson R-7 students attending Herculaneum High School increased dramatically. At its peak, the enrollment of Jefferson R-7 students in the Dunklin school district reached into the high nineties.



In the summer of 2001, the Dunklin R-5 School District and the City of Herculaneum were faced a major crisis when the Doe Run Lead Company was ordered to offer a voluntary buyout of homes in the area south and east of the school complex due to concerns surrounding lead contamination of the area. The voluntary buyout zone encompassed 148 homes in a 3/8 of a mile radius from the Doe Run plant. With the buyout completed in 2005, 133 of the houses were sold to Doe Run, effectively eliminating housing units for families with school-aged children. Although not directly in the voluntary buyout zone, the school district property is located just outside the zone. Due to its close proximity to the plant and the buyout zone, the district facilities have been required to allow for the replacement of soil on district property and to allow internal cleaning of district buildings.

In addition to the loss of potential students who might have lived in the voluntary buyout zone, the lead contamination issues have also impacted the number of students attending Herculaneum High School from the Jefferson R-7 District. From its peak numbers of the late 1990s-early 2000s, the number of Jefferson R-7 students enrolling in the Herculaneum High School has been decreasing ever since the lead contamination issues surfaced.



Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, the Dunklin R-5 School District closed the Roy E. Taylor Elementary school and realigned the use of the Pevely facility and the Senn-Thomas facility. Students in grades K – 4 are now housed in the Pevely facility and grades 5 – 8 are housed in the Senn-Thomas building. The school district has leased the Roy E. Taylor building to the Early Childhood Education program through the Jefferson County Cooperative Services. Originally a two year lease, the Dunklin R-5

School District has signed another one year lease, keeping the program in the facility through the 2006-2007 school year.

All is not gloom for the Dunklin R-5 School District. New subdivisions are being built in areas to the west and north of the city of Pevely and a new subdivision is under construction in a newly annexed area of Herculaneum. These new housing developments are all located in the Dunklin R-5 School District. In addition to these new residential areas, a portion of the Providence subdivision west of Interstate 55 is located within the Dunklin R-5 boundaries.

As of 2006, the Dunklin R-5 School District is not planning any expansion of school facilities. As residential development continues and enrollment increases, immediate plans include the re-opening of the Roy E. Taylor Elementary School and possibly using classrooms not currently being utilized.

Although the Festus R-6 School District will be enrolling many students from within the city limits of Herculaneum, the district does not have any plans to build inside the Herculaneum city limits. The immediate plan of the Festus R-6 School District to offset the projected increase in the number of students in the Festus schools is to construct a new high school facility on district property on Highway A. The space vacated by the move of the high school will allow for a reconfiguration of grades K – 8 in the existing district buildings in the City of Festus. One thing that is clear from Festus R-6 administrative personnel - there are no plans to give students from the City of Herculaneum to the Dunklin R-5 School District.

It is apparent through research that one of the primary building blocks of “community” is the school system. One of the major causes of division in Herculaneum is the fact that the children do not all attend Herculaneum schools. This actually has the effect of competition, rather than unity among the families in the City. In addition, the taxes earmarked for schools are being paid to cities other than Herculaneum on a regular basis; taxes which would make a great difference for the Dunklin R-5 School District.

Recommendations:

- a) It is important for the City to take whatever steps are necessary to keep the Dunklin R-5 schools within the City limits.
- b) The City and Dunklin R-5 School District should make every effort to work together (such as the use of cable vision, Little League, parks, facilities, etc.) for the benefit of the community and its schools.
- c) Over time, there should be negotiations between Dunklin R-5 School District, the City of Herculaneum and all the other school districts and those cities that enroll local students outside of Herculaneum. The purpose of these negotiations would be to determine how to bring the Herculaneum community back together through a united local school system.
- d) Post high school education should be offered at the R-5 school building