A HISTORY OF THE WEST CENTRAL SCHOOL CORPORATION

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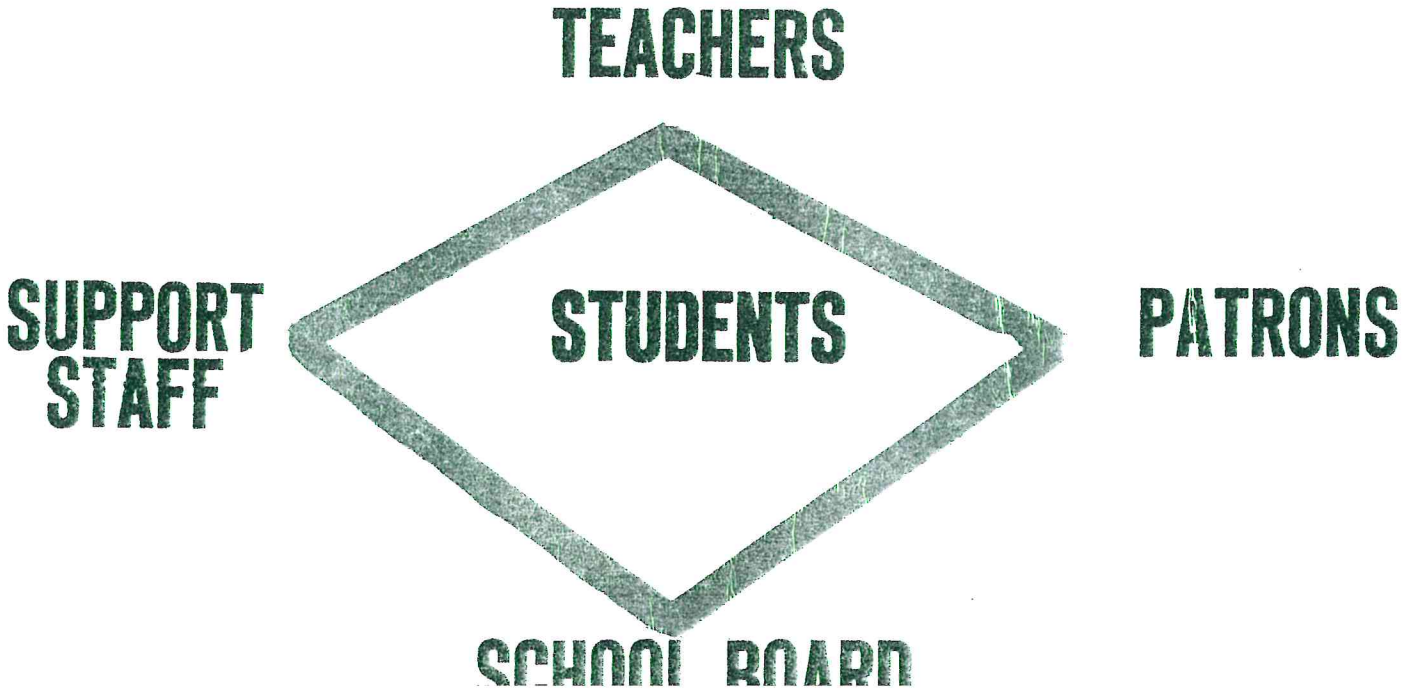
West Central School Corp.
Corporation Goals
A United Educational TEAM

1. STUDENTS, STAFF, BOARD & COMMUNITY PATRONS SEEK COOPERATIVE DIRECTION.
2. QUALITY AND CARING TEAM MEMBERS.
3. MOTIVATED AND SATISFIED ACHIEVERS.
4. UNDERSTANDING, INFORMED & SUPPORTIVE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY.

The Cycle For Educational Excellence



A History of the West Central School Corporation

"A Comprehensive Plan for Reorganization of Schools of Pulaski County, Indiana and Gillam Township, Jasper County, Indiana" was formulated by the Pulaski County Committee for the Reorganization of School Corporations. This was accomplished under the provisions of Chapter 202, Acts of 1959, Indiana General Assembly, as amended.

The plan was approved by the Indiana State Commission for the Reorganization of School Corporations on August 31, 1961. The plan called for a community school corporation for parts of Pulaski and Jasper Counties. The area was to be known as the Western Pulaski Count School Corporation. On October 31, 1961, official word was received that the plan had been approved by the State of Indiana.

On December 31, 1961, the following individuals were notified of their appointment, by Judge Robert E. Thompson, as members of the firs Board of School Trustees of the Western Pulaski County School Corporation; Eldon Clark, Andrew Houston, Dal Mayhew, O.H. White, Edward Finnegan, Edward Leman and Richard C. Overmyer. These members were to serve until an election was held. On May 8, 1962, all of the members serving were elected in the Primary Election.

The Western Pulaski County School Corporation was scheduled to com into being as of January 1, 1962. A total of 73.9 percent of the registered voters in the affected area had signed a petition to make th new school corporation a reality.

Those serving on the county school reorganization committee were John Binkley, Orville H. White, Clairborn Wamsley, William Baker, John S. Capper, James Freeman, George Gericks, Edward Leman and Lemoin Nice. A total of seven individuals, living outside of the boundaries of the Western Pulaski County School Corporation, filed a restraining order against the reorganization committee and the school board members to halt the proposed new school plan. This action prevented the proposed new school district from officially coming into being for a number of years. The issue was fought through the courts and finally reached the Indiana Supreme Court. The highest court refused to hear the case so the appealed verdict was upheld. This prevented the Western Pulaski County School Corporation from coming into existence.

The action by the original school board members illustrates the foresight and perseverance that those concerned citizens had in attempting to do what the state law required, consolidate. The matter was finally resolved in December, 1967, as the voters throughout the county approved a reorganization plan.

A number of excerpts are taken from the booklet, "A Cooperative Study of the Eastern Pulaski Community School Corporation and the West Central School Corporation". This was prepared by the Bureau of Special School Services, Department of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. It is classified as Studies In Education No. 3, 1968.

CORPORATION HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Until a petition favoring the reorganization of the two school corporations was instituted in December, 1967, Pulaski County had a varied school organization. The Pulaski County School Corporation included the townships of Franklin, White Post, Jefferson, Harrison, Salem, Beaver, Indian Creek, Van Buren, and the southern part of Cass. Secondary school students from Gillam Township in Jasper County were also transferred into the corporation. The northern part of Cass Township and Rich Grove Township were and still are a part of North Judson-San Pierre School Corporation as the result of a special election held in May, 1964. Subsequently, Tippecanoe Township has become a part of the Culver Community School Corporation. M.S.D. of Monroe-Winamac included Monroe Township and the Northeastern corner of Jefferson Township. Previous to the present organization the Pulaski County School Reorganization Committee had examined the organizational needs of the county, and had presented plans for reorganization to the people in 1961 and again in 1964. The present organization is the result of the efforts of the Reorganization Committee, school administrative officials of the involved districts, and Dr. Charles Kline of Purdue University who worked with these groups in finalizing plans for reorganizing into the present two-system organization. It was felt that the reorganization would accomplish the following objectives.

1. A more equalized educational opportunity for public school pupils of the area.

2. More efficient and economical administration of the public school in the area.

3. A greater equity in tax rates for school purposes.

4. More equitable distribution of school revenues throughout the area.

5. Greater degree of local control because of more geographic concentration in each new school district.

6. Greater flexibility in providing transportation for area students.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Eastern Pulaski Community School Corporation and the West Central School Corporation were organized in December, 1967, by a petition of the residents of the proposed reorganized districts. Previous to reorganization, the three school organizations which contributed to the resulting two-district system were the Pulaski County School Corporation, the Monroe-Winamac School Corporation, and Gillam Township of Jasper County.

In the fall of 1967, and previous to reorganization, some districts created new boundaries and attendance areas from the 1966-67 pattern. Beardstown and Fairview Elementary Schools closed their doors and students from these schools were reassigned. In the 1966-67 school year many junior and senior high students from Franklin and Harrison Townships had been attending the Monterey Schools. Most of these students transferred to the Monroe-Winamac district in the fall of 1967.

Beaver Elementary School was also closed in the fall of 1967 and these students were reassigned. Francesville School was changed from a K-12 grade structure to a K-6 pattern. The Medaryville School was transformed into a 7-12 configuration from a K-12 grade structure. The school at Medaryville (7-12) was then called the West Central High School. The school at Francesville (K-6) was then referred to as the West Central Elementary School. (Pages 2 & 3)

PULASKI COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS

During the fall of the 1967-68 school year the Pulaski County School Corporation was operating two high schools, one at Star City and the other, West Central High School, in Medaryville. Because of possible school district reorganization, many students that formerly attended school at Star City from Harrison and Indian Creek Townships were transferred to the high school at Winamac for the 1967-68 school year. During the fall of the 1967-68 school year there were 56 students enrolled in grades 7-8 and 107 pupils enrolled in grades 9-12 at the Star City High School.

In the fall of the 1967-68 school year the students that had formerly attended high school at Medaryville and Francesville were combined to form one Junior-Senior High School (West Central) at Medaryville. The enrollment in grades 7-12, in West Central High School was 566 pupils with every class having at least 75 pupils. The combining of the two high schools had enabled the School Corporation to provide an expanded and enriched curriculum. To cite some of the additions that have been possible because of the merger of the two schools, both physics and chemistry are offered each year, rather than on alternate years, two foreign languages are offered, the music program has been expanded, additional courses for both the college preparatory students and those who plan to enter the various vocations have been added in English, mathematics, industrial arts, and commercial work. In addition to the expanded curriculum, additional auxiliary personnel in such areas as library, guidance, speech and hearing and remedial reading have been added. Fifty-nine different courses were being offered during the semester. The school system is to be commended for the excellent educational program that has been developed during the first year that the West Central High School has been operated.
(Pages 33 & 35)

SCHOOL FACILITIES

West Central Elementary School at Francesville

The West Central Elementary School at Francesville was constructed in 1913 with an addition in 1939. The building is a two-story brick veneer building with a gound floor. In the fall of the 1967-68 school year this building was used to house 471 pupils, grades 1-6, and 75 kindergarten students. Prior to the 1967-68 school year this building was used to house students in grades 1-12. There are twenty general use classrooms, the cafeteria, and five special teacher stations in the building. The building has been refurnished and presents a pleasing environment for children and staff. Many of the general use classrooms do not meet present standards for classroom size. However, as the program is now organized the facility is very functional. The building like many buildings constructed for use as a grade 1-12 building leaves much to be desired for housing a modern elementary education program.

West Central High School at Medaryville

The West Central High School at Medaryville was constructed in 1921 with an addition in 1952. Three separate self-contained portable classrooms were added to this school site in 1954. A separate building, about two blocks from the school site, is used for music, industrial arts, and vocational agriculture. The 1921 portion of the building is a two-story brick veneer building with a ground floor. The 1954 addition includes a gym, some special use classrooms, general use classrooms, and offices on the ground floor. Prior to the 1967-68 school year, this complex of buildings had been used to house students in grades 1-12. There are eleven general use classrooms and eleven special teacher stations available in this complex to house 566 students grades 7-12. Many of the general use classrooms do not meet present State Department of Education standards for size. The building has been refurnished and presents a pleasing environment for students and staff. The building has been well adapted for use of the students in grades 7-12. However, the building leaves much to be desired in terms of housing a modern education program for junior and senior high school students.

Gillam Township School

The Gillam Township School was constructed in 1938 with an addition in 1954. In 1961 a portable classroom was added. During the 1967-68 school year this facility was used to house 261 students in grades 1-8. There are eight general use classrooms and one special teacher station available. The special teacher station is a gym which is used for a multi-purpose room. The building is very inadequate to accommodate the present instructional program and the number of pupils enrolled at the present time. Five of the general use classrooms would be classified as small, one medium, and two large by present State Department of Public Instruction standards. The building was well constructed and has been reasonably maintained. The two classrooms added in 1954 are very excellent facilities and meet all present standards for elementary classrooms. The building is a one-story brick building with a kitchen underneath the stage which is adjacent to the general purpose room. The multi-purpose and/or gym is used as a cafeteria. (Pages 53 & 56)

CHANGE IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAS BEEN PROPOSED

According to plans developed in the summer of 1967 and presented to the County and State reorganization committees, the geographic boundaries of both the Monroe-Winamac School Corporation and the Pulaski County School Corporation will be changed if approved by the voters. The Pulaski and Star City schools will become a part of the Monroe-Winamac School Corporation, and will be known as the Eastern Pulaski Community School Corporation; the West Central Elementary School at Francesville and the West Central High School at Medaryville as well as the elementary school in Gillam Township will become a part of the West Central School Corporation. (Page 63)

The first Board of School Trustees of the West Central School Corporation was elected by the voters of the corporation in 1968. Alfred Schlatter served until 1970, Andrew Houston until 1972, Ray Dornhecker, Sr. until 1974, Nathaniel Gutwein, Edward Nielsen and Dean Tanner served until 1976. Joe Kuhn served on the board until 1978. Other school board members and their years of service are as follows:

Helen Ricks	1970-78
Don Tillett	1972-84
Lawrence Parish	1974-78
Lynn Jackson	1976-80
Roscoe Cummins	1976-84
Jack Stevens	1976-88
Wayne Putt	1978-86
Robert Ledford	1978-86
Dave Ramey	1978-90
Fred Kasten	1980-88
Wayne Mayhew	1984-88
Bonnie Culp	1984-Present Member
Pam Ledford	1986-90
Dean Lowry	1986-Present Member
Larry Leman	1988-Present Member
Gene Timm	1988-Present Member
Roger Ward	1988-Present Member
Lacy McCarty, Jr.	1990-Present Member
James Bergens	1990-Present Member

On April 7, 1969, a lease agreement was entered into between the West Central School Corporation and the West Central School Building Corporation. The building corporation came into being for the purpose of constructing facilities for a new jr.-sr. high school. The necessary legal steps had been taken, bids were sought on the project and then the arrangements were made to issue the mortgage bonds to finance the project.

Initially, the West Central School Building Corporation was formed and 1,000 shares of common stock were sold at $10.00 per share to 32 shareholders. The stockholders elected the following officers to serve as the Board of Directors:

Clyde Krug, President
Carl Gutwein, Vice-President
Keith A. Westphal, Secretary
Robert Pfledderer, Treasurer
George K. Haring, Member

The West Central School Building Corporation offered $3,700,000.00 First Mortgage Bonds for sale on May 13, 1969, The maximum interest rate was not to exceed 6 1/4 percent with the final payment scheduled for 1992. The funds were to be used to finance the new West Central Jr.-Sr. High School building. The facilities were leased to the West Central School Corporation by the West Central School Building Corporation.

Members of the West Central School Corporation Board of School Trustees and the members of the Board of Directors of the West Central School Building Corporation continued to be good stewards representing the taxpayers of the corporation. This was highlighted on March 1, 1974 as the indebtedness on the Jr.-Sr. High was refinanced. Although the First Mortgage Refunding Bonds amounted to $4,400,000.00 the end result was that $290,052.14 was saved due to a lesser interest rate being paid. In both financing endeavors Frank Witt of the Peoples State Bank and the attorney firm of Dumas & Moriarty provided invaluable services to the corporations.

Ground was broken for the new West Central Jr.-Sr. High School structure on May 16, 1969. The total cost of the building and the contents amounted to $3,994,944.00. The following firms were instrumental in the construction of the school.

Architect - Everett I. Brown Co.
General Contractor - W.A. Sheets & Sons
Electrical Contractor - Steele Electric Co., Inc.
Mechanical Contractor - Burton Plumbing & Heating Co.

Dedication of the beautiful and functional new West Central Jr.-Sr. High School was held on Sunday, November 21, 1971. Illustrated below is a copy of the dedication program as it appeared on the Dedication and Open House booklets.

DEDICATION PROGRAM

Musical Prelude ..... West Central Concert Band
(*Mr. Steinacher*)

Invocation ..... Rev. Wendell Parman

National Anthem ..... West Central Concert Band

Pledge to Flag ..... Mr. Clyde Krug

Welcome & Presentation of Special Guests Mr. Robert Shipman

Introduction of Speaker ..... Mr. L. E. Zehr

Challenge for the Years Ahead ..... Dr. Chris Jung

Presentation of the Building ..... Mr. Orville Hooker

Acceptance ..... Mr. Nathaniel Gutwein

Song of Praise ..... West Central High School Choir
(*Mrs. Steinacher*)

Prayer of Dedication ..... Rev. Thomas Reimer

Tour of Building ..... Future Teachers of America

Reception ..... Parent-Teacher Council

After the excitement of dedicating the new Jr.-Sr. High School things calmed down within the corporation for a number of years. Students continued to gain a superb education, the staff was dedicated to helping kids, the community patrons remained supportive of the schools and the school board members continued holding lengthy meetings in an effort to plan for the upmost in offering quality education programs.

The peace and tranquillity of the West Central School Corporation was disrupted in the early morning hours on January 10, 1980. A fire broke out in the boiler room of the old West Central Elementary School in Francesville. Extensive smoke damage occurred throughout the central part of the building.

An emergency session of the Board of School Trustees was underway within hours of the discovery of the fire. A contingency plan was agreed upon in order to provide the type of excellent educational program that the community had come to expect. Plans were finalized to move the Fifth and Sixth Grade students to the Jr.-Sr. High School building. Some of the other students were transferred to the Gillam Elementary School while the remainder of the students would attend school at the First Christian Church in Francesville. The students remained in these facilities throughout the remainder of the 1979-80 school year.

The response from the community was overwhelming as a great number of patrons turned out to help move the school equipment to the new sites. Once again the cooperative spirit of a caring school community was present and the move was completed remarkably in one day.

A great number of meetings were held, seeking staff and community patrons input, to determine the long range direction for facilities to serve the elementary students. The decision was made to restore the "old" elementary school to a minimum in order to reuse it in the fall of 1980. In the meantime the decision was made to proceed with the construction of a "new" elementary school on the same site as the Jr.-Sr. High School. The students from the Francesville site and the Gillam Elementary School were to be consolidated into the new facility.

The new 76,000 square foot West Central Elementary School was constructed at a cost of $4,879,083.02. The 600 students moved into the beautiful new structure during the Spring of 1982. A Dedication and Open House program was held on Sunday, May 2, 1982. A copy of the program is shown below:

DEDICATION PROGRAM

Music.....Sixth Grade Band
Mr. Robert Chase, Director
Invocation.....Rev. Wendell Gudeman
Welcome.....Mr. Roscoe Cummins
President, School Board
Pledge of Allegiance.....Jack Drone and Lauri Erb
Recognition.....Mr. Donald Tillett
School Board Member
Remarks & Introductions.....Mr. Roger Dickinson
Superintendent
Address.....Senator Richard Lugar
Remarks & Presentation of Keys.....Mr. Jack Stevens
Vice-President, School Board
Music.....Fifth & Sixth Grade Chorus
Mr. Mark Patterson, Director
Invitation to Open House.....Mr. William Canary
Principal
Benediction.....Rev. Kyle Gardner

As in the past, the community patrons responded to the call for assistance. All school materials, equipment, supplies and books were moved from the two older facilities to the new school in only one day.

The West Central School Corporation has continued over the years to be served by outstanding educators and dedicated school board members that have remained focused on the goal of providing a quality education for every student. The corporation strives to be on the forefront of using the latest teaching techniques, technology and innovative ideas to make instruction meaningful and challenging.

During the spring of 1991 Rose Capouch, Kevin Drane, and Mike Gutwein were asked to represent the school corporation patrons on the Focus Group. Representing the Jr.-Sr. High School educators were Jeff Hart, Dean Hill, Kirk Runk, and Beth Siemens. Other members were A.J. Gappa, Charles Mellon, Marcia Metz and Jim Stradling.

The purpose of the Focus Group was to project to the next five to ten years what the needs of the students of the West Central Jr.-Sr. High School will be. Attention was given to attempting to meet all students needs, curriculum development, course offerings, class size, enrollment, meeting state mandates, number of teachers preparations, student apathy, extra-curricular activities and the constraints of the budget.

It was emphasized that the purpose of the West Central School Corporation continues to be to offer the students the most effective and appropriate education in order to successfully meet the challenges of the future. The Focus Group centralized the objective of their work on the fact that every student must be given the ultimate in opportunities to graduate from high school and to have a firm foundation for the career of their choice.

To assist each student in achieving a quality education the recommendations were categorized into three areas. Jr.-Sr. High School principal, Charles Mellon, summarized the recommendations as (1) increasing the graduation rate, (2) curriculum changes and staffing and, (3) strengthening the mathematical and science offerings to meet all local, state and national goals. Techniques, dream, thoughts and a variety of practical solutions were explored in an effort as to how to best meet the needs of the future.

The administrative staff stressed that a variety of alternatives will be investigated before any final recommendations will be offered during the Winter of 1992. Curriculum exploration will continue and members of the board will become active participants in reviewing the "Creating Positive Relationships" program.

It is felt that the initial stones have been laid for a firm educational program to reach beyond the year 2000. An organized effort will continue to seek the most desirable means by which to serve the needs of all youngsters of the corporation.

Attached to this booklet is a pamphlet summarizing the make up of the corporation at the present time. Although the enrollment has declined over the years the course offerings have nearly doubled in size since the inception of the school corporation.

A large crowd was on hand at the West Central Jr.-Sr. High School Cafeteria on December 19, 1991. The former board members and interested community patrons joined the current school board members in a celebration by burning the mortgage papers since the indebtedness on the Jr.-Sr. High School was retired.

It was evident that the evening was a time of jubilation. Yet the occasion brought back many memories of the difficult times and struggles to achieve the historical moment that was at hand. The West Central School Corporation has been blessed by individuals that possess the philosophy of William James. He said, "The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts us". It is because so many have so freely given that the West Central School Corporation has reached its current level of excellence.

The motto for the educators, staff members, school board members and community patrons continues to be that all will work cooperatively together to make a good school corporation even better. It is evident that with the caliber of individuals that serve the students and the make up of the community patrons that the future outlook for the West Central School Corporation remains very positive on into the 21st Century.

West Central School Corporation

GUARANTEE

West Central Students And Teachers Will Be

SELF-CONFIDENT.
ENTHUSIASTIC, SELF-MOTIVATED.
SUCCESSFUL.
PROUD OF THEIR SCHOOL.
PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

Francesville High School

Facts

Class of 1912 was the first graduating class to go all 4 years of high school at Francesville.

Class of 1967 was the last graduating class from Francesville High School.

Class of 1968 was the first graduating class from West Central High School.

The fall of 1914 the brick building schoolhouse in Francesville was open.

In 1939 the "full sized" gym was added and Francesville High School became the home of the "Zebras".