

History of

McKendree Elementary School

The first McKendree School was built in 1884 adjacent to McKendree United Methodist Church on Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. The school derived its name from the church, which also was built that year and named after Bishop William McKendree. Bishop McKendree was the first native-born bishop of the Methodist Church.

In 1923, two unpainted rooms, valued at \$75, on one-and-a-half acres accommodated two teachers, Roy Mercier and his wife. The school served 78 students in seven grades. A neighbor's well provided water for the austere building. The school equipment inventory listed only double patent desks and a small blackboard.

In 1938, the school's value was placed at \$1,500 even though it had no electricity. It closed in June 1942.

The facility was quite different when a new 65,000-square-foot McKendree Elementary opened its doors to register 934 students, grades kindergarten through fifth, on August 22, 1988. The facility was built at 650 Lakes Parkway in Lawrenceville. The school eased overcrowding at two other Gwinnett County elementary schools, Benefield and Dyer. The school actually was built prior to the existence of any mapped road! The new

FAST FACTS

Address: 1600 Riverside Parkway
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

The following have served as principals of McKendree Elementary School:

1988–2009 Cindy Antrim
2009–Dec. 2016 Dr. Loretta Denmark
Jan. 2017–Present Tyese Scott

School Colors: Green, Silver, White

School Mascot: Eagle

building contained 44 classrooms, an activity building for indoor physical education, an automated media center, a spacious cafeteria with self-serve lines for students and staff, and administrative offices for the principal and instructional lead teacher.

Under the leadership of Principal Cindy Antrim, the students and staff of the new McKendree Elementary began to establish their own traditions. The Mustang was voted as the school mascot, and silver and royal blue were established as the school colors. *Mustang Magic*, the



McKendree school newspaper, kept parents informed each six weeks of upcoming school activities such as the Mustang Read-A-Long and field trips to the zoo or SciTrek in Atlanta.

By the end of its first year, McKendree grew to a student enrollment of over 1,000 students with a staff of 95. Two portable classrooms were added to the physical plant.

During McKendree's 2nd year, construction began on an expansion wing housing 13 additional primary classrooms. Enrollment quickly filled the new wing upon completion. As the area around McKendree, also called "The Golden Triangle" continued to grow, McKendree soon became the largest

elementary school in Georgia for that time period with an enrollment exceeding 1,600 students. All rooms within the building were full as were the 23 additional portable classrooms present on the property! With the addition of Walnut Grove Elementary and Jackson Elementary to the Collins Hill Cluster, McKendree's population stabilized around 1,150 to 1,200 students. Still overfilling the physical limits of the building, McKendree was fortunate to receive one further addition which included a two-story addition with an enclosed gymnasium, art and

music rooms, computer labs, a 4-classroom suite, offices, and upper-grade classrooms, as well as a renovated and enlarged Media Center, Cafeteria, and front office area. With the addition, McKendree was able to house its total student enrollment within the building for the first time in many years!



A photo of the original McKendree School.

McKendree's address was changed when Lakes Parkway became Riverside Parkway, a four-lane road extending from Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to Old Norcross Road.

Enrollment at McKendree now draws from an area within one to two miles of the school, a much smaller attendance zone than the nine to 10 mile attendance radius in 1988!

In an effort to develop a sense of cohesiveness with the other Collins Hill Cluster schools, McKendree's mascot was changed from a mustang to an eagle in 2011, and the school colors were changed to hunter green, silver, and white.

Over the years, McKendree Elementary has matured into a united, caring community... one that gives back in a number of ways (Relay for Life, United Way, Great Days of Service, American Red Cross, and through the Lawrenceville Co-op). In addition, the school receives overwhelming parent and community support and involvement for school activities.