

### **Our School-Excellence and Education Go Hand-In-Hand**

The very first school in Williams Bay was started in November 1899 and held in the Free Lutheran Church basement for a rent of \$5 per month. Until this time, children attended several one-room schoolhouses to the north, east & west of the village. The first teacher, William H. Orme, was paid the princely monthly salary of \$30.

A site for a new school was found (now occupied by the Douglas Swangren family) on the corner of Congress & Collie streets, just across from the current Elementary school location and a two story building was erected in 1900. (photo above) When school opened in the fall, the janitor resigned & the school board asked the school superintendent to take over the janitorial duties for an additional \$6 per month.

In 1915, the School Board, through the efforts of member Storrs Barrett, the need for a high school was recognized, and the present elementary school building was started. In 1916, the old school was abandoned, and elementary, junior high & high school occupied the new brick building, with additions added in the 1950's, 60's & 80's. For 80 years, the building saw generations of all ages pass through its halls.

In 1994, a decision was made by the voters of Williams Bay to construct a new separate Junior/Senior High School and the Geryl Blakeley farm property was purchased just northwest of the George Williams Golf Course on the west side of Williams Bay. In 1996, the doors opened to the new Junior/Senior High School facility.

As the current student population rises in the elementary, the Williams Bay School Board is again pondering a change in location for the elementary school, probably adjacent to the high school, sometime in the future.

Compiled by the WBHS History Club. Recipient of the 2010 Natl. History Club of the Year Award. The WBHS History Club often researches & studies local history. The History Club is currently renovating a long forgotten park in Williams Bay.