A look back at Horace Mann history

Horace Mann opened in 1950 on Krebs Street as an elementary school serving grades kindergarten through eighth. The school was closed in 1982, but reopened in 1986 for third grade and special education classes to accommodate an increase in district enrollment, particularly at nearby Cleveland Elementary. From 1987 to 1989, the school contained kindergarten through third grade. During the 1989 to 1990 school year, it was a prekindergarten through sixth-grade school.

Beginning in the 1990-1991 school year, Horace Mann became a Montessori school, one of three (with Franklin and Jefferson) in the district. Montessori education stresses individual activity (students may be working on different projects or assignments within a group), gross motor skill development and self-reliance. Students are taught that they are ultimately responsible for their actions, and encouraged to work through various problems – whether educational or personal – themselves. Older children within the group become mentors and role models to younger students.

The district consolidated its Montessori program to Franklin beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, and Horace Mann returned to a traditional school. This year, the school has added seventh grade, and will add eighth grade beginning next school year.

The school's namesake, Horace Mann, was an American education reformer. A Massachusetts state senator, he was named secretary of the state's newly formed board of education in 1837. During his tenure, he introduced numerous educational reforms, including individual classrooms for each grade level, better school buildings, higher teacher pay and requirements for students to attend school longer (until age 16). His reforms were credited with having widespread appeal, affecting education policy in other states.

Mann became president of the newly established Antioch College in Yellow Springs in 1853, where he taught economics, philosophy and natural theology until his death in 1859 at the age of 63.

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