History of Schools in the Roseville Area

The Roseville area has been home to many schools over the past nearly two centuries. The first schoolhouse was a log cabin that was built in 1851, with all households in Erin Township (current day Roseville, Eastpointe, Fraser and St. Clair Shores) contributing funds to purchase the logs. The first public school in the area opened in this log building in 1852. At this time, the population of Erin Township was 974 and by 1860, the population was 1,975. While the First Presbyterian Church of Erin was under construction (completed in 1861), church services were held every other Sunday in the schoolhouse.

In 1854, the District #4 school was built, starting the Kern Road School District. This school was located on 10 Mile Road, east of Gratiot Avenue. In 1870, a new one-room, white schoolhouse with a steeple was built to replace the original log cabin. This was District #5 of Erin Township, later to be called Burton. Among the first teachers were Mrs. Dr. Grover, then Jennie Templeton, who taught there for 6 years in the 1880s, pictured below. One of the early teachers, Mrs. Katheran Moran, was paid a monthly salary of $14.

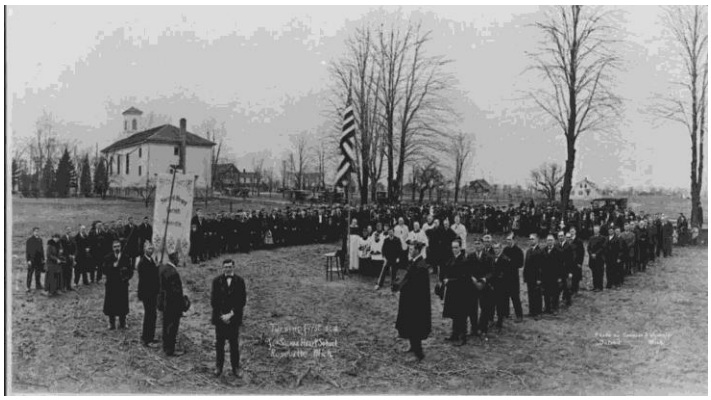
District #5 School House, c. 1880s. Teacher Jennie Templeton & students.

By 1874, the population of Erin Township as 2,466 and in 1875, Roseville became an unincorporated village within Erin Township. In 1880, the population of the Township was 2,696. In 1882, Sacred Heart Parish, which was sold land by the Pulcher family in 1873 for a parish and cemetery, opened a Grade 1-8 schoolhouse for 12 students, though it closed after a few years when Father Van Straelan left. The operating budget for District #5 was $502.95 in 1883. The budget increased to $3,799.16 by 1897. By 1900, with a population of 2,440 and student enrollment of 484 students, the budget was $4,000. In 1910, Lake Township (current day St. Clair Shores) was established, creating a drop in the population of Erin Township to 2,225 residents.

In 1917, the white school house was moved to a new location and made into a private residence. A new four-room school was built on the original site, the 3rd school building for Roseville.

District #5/Burton School. This building opened in 1917 and operated as the high school until 1956 when Roseville High School opened. The building continued as Burton Junior High School until it was torn down in 1981.

In 1919, Father Dennis P. Tighe restarted the Sacred Heart school in the basement of the church and a new Grade 1-8 schoolhouse was built in 1921. With the opening of Sacred Heart school, there was a drop-in Erin public school enrollment to 350 students with Sacred Heart having 250 students. The Erin population in 1920 was 2,791. In 1922, an extension to the four-room Burton school added 10 classrooms, administration offices, and basement gym. They had 10 teachers at this time. The same year, Eastland School was built, a 4-room schoolhouse on the North end of Roseville, on Eastland Street between Gratiot Avenue & Utica Road. This was District #6. It was originally limited to Grades 1-10. Also, in 1922, District #5 added 11th & 12th grades, with the State placing the school on the University Accredited List of High Schools.



Ground Breaking for Sacred Heart School, c. 1921

1925 was a big year for District #5. Lincoln Elementary opened, and the District expanded to accommodate the growing student population. Expansion of the School, which began in 1922 was completed in 1925, with a large brick addition to the front of the school which added 10 classrooms, administration offices, and a basement gymnasium. The school officially became Burton School, named for Marion LeRoy Burton (1874-1925), President of University of Michigan and an educator. 1925 also saw the first graduating class of 9 students from Burton High School. Albert Neverth was the first Superintendent of Burton Schools.

Lincoln Elementary School, opened 1925, closed 2008.

History of Roseville

The First Roseville High School Graduating Class

The above is a photo of the first Roseville High School graduating class. That was in 1925. Jog any memories? Seated are: l. to r.: Thelma Callen, Flossie Brown, A. A. Nevereth, the then Superintendent of Schools, Katherine Konarske and Dorothy Miller. Standing: Aliwin Apps, Harry Schram, Adolph Moellman, Paul Baker, and Cora Pangman. Contrast this class of 1925 with nine graduates to that of the Roseville High School class of 1954 containing over ten times as many!

In 1926 the Village of Roseville was incorporated. The construction of Pierce Elementary was completed in 1927, named for John Davis Pierce (1797-1882), first Superintendent of Public Instruction for Michigan in 1836; he created the organization and structure of the school system in Michigan and served on the state legislature in 1847. Also in 1927, a separate gym facility was built adjacent to the Burton School.

Burton High School Gymnasium, built in 1927.

By 1928, the public-school enrollment grew into almost 1,000 students and the Burton District had 35 teachers. That year, Eastland added 4 additional rooms to their original building. In 1930, Earl Schumann, principal of Burton School, organized a Parent Teacher Association, with Mrs. Erwin Coop elected as its first president. It is believed that Greater Gratiot School District (#3) opened in 1930, further North on Gratiot, in the area which is now Macomb Mall. The population of the Village of Roseville was 6,836.

Eastland High School added Grades 11 & 12 in 1934, with an 8-student graduating class in 1935. Clarence F. Scharer was Superintendent of Eastland District. Also, in 1935, they built two rooms over the auditorium with financial assistance from the federal government. In 1938, Eastland High School had rooms added for shop class and a band room and added 4 more rooms the following year. In 1940, Eastland bought property on Wexford Street for a football field. The Village of Roseville population was 9,023. In 1941, Burton added a wooden annex, north of the main building and west of the gym. At some point during WWII, they also added a concrete block machine building was added between the main building and the Annex. This building later housed the District Maintenance crew, then the Junior High Band.

Eastland High School, opened in 1921, closed in 1956.

In 1943, MacArthur Elementary was opened on 11 Mild Road & present day I-94; and in 1947, post-WWII, they needed the Annex building for Burton to handle the student boom. Between 1940 and 1950, the population of Roseville grew from 9,023 to 15,816. Eastland Elementary School was built on Washington Street in 1944. By 1945, the schools in Roseville were as follows: Burton District (#5): Burton/Roseville High School, Lincoln Elementary, Pierce Elementary, & MacArthur Elementary; Eastland District (#6): Eastland High School & Eastland Elementary; Greater Gratiot School District (#3): Greater Gratiot Elementary; Kern Road School District (#4): Kern Road Elementary & Washington Elementary.

In 1952, Eastland used some of the Wexford property to build Alumni Elementary. Kern Road School District (#4) was dissolved & annexed to 3 other districts. Lakeview received the east part from Little Mack to Hayes; East Detroit received the South part from 10 mile to Stephens, and the North part from 10 mile to Frazho joined with Burton District (#5), become Roseville Community Schools. George Duda was the last Kern Superintendent & became the Principal of Washington Elementary. The 1950s saw a boom in the opening of schools for lower grades: Kaiser Elementary and Alumni Elementary in 1952; Wellington Elementary in 1953; Edgewood Elementary and Huron Park Elementary in 1955; Arbor Elementary, Dort Elementary and Fountain Elementary in 1957; Guest Junior High in 1958; and Roseland Elementary and Chippendale Elementary in 1959.

Kern Road School (District #4), 1940. Opened in 1854, closed 1952.

Sacred Heart opened their High School in 1955, the only Catholic High School in the area. In 1956, a new Roseville High School building was completed on Barkman St. and Martin Rd. The old Burton High School building became Burton Junior High School. Also, in 1956; Eastland District (#6) was consolidated with Roseville Community Schools, and Eastland High School was closed. John McLeod (EHS '40 grad) was the last Eastland Superintendent and became Roseville High School principal & later served on the Roseville Board of Education. All 7th-9th graders went to the two Junior Highs and all 10th-12th graders went to Roseville High School.

Roseville High School (on Barkman & Martin) opened in 1956 & became Roseville Junior High when RHS moved into the Brablec building in 1989.

In 1958, the Village of Roseville merged with what was left of Erin Township and became the City of Roseville. In 1960, Roseville had a population of 50,676. Greater Gratiot Schools District (#3) was consolidated with Roseville Community Schools, the school continuing under RCS until 1965. Lucile Patton was the last Superintendent and became principal of Greater Gratiot Elementary after the consolidation. Now all public schools in Roseville were a part of Roseville Community Schools. In 1961, Sacred Heart had more than 1,700 students in 1st – 12th grade. Senior teachers were IHM (Immaculate Heart of Mary) Sisters Rosalie and Rebecca, and James Zimmerman; Mother Clotilde Schrafe was principal. There were 99 students in the 1961 graduating class.

Beginning 1962 through 1967, the first renovations to the Burton buildings as a Junior High took place – a 2-story section addition along School St. adding half of the cafeteria, library, and a boys' gym (the separate gym building was the girls' gym). The wooden annex & concrete block buildings were torn down; all Burton buildings built in 1917 & 1924 were demolished and replaced with a new building, still operating as Burton Junior High School. In 1962, Grandmont Elementary opened. Eastland Junior High, on Park St. between Common & 13 mile, opened in 1963 and Patton Elementary, named after Lucile Patton, opened on McKinnon St. in 1965.

Carl Brablec High School was opened in 1967, with students and staff sharing the Roseville High School building until the new "modern" Brablec building was completed in 1969, located at Common Road and Normal Street. The school was named in honor of Carl Brablec, who was RCS Superintendent for 23 years, 1947-1970. He was also a Regent of

University of Michigan for 9 years. The two schools operated simultaneously in Roseville until Brablec closed in 1989. In 1969, MacArthur Elementary closed. The Roseville population reached its peak in 1970, with 60,529 residents.

Carl Brablec High School, building opened in 1969 & operated as Brablec until 1989. Still in operation as Roseville High School.

Sacred Heart High School closed when mounting debt and the passing of Rev. Raymond Clancy forced the parish to close the school at the end of the 1970-71 schoolyear. In 1974, there was a peak enrollment of 1,215 students at Burton Jr. High and the Eastland "Annex" was closed. Due to declines in enrollment, the Board of Education decided to move 9th grade to the high school, and then there was only about 1,200 7th & 8th graders in the entire district, so the decision was made to close Burton Junior High, keeping Eastland & Guest Junior Highs and to attempt to sell the property/building. Burton's last principal was Ralph E. Erickson.

Sacred Heart High School, opened 1955, closed 1971.

Beginning in 1980, Roseville's population took a downward trend, sinking to 54,311. The Burton building was torn down in 1981, the end of Burton and the original school location. Several elementary schools closed in the 1980s: Edgewood Elementary in 1982, Wellington Elementary in 1983, and Grandmont Elementary in 1987. In 1989, Brablec High School closed and the two high school student populations merged under the Roseville High School name, but in the newer Brablec building. Roseville High School became the only high school

in Roseville and still operates from the Brablec building at Common Rd. and Normal St. today. The Roseville High School building on Barkman then became Roseville Junior. High School. The city population continued its decline in the 1990s, with 51,412 residents.

Roseville Junior High School opened in the old RHS Barkman St building in 1989 & still operates as Roseville Middle School.

The early 2000s saw the closure of quite a few Roseville schools and the openings of the first new schools since Brablec in the late '60s. In 2008, Lincoln Elementary, Pierce Elementary, and Eastland Elementary all closed. Guest Junior High & Alumni Elementary followed in 2009. Kment Elementary & Steenland Elementary Schools opened (named after John Kment & Joseph Steenland, respectfully, both former RCS superintendents) also opened in 2009. The dedication of Roseville High School in the Brablec building on Common & Normal happened that fall as well. In 2022, Huron Park Elementary was renamed Green Elementary, for Ruth H. Green, RCS Board of Education member 2009-2020.

In the 2024-2025 school year, Roseville Community Schools celebrated 100 years, dating back to the first Roseville High School graduating class. On May 5, 2026, Roseville residents voted to pass a bond proposal for RCS, a $175 million zero-tax rate increase bond proposal designed to strengthen the district by updating buildings, consolidating facilities, expanding early childhood programming & improving learning environments across all grade levels. This bond will improve the district overall and will be the first major upgrades in more than 15 years. This project will include infrastructure improvements; safety, security & communication upgrades; enhanced learning environments & classroom tech; and upgraded athletic, performance, & play environments.

Due to declining enrollments and underutilization of existing buildings, there will also be the closure and demolition of several buildings: Dort, Kaiser, & Patton Elementary Schools & Eastland Middle School. A new elementary school will be built on the Eastland site. Fountain Elementary will be renovated into a centralized Early Childhood Center. Eastland Middle School will consolidate in the Roseville Middle School building. Every school building in the district will receive improvements. The renovations & new constructions will take place between 2026 and 2032.