



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Harlem Elementary



Elementary Schools: Alamo | Bonnie P. Hopper Primary | David Crockett | George Washington Carver | Harlem | Highlands
James Bowie | Lorenzo De Zavala | Mirabeau B. Lamar | San Jacinto | Stephen F. Austin | Ashbel Smith | Victoria Walker | William B. Travis

Junior Schools: Baytown | Cedar Bayou | Gentry | Highlands | Horace Mann

High Schools & Others: Goose Creek Memorial | Impact Early College High School at Lee College | John M. Stuart Career Center
Peter E. Hyland Center | Robert E. Lee | Ross S. Sterling | School Community Guidance Center

3333 Interstate-10 East

Harlem Elementary School was first organized in 1923. It was located across the present interstate about where the pond and statuary place are now. It was first called the McNair School for Colored. The school was named for Harlem, an African-American section of New York City, New York. It was named Harlem to designate that it was a black school. E. A. Archia, principal of George Washington Carver School in Oak Addition, led the movement to get a school built in McNair.

Classes were held in a one-room frame building. Ayrie Adams-Davis was the first teacher at the school. Mrs. Davis served for many years as the head teacher. She was the only teacher from 1931 through 1935. Nettie Perry joined her for the 1935-1936 school year.

In 1935, the school was moved into a four-room building, on a six-acre tract of land given by the late Harry K. Johnson of Highlands. He stipulated that an area of three square miles around the land for the school was to be sold only to black families. Mr. Johnson owned the railroad that ran from Baytown to Houston. The name was changed to Harlem Elementary in 1937. It was located at 2625 Broad Street in the McNair community. The classrooms had only dirt floors. The bathrooms were outside with dirt floors as well. The first brick structure was built in 1951. It had 6 rooms and a cafeteria, a floor but no carpet. Six more rooms were added in 1953. The buildings were remodeled and carpet was added as well as moving the bathrooms to the inside in 1968.

Mrs. Johnnie Mae Walker served as the head teacher for a number of years. Clyde Messiah began his career in Baytown as a fifth and sixth grade teacher at Harlem School in 1949. He received his B. S. degree in Education from Prairie View A & M College in 1949, and his Masters in Education Administration from P V in 1953. He was promoted to principal of Harlem Elementary in 1953 and served as principal there from 1953 to 1966. He was also elected as the interim principal at G. W. Carver High School in February 1954, to succeed the late W. Marion Davis. Messiah served as the principal of both schools from February 1954 to August 1954.

Harlem was in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, i.e., it was the last all Black school in the district, (not coming into compliance with the act until 1975, seven years after integration was implemented.) The plans suggested for Harlem's future were: 1.) close Harlem 2.) Reverend Sherman Gray endorsed pairing Harlem and Highlands Elementary schools. He said closing Harlem would be a waste of money. The district had spent \$500,000 on Harlem. 3.) Trustee Dignam proposed a "super school" that would offer an ungraded curriculum, programmed learning, a complete art program and an extensive music program, 4.) Dr. Dan Golden represented Highlands. He opposed to the pairing or zoning of the Harlem and Highlands Elementary Schools. The plan to make Harlem a "super school" was approved with a 4-1 vote.

Harlem became an open concept school offering new programs. Harlem had the first and only elementary magnet school in Goose Creek CISD. Goose Creek CISD began providing transportation to Harlem in the 1969-1970 school year. The trustees were hoping to make Harlem a pilot program school. The pilot program, IPI (Individually Prescribed Instruction), began in the 1971-1972 school year. It was



Harlem began a special all day kindergarten class as opposed to a half day kindergarten at all the other elementary schools in the district. The all day class was begun with the intention of drawing white families to keep the statistics for integration at an acceptable level so Harlem Elementary's doors could remain open.

Harlem was the first elementary school to house the gifted and talented program. There were no G/T classes in kindergarten, first and second grades. In the spring of second grade, all second grade students were administered the CTBS test. Students were nominated and a Renzuli form was filled out on all nominated students and they were G/T tested. The students accepted into the G/T program entered 3rd grade as G/T. They continued in the G/T class through the fifth grade and then moved on to Junior High. The G/T program was extended down to Kindergarten, first and second grades about 1990.

Harlem consisted of a primary wing, an intermediate wing, a gym, a cafeteria, an office and a portable building which housed the kindergarten class. All of these places were separate buildings. The primary wing consisted of 6 classes. A mixture of 1st and 2nd grade students made up the homeroom classes. The students moved from class to class for their studies. The teachers taught both first grade classes and second grade classes of students through individualized instruction. The intermediate teachers also taught through individualized instruction. The gym housed the art and music classrooms as well.

The "old" Harlem as we call it was built out of brick on the bottom half and windows on the top half. Because of repeated vandalism the windows were replaced with plywood. The sheets of plywood were held together with metal strips. There was no insulation. Condensation ruined papers if they were placed on the counter along the walls too close to the metal strips. The closets were shared with the birds. The eaves were open and many times we would find bird nests on the top shelves of our closets. Many times we would have to open our doors (each room on the primary wing had a door opening to the outside) so the birds could fly out. Anytime any of us had to go to another area, we would have to go out into the weather. There was a very low area so when it rained, it would nearly flood into the classroom at the end of the wing. Each classroom door was locked from the inside except for the classroom on the end. That classroom was locked from the outside, using a padlock.

A special reception was held at Harlem to celebrate the school's 50th

designed to diagnose problems and prescribe specific materials to help the student grasp academic concepts. The district was encouraged by Harlem's ability to steer students out of the "failure" syndrome. When the students progressed at the rate they were capable of achieving, everyone was successful. Harlem had proved to be effective and was considered a good model for other districts to view. U.S. Representative Bob Eckhardt supported the Harlem program. Harlem was chosen as one of seven schools in Texas by DSII (Demonstration Schools in Individualized Instruction) from 1978-1980.

Students were transported to Harlem from all over Baytown. Because Harlem had magnet status, all parents had to enroll their child each year. Many parents would come out in the middle of the night to wait for the school to open on registration day to ensure their child's enrollment. If a student wasn't reenrolled, he/she was required to attend their neighborhood school. Harlem housed about 350 students until the new building was built, at which time the student population, as well as the faculty, more than doubled. At the present time, there are only about four personnel remaining on campus who moved from the old building to the new.

A swim program began at Harlem in 1974. The pool was made of fiberglass. It was five feet wide and 27 feet long.

A volunteer program began in 1970 involving 28 women. Each lady worked three hours weekly or biweekly. The program was designed for individual children who experienced difficulty learning in a group setting. The program played an important role in social adjustment as well as academics. Babysitting for the ladies was provided at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Harlem underwent more changes in 1967 which included an air conditioned 500 seat auditorium, the district's first central library in an elementary school, office space for the principal and counselor, a teacher's workroom, a first aid room, faculty lounge, restrooms, and four new classrooms.

anniversary. Many people attended, both present and previous faculty and staff and many families whose children had attended Harlem throughout the years.

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In 1992, the "old" Harlem School was closed on Broad Street. The "new" Harlem Elementary School was opened at 3333 Interstate-10 East in 1992 where it remains open today. In the fall of 1994, the old building on Broad Street was demolished.

The people who have served as principals at Harlem Elementary are:

1928 E. A. Archia
1953 Clyde Messiah, Marian Davis
1968 Arthur Coltharp
1972 Joy Ralls
1974 Sue Jennings
1987 Kay Hurzeler
2000 Mattie Sharp
2004 Michael Wahl
2010 Stephen M. Warford

HARLEM, NEW YORK

Harlem is an African-American residential section of New York City. It is located in the borough of Manhattan. It was first organized in 1658 as a Dutch village and was named for the city of Haarlem in the Netherlands. Black citizens began to arrive in large numbers in 1904. They were fleeing the South in what was known as the "Great Migration". The community was the focus of the "Harlem Renaissance" in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a time of great artistic and professional works in the African-American culture in America. The leading black poets, actors and movie stars, singers and artistic painters migrated and lived in Harlem during this time period. The nightclubs in the community were jam-packed by black and white customers on a nightly basis. The "Great Depression" in the mid-1930s led to the end of this renaissance, because of the huge number of job losses. The advent of World War II depressed the community even further. The community still exists in the 21st century.
Source: wikipedia.org

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