

CALVIN COOLIDGE SCHOOL: A CHRONOLOGY

1927

Town Meeting approves \$115,000 for "the purpose of providing necessary accommodations for school children of the Bigelow School section." Superintendent: Merle Sturtevant. Chairman of Building Committee: Howard Shepard. Contractor: Clarence Rocheford.

1927

Calvin Coolidge School opens with 389 students in Grades 1-8, "in the section formerly served by the Bigelow School and the Edgemere School, and also for pupils in Grades 7-8 from North Quinsigamond Avenue and the Henry Harlow School."

1928

Grade 9 students added to Coolidge School.

1938

Hurricane of September 21 demolishes two "portable schools" in Shrewsbury. With overall enrollments rising, the School Committee "refuses to approve the further erection of portable school buildings... The urgency of the situation demands that permanent quarters be provided immediately."

Principals of Coolidge School

	Appointed
Albertis LeGacy	1927
Clarence Churchill	1929
Elmer Barber	1931
Lester Dyer	1934
John Bohdiewicz	1953
Peter Zona	1976
Arthur Bergeron	1985



LUNCH ROOM — Calvin Coolidge School

This room used also for physical training, dramatics, entertainments, manual training, music and playroom for primary grades. Taken from ANNUAL REPORT of the SCHOOL COMMITTEE, 1929.

1940

New wing is constructed on the South side of the building, adding four classrooms, manual training room, shower room, toilets, teachers' room, stage.



Coolidge Fishing Derby, 1952. On opening day of the fishing season, school opened at 10:00 a.m. to allow students to participate. Teacher Mike Kleminich (now Athletic Director) weighs and measures the entries. The girl in stripes is Shirley Dyer Richitelli, daughter of then principal (and later superintendent) Lester "Pop" Dyer.

1943

A Saturday evening fire on June 12 damages the Principal's office and several classrooms. School sessions are suspended for the remainder of the year.



Coach Mike Kleminich shows off his Coolidge Baseball Team, circa 1953. Billy Catalina, center-front, (now owner of the Catalina Health Spa), had outgrown his teammates.

1953

John Bohdiewicz appointed Principal of Coolidge.

1955

Because of rising enrollments, Coolidge goes on double sessions.

1958

Grade 7-8 discontinued at Coolidge (except for a handful of Grade 7 students); school goes off double sessions with the opening of the new Junior-Senior High School.

1964

Grade 6 discontinued at Coolidge, moved to the new Junior High.

1968

Town Meeting appropriates \$621,951 for another new wing.



Peter Zona was principal of Coolidge School from 1976-1985. He is now principal of Spring Street School.

1969

New wing opens, adding cafeteria, gym, two classrooms, library, offices. Kindergartens added.

1976

Kindergarten classes discontinued at Coolidge, moved to Ward School Kindergarten Center. Peter Zona becomes Principal.

1979

After the west wing of North Shore School is destroyed by fire, Coolidge School goes on double sessions, with North Shore students attending the afternoon session.



John Bohdiewicz hands out one of the many awards he presented during his years as Coolidge Principal from 1953 to 1976.

1980

Double sessions end in February, as North Shore students return to a renovated North Shore wing and to the Army Reserve Center in Worcester.

1981

Ward School closes; Coolidge adds Kindergarten again.

1983

Reorganization of Shrewsbury Schools makes Coolidge a K-4 school.

1984

Town Meeting votes \$1.2 million in May to renovate Coolidge School. Coolidge Gr. 1-4 students move to the Beal School building in September, Coolidge K students to Paton. Arthur Bergeron becomes Principal.

1986

Renovation of Coolidge completed in February; K-4 students return to Coolidge.

What grades have been housed at Coolidge School?

Beginning in...	1927	1-8
	1928	1-9
	1950	1-8
	1958	1-7
	1959	1-6
	1964	1-5
	1969	K-5
	1976	1-5
	1981	K-5
	1983	K-4

AN ORIGINAL COOLIDGE STUDENT REMEMBERS



Michael Perna, a retired 32-year veteran of the Shrewsbury Fire Department, was 10 years old when he was moved from the Bigelow School to the brand new Coolidge School in 1928.

"I remember it was a heck of a change for us. The Bigelow School was next to what is now the Lake Shore

Market. It was small — 4 rooms, I think, with a portable classroom added. It was old, with floors blackened with age. The new Coolidge felt, well, **plush**. It was roomy, and had tiled floors. It also had a cafeteria, which also served as an auditorium and a gym where we played basketball.

"Also it was different because there were older pupils there, in the Junior High grades. We used to watch them play marbles outside during recess — "pooning," which was tossing clay marbles at "glassies."

"Most of the children walked to school, some from as far away as the Old Mill area. Only those from Morningdale and Edgemere were bused.

"The teachers were really strict. I remember one woman teacher who would grab you by the arm with the grip of a man if you did something wrong. But she was fair. The teachers all really wanted you to learn, and didn't hesitate to keep you after school and drill you until you understood the lesson.

"Emma Drinkwine was the Truant Officer. If you were absent from school and she had an inkling that something was suspicious, she'd go get you. Once two or three of us played hookey and went to our clubhouse. She knew where it was, came to find us, loaded us into her old, green Essex and drove us back to school."



Above: Making use of one of the new Teachers' Offices are Third-Grade Teacher Terri Caffelle (left) and Worcester State College student teacher Janet McDowell

Right: Principal Arthur Bergeron and School Secretary Corliss L. Loomer in his office. Getting the school re-opened and operating was a big job, but now everything is proceeding smoothly.

Below: Teachers enjoy the two new workrooms equipped with duplicating machines and other necessary equipment. First grade teacher Mrs. Emily Weagle runs off a lesson.

