



River Forest
Public Schools

Our History

District 90 was founded in 1850, with 14 students attending classes in a 12-foot-square shed at the corner of Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue. It was replaced by a red frame schoolhouse the following year, which was then replaced in 1859 by the Harlem School, the historic brick building that now serves as the District headquarters at the corner of Lake Street and Park Avenue. At the time, Harlem School was the largest school building between Chicago and Elgin, and was renowned for amenities that included its own well water and individual room stoves for heat.



By 1889, the number of students had grown to nearly 300, warranting the addition of a second building on the same property. Called the Central School, it became today's Lincoln Elementary School.

When the population of River Forest grew to more than 1,000 in 1894, the town chose its first school board. Roosevelt School opened in 1924, serving grades K-5 and 8; in 1953, it became a junior high and in 1979 a 5th- through 8th-grade middle school, which it remains today. Willard Elementary School was built in 1928, to accommodate the growing number of families settling in the north part of town.