

The A B C's of Education in East St. Paul

Stories from the "East St. Paul Centennial 1916-2016" book and
"Heritage ... a story of East St. Paul
A Centennial Project by Robert Andrews School 1967"

Submitted by Mayor Shelley Hart

The earliest records of the municipality of St. Paul identify a St. Paul School located at Middlechurch and a school at Park's Creek (Parkdale). By-law 23, passed on February 17, 1883, stated that St. Paul's School District shall be comprised of a settlement belt, geographically identifying lands on both the east and west side of the Red River.

Today, East St. Paul schools are part of the River East Transcona School Division. The municipality's three schools – Bird's Hill School, Robert Andrews School and Dr. F.W.L. Hamilton School – provide early and middle years education to about 700 students, who then transfer to divisional high schools located in the city of Winnipeg for their senior years.

Back in the late 1800's and early 1900's, area residents began to see a need for formal education for children living in the area. People often offered or rented space in their homes to be used as a classroom, such as Burton House, a private home used for classes from 1911 to 1914. Over the years, several schools were built and utilized, including St. Paul School (1989) and Donald McLeod School on Wallace Avenue (1943), which was sold in 1952 and renovated to become a home.

Various school districts emerged over the years. Before 1950 for example, there were three school districts covering an area of four square miles. It was common for one teacher to teach eight grades. Around 1950, through the efforts of parents and school trustees, the consolidated Municipal School District of East St. Paul No. 2322 was formed.

In 1959, the River East School Division was established to consolidate two City of Winnipeg areas – East Kildonan and North Kildonan – along with the school districts in St. Clements and East St. Paul.

In 2002, another change to school divisions occurred, resulting in today's configuration: the River East Transcona School Division was established following the amalgamation of River East School Division No. 9 and the urban portion of Transcona-Springfield School Division No. 12. It is the second largest division in the province.

Bird's Hill School has seen more than 100 years of learning – it held its 100th anniversary celebration on April 23, 2014, two years before the municipality of East St. Paul turned 100 years old. The first Bird's Hill School was a brick and stone structure of two rooms that opened its doors in 1914, with an addition being added in 1945. That

old school, located at 3156 Birds Hill Road, served the community until 1986, and was torn down in 1987. One of the fondest memories of the school was the fire escape slide which many former students used and remember with glee. Sobeys grocery store now occupies the land where the school once stood.

Just this year, construction began on two new, permanent classrooms for Dr. F.W.L. Hamilton School. Announced by St. Paul MLA Ron Schuler, the two classrooms will add 1,720 square feet to the school, replacing older portable classrooms. The work is expected to be complete by September 2019.



Bird's Hill School
(Archives of Manitoba, School Inspectors Photo Collection)