

# GREENWOOD SCHOOL

1897 – 2017

*120 Years of Learning  
in  
Wakefield Massachusetts*



Prior to 1880, most children in Wakefield, Massachusetts were educated in one-room schoolhouses. There was one in each geographical “ward” of the town. The Greenwood School is a member of an elite class of nine red brick school buildings that the town built over a period of 40 years, from 1883 to 1923.

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### **1897**

The Greenwood School was originally built as a four-room brick schoolhouse. Including furnishings, the building cost \$13,990. There were four large rooms on two floors for eight grades. Each teacher had two grades. There was a teachers' room, supply rooms, and toilets in the basement. In 1897 the third story was unfinished.

It is thought that the name Greenwood may have come from Isaac Green at whose father's house some local teachers boarded and received letters addressed to "Green's Woods."

### **1902**

The first addition to the Greenwood School was completed in 1902. It cost \$14,633. The capacity of the school was doubled with an addition of three stories and a basement. An additional entrance was made on the side of the building. It opened into a corridor that led to the two new classrooms in the rear of the building and the two original classrooms on the first floor. The new classrooms were 33 x 27 feet and 28 x 32 feet and were provided with "abundant light, slate blackboards, and book closets." The second floor also added two classrooms. On the third floor was a large assembly hall, 63 x 40 feet, with a seating capacity of 425. A platform extended across this hall. "Flanking the hall was an anteroom, two storerooms, and commodious sewing room." In the basement, there was a coal bin, store closet, and a boys' toilet and a girls' toilet. There was also a girls' playroom in the basement. The Greenwood School opened with its first addition on Wednesday, September 17, 1902, with 262 pupils in grades 1 through 9.

Miss Sarah E. Wilkins was the first Principal of the Greenwood School. One of her accomplishments as Principal was the formation of a Parent-Teacher Association.

### **1910**

On January 11, 1910, Superintendent J. H. Carfrey called a formal meeting and 25 parents attended. Officers were nominated and elected at this meeting. They were Herbert B. Willey President, Mrs. Adelaide W. Boynton Vice-President, and Mrs. Lilly M. Collinson Secretary. These officers and Mrs. W. Eugene Griffin and Ross Varden, the new Principal, comprised the executive board. The second meeting was held in March 1910 with 75 present. Meetings were held every two months during the school year. The Greenwood PTA was the first to institute Physical Education in the schools, raising funds to hire a teacher.

By 1910, the number of pupils at the Greenwood School was so great that the school department had to hire three extra teachers as assistants in the overcrowded classrooms.

### **1924**

During 1923, a building committee began work on enlarging the Greenwood School. The addition plan passed Town Meeting on March 19, 1923. The old building had eight rooms with a hall on the third floor. After the addition, the school had 18 rooms and an

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auditorium on the first floor. The third floor was removed and a flat roof was made for the entire building. The auditorium, with a kitchenette connected, was designed to meet community, as well as school, needs. The 1924 addition was to have cost \$175,511. But problems made the actual cost closer to \$210,000.

441 students attended the Greenwood School in grades 1 through 8. A first-grade class had 56 students.

The Public Library formerly had a room in the basement for a branch. After the 1924 addition, the branch was relocated to a classroom, until that classroom was needed for school purposes.

### 1950



**Greenwood School Baseball Team, 1950.** Photo courtesy of the Wakefield Historical Society.

(Seems that the previous owner drew some spectacles on the fellow in the suit!)

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### **Greenwood School Principals**

Miss Sarah E. Wilkins	1897 – 1909
Mr. Ross Varden	1910 – 1936
Mr. Eliot B. Leonard	1937 – 1964
Mr. Nat M. Finklestein	1965 – 1990
Ms. Judy DeLucia	1990 – 1994
Ms. Patricia Barrett	1994 - 2001
Mr. Clif LaPorte	2001 - 2005
Mrs. Deborah Collura	2005 – Present

### **Sources:**

“GREENWOOD SCHOOL 1897 – 1997: 100 Years of Learning in Wakefield Massachusetts” by Mary Vincent, May 1997.

Wakefield Historical Society

Old School by Mark Sardella, <https://marksardella.wordpress.com/2010/11/18/old-school/>