



McHenry Community High School District #156 9th Grade Campus Concept - One School Community

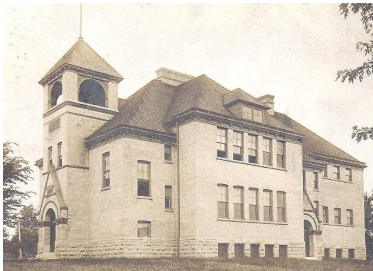
A Brief Educational History of McHenry High School

One Community - One School

Since the beginning of public education in McHenry, the community has enjoyed a “one school” persona. Early education in McHenry was delivered in a small, two-story building on north



Richmond Road from the late 1850s until 1894. That year, Landmark School opened and housed education for several decades until the opening of the community’s first high school on Green Street in 1925. McHenry High School operated as a grade 9-12 facility until population growth necessitated the building of West Campus on Crystal Lake Road in 1968. When West Campus opened in 1968-1969, MCHS operated the East Campus for grades 9-10 and West Campus as a “new” facility for grades 11-12. All students continued the one-school, “Warrior” identity. This structure continued until the departure of Johnsburg students with the opening of Johnsburg High School in 1979.



With reduction of enrollment, McHenry High School switched its structure to two grade 9-12 high schools. Through the 1980s and 1990s, the schools grew to capacity as McHenry County was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States during the boom of the 1990s. After several failed referenda attempts in the late 1990s, a question to expand West Campus and improve facilities at East passed in 2000. West Campus was expanded to have a capacity of close to 1,600 with East remaining around 950. Following the opening of the new addition at West Campus, boundaries were then changed to reflect this added facility space.



Rationale for the 1-3 Campus Concept in the Context of the McHenry Community

Since the completion of the 2003 expansion of West Campus, inequities between East and West have been growing. The complex master schedule of MCHS is greatly complicated by the travelling of students and teachers to reduce the replication of instructional programs. During the last ten years, McHenry High School has developed over 20 Advanced Placement courses and a variety of dynamic, 21st century electives. Many of these courses have represented a significant investment of resources that cannot be replicated in two schools. As our curriculum

offerings become more modern and advanced, East students have increasingly been forced to travel to West or select other opportunities. About a quarter of all MCHS students travel and about 23% of teachers. The district currently operates 47 shuttles a day and 7,800 shuttles annually to meet these needs. The vast majority of East Campus students have to travel at some point during high school and many find themselves attending multiple classes at West during the school day.

Rationale for the 1-3 Campus Model

- McHenry High School has been “one school” since the very beginning of its history.
- Recent facilities assessments concluded that both MCHS buildings are sound educational facilities, if needed remediation and improvements take place.
- Modernize our educational environment and provide all students and families in McHenry with the **same 9-12th grade shared educational experience**.
- Eliminates issues related to student population disparities at both campuses.
- Eliminates academic inequities between East and West students.
- Eliminates 95% of the travel between campuses during the school day.
- All students will have access to the vital courses and resources that will prepare them for the careers of the future.
- The planned expansion of West Campus to accommodate 200-250 more students can focus on advanced courses, capstone experiences, adding modern lab and resource space to support higher level curricular and elective opportunities (Center for Science, Technology, and Industry).

Efficacy of a 9th Grade Campus

- Our 9th grade students come from four different feeder schools.
- The 9th grade campus can focus on the transition, social-emotional, and curricular needs of freshmen.
- The culture and activities of the 9th grade campus can be focused on the developmental needs of the students and 9th grade success.
- Campus environment would focus on building “one class” identity and connection to the “Warrior Culture”.
- Continued connection with the 10-12th grade campus throughout the year (athletics, activities, mentor programs, assemblies, and other all school events).



East Campus - 9th Grade Educational Facility

Approximate Number of Students: 530-575

As discussed above, it has been increasingly more difficult to replicate the courses and resources necessary to offer a comprehensive grade 9-12 curriculum at East Campus. However, the smaller footprint of East Campus is ideal for 9th grade

students. East Campus has more than 40 usable educational spaces on two floors, a newly updated media center, several specialty labs, and gymnasium spaces that were improved in 2003. Freshman students have less curricular options available to them than upper level students. Freshman will be able to access all academic courses and most elective options at East Campus without having to travel. **McHenry East Campus has a rich tradition (nearly 100 years), that all McHenry students would be able to experience (freshman year) at this historic campus.**

Academic Program Design Focused on 9th Grade Needs

- English I and Honors English I
- Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Honors Algebra, Honors Geometry
- AP Human Geography and Issues of the 21st Century
- Biology and Honors Biology
- 9th grade PE and Health Education
- Spanish I, French I, and German I
- Literacy courses
- Introductory Art and Music
- Introductory Career Pathway Electives
- PLTW Introduction to Computer Science
- PLTW Introduction to Engineering Design
- PLTW Principles of Biomedical Science

9th Grade Transition Programming Focused on Freshmen Success

- 9th Grade Administrators
- 9th Grade Academic Counseling Team
- Social Emotional Supports Team
- Special Education Case Managers and supports
- Academic Support Resource Center
- Freshman PRIDE Camp
- 9th Grade Student Activities and Clubs

Connections to New Trier High School

New Trier High School is annually one of the highest achieving districts in the state of Illinois. In 2001, New Trier established their Northfield Campus as an exclusive 9th grade campus. MCHS administrative staff has had a variety of contact with New Trier leadership and are planning future site visits. New Trier administrative staff universally agree that the 1-3 Campus Model has worked very well for their students and community. According to a 2011 New Trier report on the first ten years of the 9th grade model, strengths of the Northfield Campus impacting 9th grade students are as follows:

- Northfield 9th grade campus provided a gentler transition for freshmen to high school
- The campus allowed for focus on social, emotional, and academic needs of freshmen
- No need to create a divisive boundary between east and west parts of community
- Lower start-up and recurring costs than two separate 4-year high schools

These strengths coincide with the need for MCHS to eliminate 95% of travelling between campuses by students, increase equity and access for all students, create organizational efficiencies, and allow for advancing 21st century curriculum and facilities opportunities for all students equally.

Testimonials from New Trier - 9th Grade Campus Stakeholders

Having staff who are dedicated to helping students transition to high school is valuable. Having a year for students to build their own class identity without upperclassmen and develop freshman specific supports for their success. The campus allows students to build their own leadership capacity.

- **Paul Waechtler, New Trier Northfield Campus Principal**

The campus provides an extremely valuable transition and landing pad into a big school. Northfield Campus allows 1,000 kids from different towns and feeder schools to acclimate to high school social and school requirements outside of the lens/influence of upperclassmen. Survey evidence suggests that this also keeps them from stepping into risky behaviors of drinking/vaping at rates more significant for upperclassmen.

- **Sally Pofcher, co-chair of the New Trier Parents Association**

Northfield Campus provides more student-teacher interactions (because there are less students), better adaptation to high school life, great preparation for high school work and curriculum.

- **Max Rosen, 9th grade student at New Trier Northfield Campus**

A 9th grade campus helps to ease the transition socially and in terms of school culture. Academically the campus offered resources tailored to freshmen: the Academic Assistance Center was staffed by teachers who knew the material intimately. The students also feel a sense of ownership (it's THEIR campus) which I believe contributes to their ability to self-advocate.

- **Ami Campbell, 9th grade parent**

I think that a separate 9th grade campus is a great benefit to a high school that has so many different feeder districts. It gives the kids a chance to come together in a space where they all have being "new" in common with everyone else that's there.

- **Michelle Paul, 9th grade parent**

Becoming a class, making new friends in hopefully a safe environment - without the influence of older students. Classes can focus on being a new high school student and the skills they need for success. All around we can put a lot of time and effort into the freshman experience.

- **Robyn Ward, Science Coordinator, Biology Teacher, and 9th grade Advisor**