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## Chapter 9. Changes after 1969 – Hillsdale years and new grade school buildings

### 9.1. 1969 to 1981

After the grade school addition to the middle of the north side of the school complex, the Chapter 8 “pink” addition, and the merger with Hillsdale, things seem to have remained fairly constant. Grades 1-4 were in that latest grade school addition, and I assume that kindergarten continued in the former music room. Grades 5-8 attended school in the Hillsdale school building(s), and the high school students used the rest of the building. [There may have been changes in the uses of some of the high school rooms – I was not around for these years at all.](#)

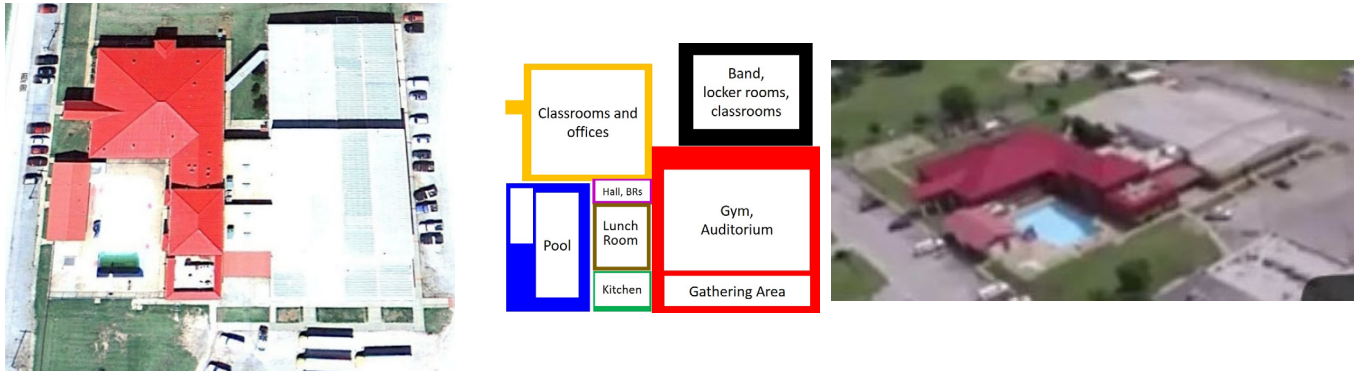
The first significant change that I know of was the building of the Stewart swimming pool and a changing room with a concessions room; [I believe this was just south of the bus barn, but it is possible that the bus barn was removed to make room for the swimming pool.](#) Jim and Minnie Stewart lived near the northwest corner of the Kremlin school district, but they did not have any children of their own. Our cousins Ernie, Bob, and Johnny Voth rented and farmed (with help from all three of us Toews boys) the Stewart farms for many years, and they helped take care of the Stewarts. When the Stewarts died, they left their farms to the Voth boys, but they also left a significant donation of funds to the Kremlin School. These are the funds that were used to build the pool, perhaps sufficient on their own, perhaps together with some tax and school budget funds.

Roger Gossen thinks this pool was built or opened in 1972; he remembers swimming under the “bubble dome cover” in mid-winter, very cold, and with snow on the ground, in February, 1973. That bubble dome, which allowed year-round use, wore out after some years and was not replaced. Roger said that swimming was now (at least recently) done for the first few weeks of PE each school year, before it gets too cold for swimming outside. The pool is now open most days in the summer for the community and recreational swimming, I presume with swimming lessons offered also.

### 9.2. A new grade school building in 1981, a new gym in 1989, and more

In 1981, an entire new grade school building was added to the north and east of the swimming pool, perhaps in stages. [I was never a part of this building or changes, so I hope that someone else will write about this building, or perhaps help me do that.](#) Teacher Roger Gossen, who started in 1983, and Dusty Bittle, who was a 4<sup>th</sup> grader in 1981, both confirmed 1981 as the date for the new grade school. An Enid News and Eagle article from June 21, 1980, about a storm at Kremlin mentioned that there was some damage at the new elementary school that was under construction, placing construction in the summer (and fall) of 1980. The Hillsdale school buildings were closed down at this time. Alanna Uhrig Hart remembered that the Hillsdale School building closed over Christmas break of 1980, when she was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade; so all students started attending school in Kremlin as of January 1981. The Hillsdale school buildings would open again later, as the Hillsdale Christian School, which is still in operation today.

The left diagram below is the 2011 Google Earth aerial view. The center diagram below shows the separate parts of the building, color-coded, and identified by Dusty Bittle. Blue is the pool area, with changing room in the north-west corner. Yellow is the main grade school, with offices both sides of the entry hallway; purple is a hallway to the lunchroom and where bathrooms are located; brown is the lunchroom; and green is the kitchen. Red is a new gymnasium building, added around 1988 or 1989. Black is the latest addition to this facility, [date unknown](#), with a band room (perhaps vocal music also?), locker rooms, and perhaps an additional classroom or two. [More detail needed and appreciated!](#) The photo to the right is blurry but provides a different view of the school, looking to the north-east; source not documented.



Roger Gossen said that grades 1-6 moved into this new grade school, with grades 7 and 8 moving into the high school building. The 7<sup>th</sup> graders had a dedicated teacher and classroom the first year, and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders moved from room to room and teacher to teacher for their first year there. The next year, the 7<sup>th</sup> graders also switched to the more “high school” model of moving from room to room for different classes.

I believe that the high school students also switched to the lunchroom in the new grade school building when it was completed. Dusty said that the former lunchroom was split into two additional classrooms, and that the former kitchen became the teachers’ lounge. [I do not yet know the uses of the two new lunchroom classrooms or of the former grade school rooms \(“pink addition” from the previous chapter\); or of most of the rooms in the 1933 and 1951 building either!](#)

The gymnasium addition had an entry area on the south side, which became the new location for the senior photo panels and a nice gathering area, including for enjoying concessions for sports events. The gymnasium occupied most of the north end of the building, but I vaguely remember a hallway running east-west at the north end of the gym, providing access from the back of the school to the classrooms and offices in the grade school building. I believe that this new gymnasium was used for high school games and performances as well, with the earlier high school gym in the building to the south being used only for practice at this time. The football field continued to be improved, with nicer concession stands and perhaps restroom facilities nearby. A new large bus barn was added to the south of the 1966 metal shop, with spaces for [how many buses](#); [when the bus barn was moved is not known to me; likely prior to 1981 and the new grade school building.](#)

### 9.3. The big picture, 2011

To the right is the expanded 2011 Google Earth photo of the entire school grounds. The new bus barn east of the high school gymnasium can be seen, and many additions and improvements to the ball fields. The building to the north-east is an animal husbandry facility for the FFA program. [There appears to be another new building to the north of the grade school, with an unknown area to the east of it.](#) There are now entrances to the back of the school grounds from both the north and the south allowing busses to drive through.

