

A History of James Madison Elementary School

In the Spring of 1947, the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Heights Independent School District voted to authorize the building of an elementary school in the newly developed University Park District in the northwestern section of San Antonio. This site had been acquired earlier from the City of San Antonio for use as the location for an elementary school.

During the Spring of 1948, before the building was completed, Mr. Jack Smith, an instructor at Edison High School was named to the principalship of the new school. The new school as it was then designated, opened at the beginning of the Fall Term in 1948 with eight teachers.

Soon, five more teachers were added, although there were only eight rooms in the building. During the year temporary rooms were moved onto the grounds and this helped to relieve the congestion.

During the year, in an effort to find a suitable name for the new school, an essay contest was held among the pupils. Thirty-nine essays were presented. The paper written by Shirley Ann Baker explaining the reasons why the name of James Madison should be chosen for her school won the contest and the school has since been so designated.

In May 1949, the citizens of San Antonio voted to annex the Los Angeles Heights Independent School District. So, James Madison opened in September 1949 as a part of the San Antonio Public School System. The Board of Trustees of the San Antonio District realized the crowded condition of James Madison Elementary School. A twelve room addition was authorized at a regular Board meeting on September 14, 1949. This building was completed in May 1950 and occupied. The school then had sixteen teachers.

The growth of the school has been continuous. In September 1950, there were twenty-one teachers and by the second term another teacher was added to make a faculty of twenty-two teachers. In September 1951, the faculty had grown to twenty-five but was reduced to twenty-three teachers, when Samuel Maverick Elementary School opened in the same vicinity.

Twenty-three teachers remained at James Madison with an enrollment of about 660 students. The following fall, the cafeteria was enlarged to accommodate the increased enrollment. In the fall of 1954, the P.T.A. installed overhead type fans in the cafeteria. This was a welcome blessing for a warm situation.

In the fall of 1955, plans were prepared for a primary wing.. These six rooms were finished and put to use in the spring of 1956, thus ending the use of the "portable" classrooms. This same year a central Library was established. It has grown into a complete library service for both teacher and pupil.