

Ann Arbor Elementary Schools Scheduled for Replacement 2024-2031

**Frances Wright
Photography by Ryan Halsey¹**

In 2019 the voters of Ann Arbor passed a One Billion Dollar Bond Issue for the Ann Arbor Public Schools. This bond issue will cover playground renewal, busses, drinking fountains in the schools, air conditioning for the schools, and replacement of 10 elementary schools judged to be worn out and needing too much upgrading, etc.

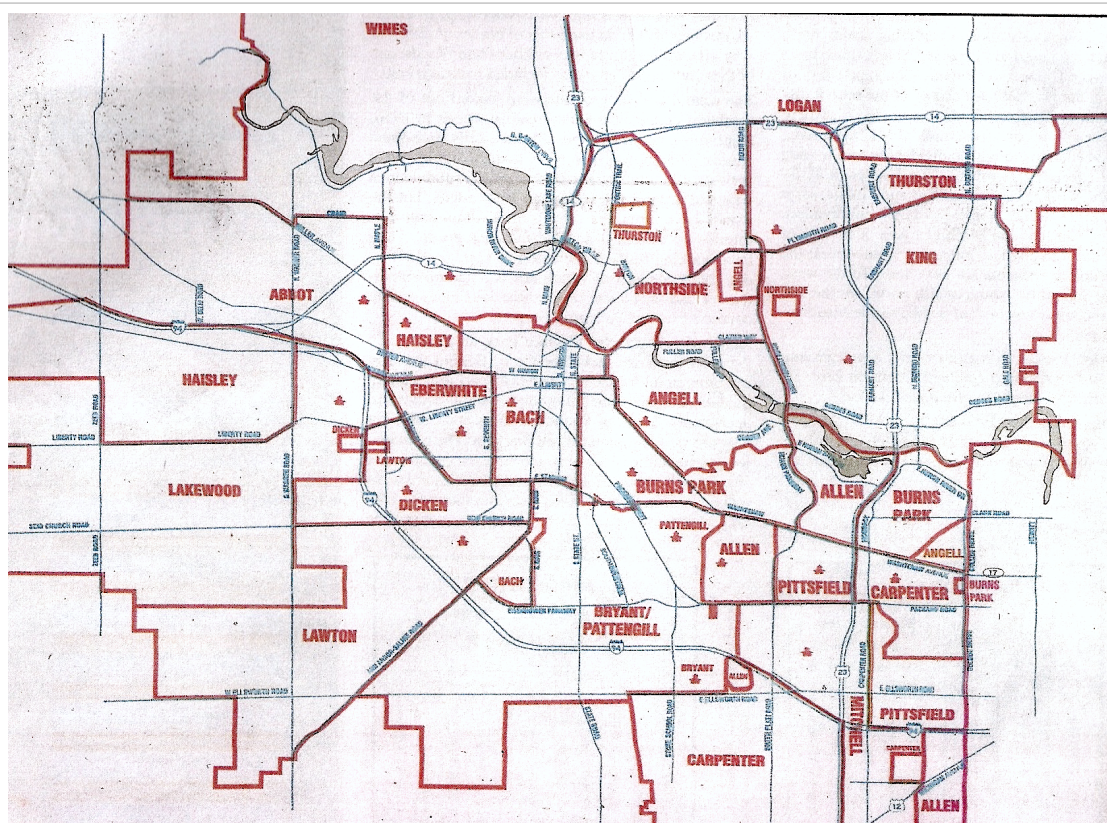
The School Board has a plan that starting in 2024 schools will be physically replaced with new buildings; the replacement schools will all go on existing school properties. Some of these properties are large enough to allow for a the new replacement school to be constructed at the same time as the current building is in use by students. Some of the properties are not large enough to do this and require that the students are attending school at some other building. This is called Staging. Schools with large enough properties will be left standing and be used as Staging schools for schools without enough property to demolish and build a new school building with the students attending.

There was an article in the May 2023 Ann Arbor Observer that detailed the timeline of creating the new buildings : Jeanice Swift's Decade, page 32 in the May Observer . The first few pages of the article are the events leading up to the plan

The plan to rebuild the elementary schools was unveiled in an Ann Arbor News Mlive article in January 2023. It next appears mentioned in the AA Observer for May 2023. But there was not a lot of public discussion about it. A2modern would like to just give you bare bones schedule for the next six years, with photographs of the schools and the surrounding property.

¹ <http://www.ryanhalseyphotography.com/>

The affected schools are all Mid Century modern buildings, built between the late 50s and the late 60s a time of much expansion in the population of Ann Arbor. They are: **Mitchell, Dicken, Logan, Thurston, Lakewood, Lawton, King, Wines, Carpenter, Pittsfield** , and **Abbot**. Then the construction moves on to the middle schools but that information is not in the plan yet. **Bryant Community School**, opened in 1975 with additions in 1975, 1976, and renovations in 1981-82. Bryant student capacity is 529. Bryant is the only school to be named after a custodian, Clifford E. Bryant ,who worked for the school system from 1946 to his retirement in 1971. Although of the same time period and



style, Bryant is not being torn down. Architects were Colvin, Robinson, and Wright and the builders were O'Neal Construction. Bryant is “paired” with **Pattengill School** which opened in 1957 and has a student capacity of 399 students. It is not being torn down. These two schools have grades k-2 in Bryant and 3-5 in Pattengill . Bryant was built with air conditioning and Pattengill has been upgraded to have air conditioning.

Elementary School Neighborhoods. Source: Ann Arbor Observer City Guide 2023-2024.

The first school that will be replaced is the school now called **Pathways to Success**, the alternative high school ,but originally built as **Stone Elementary School**. This school opened in 1949 at 2600 Stone School Road, approximately across the road from the “original” stone school, built of fieldstones and now a private nursery school. The new current building has a capacity for 426 students and is used as a high school. The replacement school will be constructed next door, on the site of a 1920s farmhouse and outbuildings, that the School System also owns. It will continue to be Pathways , not an elementary school.

Stone Elementary School was closed in the desegregation of the Ann Arbor Schools in 1986. There is no photograph of this school in this article because it is on the flight path to Ann Arbor Airport and drones may not fly over it.



Also in 2024 the New **Mitchell Elementary School** will be constructed on the Mitchell/Scarlett school property and staging for this is not required. When Mitchell School opened in 1951 it was a Pittsfield Township School. Pittsfield Township schools came into the Ann Arbor Public School system in 1957. Mitchell School, named for the Pittsfield Township teacher and superintendent Mary D. Mitchell, had additions in 1953, 1957, 1967, and 1973. At that point its student capacity was 432. It is at 3550 Pittsview Drive and Scarlett Middle School is adjacent to it. All Mitchell students proceed to Scarlett.





IN 2025-2027 **Dicken** , Logan and Thurston will be replaced. Dicken School was built in 1957 at 2135 Runnymede is named after an educator, Carrie L. Dicken. The architects were Charles Lane Associates. They also designed Lakewood and Wines schools. Builder Henry de Koning constructed the school. When new the student capacity was 559.





Logan School, built in 1976 and named for Slauson Principal Harold Logan, was designed by architects Hobbs and Black. Logan is at 2685 Traver Road. After the new construction this Logan school will become a pre-school and the new building an elementary school. But there is not enough space on this property to add a second school building.





Thurston School built in 1963 is at 2300 Prairie Street. It is named after Lee M. Thurston, assistant superintendent and on the board of Education 1931-1933. The school was built in 1963 but did not open until 1964 due to a millage not being passed. There was an addition in 1966. Thurston's student capacity was 559 students. Architects were O'Dell, Hewlett, Luckenbach, and Associates of Birmingham Michigan. The Thurston area has a pond, a prairie, and a nature area as part of the school's property.





Lakewood School at 344 Gralake in Lakewood Subdivision was built in 1961. There were additions in 1962 and 1967 and the student capacity was 453 students.

Architects were Lane, Reibe, and Weiland, formerly Charles Lane Associates. Mr. Weiland suggested the school's name as everyone who came there referred to it as Lakewood after their neighborhood. Lakewood School also has children from southern Scio Township and northern Lodi Township.





Lawton School will also be replaced in 2027-2029. Lawton School built in 1963 was designed by architect James Livingston. It's named after Uriah Lawton (1831-1904) first Superintendent of Schools 1862-1867. There were additions in 1965 and 1967 and the student capacity was 559. The school is at 2250 South Seventh St and has a very different look from above than the other elementary schools. It has pods that are classrooms, like flower petals attached to a center. Some Lawton students come from Lodi Township and Pittsfield Township too. The Lawton property is large and the replacement school can be built while the existing school is in use.





Martin Luther King School, the second-newest elementary school, which opened in 1969 at 3800 Waldenwood Lane, will be replaced in 2027-2029. The students will be attending Old Logan Elementary as King property is too small to contain two schools. The architects for King were Lynn Smith and Demiere Adams, Inc and the school capacity was 559 students. Students from developments east of US-23 in Superior Township attend King School and students from Arrowwood Cooperative Housing on Pontiac Trail also attend King. This Martin Luther King School was the first US school to be named after Martin Luther King, who was assassinated in 1968, reported Grace Shackman.





Wines School will be rebuilt in 2027-2029.

Staging is not needed as the Wines property is large enough to fit the new school on it. Wines School is at 1701 Newport Road, fairly close to Forsythe Middle School. It was designed by Charles Lane Associates, architects of Dicken and Lakewood schools. It's named after Levi D. Wines, a beloved mathematics teacher at the high school (then at Huron and State streets), a local builder, a founder of the University Musical Society and of the Ann Arbor Parks Commission. Henry De Koning Construction built the school. The school was built in 1960 and had an addition in 1966. Student capacity was 559.

IN 2030 Abbot School students will be shifted to the current Wines School while their school is replaced.





Carpenter school at 4250 Central Blvd in Pittsfield Township opened in 1953. It had additions in 1957, 1966, and 1973 and a student capacity of 625. The school's architect was Walter Anita and the Minion Construction of Ypsilanti are the builders. Carpenter school district is split into two areas. One area is south of Ellsworth Road and west to Platt Road and across past Stone School Road. There's a second smaller area surrounding the actual school building south of Washtenaw east to the edge of the City's School district at Golfside Rd and west to Carpenter Road. The school first served the homes in this area that were built during WWII.





Pittsfield Elementary school will also be replaced at the same time as Carpenter is. Pittsfield, at 2543 Pittsfield Boulevard was built in 1943. Pittsfield Village rental community next door was designed by Wallace Frost in 1943 to house workers and their families who came to work in the Bomber Plant in Ypsilanti.

IN 1965 the school got an addition incorporating the older building done by Kainlauri, McMullan, Millman and Associates. The student capacity was 451 students. While the school is being replaced Pittsfield students will be staged at Old Mitchell School. Pittsfield's school district includes both sides of Carpenter Road including the Coachville Mobile Home Community ; this was the childhood home of singer Iggy Pop. He went on to Tappan Middle School and Pioneer High School from Pittsfield. Now Pittsfield students attend Scarlett Middle School and Huron High, neither of which were built when Iggy Pop was living there.



Abbot is the last elementary school affected. Abbot, located at 2670 Sequoia Parkway, was built in 1962. The architects were Perkins and Wills, from Chicago. The school is named after Theophilus C. Abbot, the first principal of the Ann Arbor Union School which was at Huron and State Streets. Abbot was built with a capacity of 559 students. Abbot requires the students to be out so they will be Staged at Old Wines during the new construction



CONCLUSION

The program is proceeding ahead even with the School Board's 2023 changes and financial difficulties. In August of 2024 we know that the new Logan School will be a two-story building built on the Clague Middle School property, on the other side of Nixon Road from the current Logan School. And we know that Thurston School will be rebuilt on the back of the property near the Thurston Pond. The Thurston Pond has been cared for by volunteers and the volunteers have also planted an oak grove of various types of oak trees near the pond. In future, the school busses will be driving down Prairie Street to its end, near the pond, and the oak grove will be removed

Fran Wright (August. 2024)